3-30-1990

Oral History of Retired American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD) Leaders: Presidents and/or National Award Recipients Interview with Dr. Leroy T. Walker

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Recommended Citation
Swanson, Allys and Van Oteghen, Sharon L., "Oral History of Retired American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD) Leaders: Presidents and/or National Award Recipients Interview with Dr. Leroy T. Walker" (1990). Exercise & Sports Science Faculty Research. 4.
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PLACE New Orleans, LA

DATE 3/30/70 (to be completed at the time and place of the interview)

(S.T. Walker)

(INTERVIEWEE)

3/30/70

(DATE)

(For the AAHPERD Archives, the Mississippi Valley Archives of the John Willard Brister Library of Memphis State University and the Physical Education Department of St. Catherine's College)
ORAL HISTORY OF RETIRED AMERICAN ALLIANCE
FOR HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION, RECREATION AND DANCE
(AAHPERD) LEADERS: PRESIDENTS AND/OR NATIONAL AWARD
RECIPIENTS

Dr. LeRoy T. Walker served as president of the American Alliance For Health, Physical Education and Recreation (AAHPER) from 1977 to 1978. The Association is now the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD). He received an AAHPER Honor Award in 1972 and was awarded the Luther Halsey Gulick Medal in 1982. In 1985 Walker was recipient of the Charles D. Henry Award.
ALLYS SWANSON: LeRoy, we'd like to begin this interview by asking you to relate when and where you were born. Also talk about your family and some of the early childhood experiences you recall.

DR. WALKER: I was born in Atlanta, Georgia many, many years ago, June 14, 1918. I stayed in Atlanta until, at a very young age, I went to New York to live with my brother. I was reared in Harlem with all of its attendant problems of those days. I grew up with the strong domination of a mother because my father passed on when I was very young. I suppose that's why I've always had such a truly recognizable appreciation for strong, creative women. That sometimes puts fear into the hearts of men, partly because they aren't accustomed to it and partly because they may be a little bit insecure.

I grew up in Harlem when it did not have the external forces of violence that we are experiencing now. We played stickball, which is just like baseball except a broom stick is used in place of a bat and there are only two bases. We also played handball, which is played against one wall, and stoopball, in which we threw the
ball against the steps and ran to only one base. Our challenges to other blocks were mainly to play those games, rather than meeting them with guns and knives. My brother was very strict with me. I was one of thirteen children and probably the only one that would go to college. All of them, in spite of their own accomplishments, insisted that I be the one to go on and finish college. They never dreamed that I would go beyond the college level.

One advantage I had was that New York had a very good education system in those days. We had to pass the Regents Exam of the subjects we took. We were admitted to a college or a university, or given credit on our transcripts, on the basis of Regents points accumulated and passed. That put me far ahead, in spite of being a dropout, so to speak. In my junior year, I traveled with the Jimmy Lunchford Band and missed the opening of school. I was going to be behind in Regents credits, so rather than lose a full year, I went back down to Atlanta, Georgia and finished at Booker T. Washington High School.

I had a sister who we called "Lump," which was the nickname for a lump of sugar, because she was so precious. She had a great deal of influence on me, as did my brother Joe, who we called Big Mama. He said to me constantly, "If you really work at it, and resist being the victim of your own attitude or environment, you can be somebody. You have to work to be somebody, and don’t let segregation, prejudice or anything else deter you." I heard that over and over again until I began to believe it. Much of what we tried to do in spite of those upbringings made a difference.

In Harlem, a new YMCA was built on 135th Street. Jackie Robinson, Erie Staich, Fats Jenkins and a lot of great athletes came to the Y and talked to us about education and about being good people. We knew that they were good people and that they participated in sports. Fats Jenkins and Tarzan Cooper, of
the Professional Renaissance Basketball Team, were great basketball players. Of
course you know Jackie Robinson’s baseball history. Jackie was just coming up in
those days. Charlie Clark organized us into a youth community group. Those
events had a serious impact on what finally happened to me.

We used to go down to the Covenant Church in Harlem and play basketball
because there weren’t any recreational playgrounds. We got most of our
recreational play in the basement of the church. One evening, four of us were
together. I thought that we were all pretty decent people. Two of them decided
that they didn’t want to play basketball that night. They said, "Let’s do something
else." What else was there to do? Two of us went to the right and played
basketball in the Covenant Church. The other two went to the left, down to 27th
Street. The brownstones then had little Mom and Pop stores in the basement.
They broke into one of those stores. There were no juvenile agencies then as we
have now, looking out for the young and saying, "Well, you’ve come from a single
parent family and you have a few problems." In those days they sent you to the
reformatory if you broke a rule. It got worse and worse for those two. One of
them ended up wearing a cement coat, from a gang, at the bottom of the Hudson
River. The other went to Sing Sing prison.

Until that evening, I don’t think that any one of us was really that bad. That’s
why I think that a person has to have a feeling of his own self-esteem. All four of
us could have made that left turn and ended up in the same boat. Instead, my
other friend became one of the country’s major orthopedic surgeons.

ALLYS SWANSON: You talked about the influence of the Y. Tell us about
your public school experiences.

DR. WALKER: We had the Public School Athletic League (PSAL) in
New York. My first association with sport was actually at
Haaren High School, which was at 10th Avenue and 59th Street in New York. We didn’t play football: we played soccer. The conditioning and preparation I had to have to play good soccer are probably what led me to be a better athlete in basketball and track and field. It was all on a dare that I played football at Benedict College and made All-American because I had really never played football. I told my coach, "I don’t know what to do so I’ll be as good as you can tell me to be. All I know to do is what you tell me, because I haven’t played football before."

I think that the teaching process then was better than now; we had more concerned teachers. It was unheard of for someone coming out of a grade level to be unable to read.

**DR. VAN OTEGHEN:** Did you have organized physical education at the elementary level?

**DR. WALKER:** No, we had periods for free play. First of all, the facilities were very limited. There was no outside playground as such. There may have been a little area behind the classroom, but we couldn’t do very much there. We learned to be very creative in terms of what we did to exercise. We played tag, dodgeball and other games that would make us very active and agile. We did a few jumping jacks and calisthenics in our homeroom classes. None of the elementary schools even had a gymnasium. They had a large room that would be used for that purpose. There was no structured physical education program until high school, when we had some surrounding area, a football or soccer field, and a gymnasium.

**DR. VAN OTEGHEN:** Was your free play period in addition to recess?

**DR. WALKER:** Yes, but I’m not so sure that we called it free play. It was a free period, sometimes called study hall, that most of
us did not use as study hall. In those days, teachers were assigned to conduct and oversee the free play period. Now teachers are assigned to cafeteria monitoring.

ALLYS SWANSON: What about the other subjects in school, English or music? What other experiences do you recall?

DR. WALKER: I liked English. As a matter of fact, I double majored in science and languages in college. An early experience prompted my interest in foreign languages. My brother was in the contracting business and worked for some very affluent contractors. One of the contractors was George Driscoll. Driscoll’s two sons obviously were exposed to a wide range of culture. Most of my time, when the subways were a nickel, was spent at the polo grounds, which was over in Washington Heights, at Yankee Stadium in the Bronx, Ebbets Field, of the Brooklyn Dodgers, or at the downtown Madison Square Garden. However, I did go to the Museum of Natural History and places of that sort to study.

One day, my brother came home with a box for me. I thought it was a present because I had made very good grades that semester. I opened it up and found a black suit. I looked at it further and saw that it had silk trim. I couldn’t figure out what it was, so I put it back in the box and took it back to him. I thought it was a mistake. It turned out that it was a tuxedo. He and George Driscoll were going to take his sons to the Metropolitan Opera. He thought it would be good exposure for me. In those days, there was no informal wear at the Met; it was all black tie. I thought certainly he was kidding or didn’t have both oars in the water. But he weighed 250 pounds and I wasn’t about to argue with him. I figured that the opera couldn’t be anywhere near as bad as having him get on my case. Driscoll agreed to send the car to pick me up that evening. My biggest problem was trying
to slip out of the apartment and down to the car without my buddies seeing me in that tuxedo.

I’ll never forget that opera. It was *Aida*. I read the playbook to understand the story, but I didn’t understand a single word they were singing. I enjoyed the opera and decided that if I was going to attend such events, I’d need to know something about the language. I started studying French and German, which made it a bit easier for me to survive at college and to pass two languages for my doctorate. Joe’s philosophy was that there had to be something in life other than bouncing a basketball, running track and playing soccer. Looking back, I really appreciate what he was trying to do.

I adopted that same philosophy in my coaching. I tried to make sure that my athletes did the same. As a matter of fact, I had a second practice period from 7 to 9:30 p.m. in the library so that they would understand that, as great as a sport is, it’s not the end of life. A person must have a second option.

**ALLY SWANSON:** How old were you when you went to the opera?

**DR. WALKER:** I was 13 or 14, probably in junior high school at the time.

**ALLY SWANSON:** You mentioned your experience with a band and how you missed a few Regents Points. Tell us more about that.

**DR. WALKER:** In those days, the only hotel in Harlem was the famous Theresa. Blacks didn’t go downtown to the hotels, although they were supposed to have the freedom to do what they wanted to do and to stay where they wanted to stay. Jimmy Lunchford’s band was a group of young musicians that came up from Fisk University. At that time, we lived in a duplex. We lived fairly well considering it was Harlem. Jimmy Lunchford, Cy Oliver and one or two of the band members stayed in part of our duplex. Jimmy
was playing gigs in Harlem at that time. His manager scheduled these bookings week by week, and Jimmy finally ended up in the Cotton Club, one of the famous clubs in Harlem. The Cotton Club was on 142nd Street, which was almost entirely for whites. No blacks, except entertainers, ever went to the Cotton Club. Since the band was not playing for a few days, Jimmy’s personal valet pawned Billy Smith’s saxophone. In the meantime, the manager booked the band into the Cotton Club. The saxophone was not retrieved, so the valet was fired and Jimmy hired me as a temporary substitute.

The band continued to get bookings and eventually went to California. The trip lasted beyond the beginning of the school term, and I could not obtain permission for late registration. If I missed the fall semester, I would miss some course completion and the ability to take the State Regents Exam, so I returned to Atlanta to complete my senior year, and then I returned to New York.

ALLYS SWANSON: Did you play interscholastic sports in Atlanta?

DR. WALKER: When I went back to Atlanta, I had learned a great deal about basketball in the basement of the Covenant Church. At Booker T. Washington, they played basketball, so I brought to Atlanta the basketball skills of what they called a New York City slicker. People in Atlanta were startled by my ability to dribble the basketball. I had learned to dribble in the basement of Covenant by using a support beam in the middle of the floor as a "pick" to leave my guard. I was doing this before the great Bob Cousy of Celtics fame. I would dribble down one side as my guard would back up. When I’d get to that post, I’d dribble the ball behind me and go to the other side of the post. That was sort of matter of fact. I developed it as a skill, and I applied that in my play. They had never seen that done in Atlanta. We had a very fine basketball team, and we won the state championship.
When I went back to New York, I started school at Brooklyn Tech because my brother Joe wanted me to prepare to assist him in his business. Dad Crawford, and my high school coach, came by New York. He was going abroad as an interpreter for Dr. Starks, president of Benedict College. He convinced my brother that it would be best for me to get out of Harlem and to come down to this church-related school. They could bring me up in the way that he thought Mrs. Walker would want me to go. Basketball was all I played in that last year of high school, but it was enough to get me an athletic scholarship.

As I said, I played football on a dare. One of my teammates at Booker T. Washington, who followed Dad Crawford to Benedict, was boasting that I was going to be the starting quarterback. When I talked about football in New York, I wasn’t talking about football with all the heavy pads and equipment; I was talking about soccer. I had track ability, which means I was fast. When I was growing up, I used to go to Baker Field on 121st Street and shag punts for the football players. I could catch a football like I caught a baseball, but I didn’t play it. I would sometimes throw it back to them, sometimes punt it back to them. Because I was able to handle the ball well, I went out for the team when they were in tee-shirts and shorts. But when they got out the heavy gear, I was nowhere to be found. The coach wanted to know what was happening, so I finally confessed. I said, "Coach, I’m not a football player. Cook, my high school classmate, was just giving you the runaround." The coach said, "No, you know you handle the ball well. You can punt the ball, and you have some assets we can use." After about two or three days, during which I was shamed by my teammates, I went back out and became a reasonably good football player.

ALLYS SWANSON: What was your position on the football team?
DR. WALKER: I was a quarterback, 155 pounds soaking wet. In those days, we did not play a T-formation. We played single wing, which means I handled the ball on dive plays and had to block those 225 pound ends. That was no small task. Fortunately I had pretty good athletic ability. I didn’t have any bad habits to break, and I had two good coaches. The other quarterback broke his leg in the third or fourth game of my freshman year, so I was it. Our school was small and we didn’t have a lot of talent. By my junior year, I had developed enough to be picked for the Courier Newspaper All-American team.

DR. VAN OTEGHEN: What exactly was stickball?

DR. WALKER: Stickball is the equivalent of baseball. In New York, the streets are wide and the brownstones are three stories high. We played stickball with real broom handles and tennis balls. There were three bases; touch on one stoop, touch on the other stoop and come back home. If anyone roofed the ball, which was like a home run in baseball, he was out because that was like losing the ball. We could not get to many of the roofs to pick up our balls.

This was a great game. We challenged other blocks to great stickball games. Let’s say we were playing a game between 7th and 8th Avenues and 127th Street. We would play at a time in the afternoon when there was very little traffic. The tennis ball was soft enough so that it wouldn’t do any damage if we hit cars. People knew that we didn’t have much else to do so they didn’t object to our games.

ALLYS SWANSON: Was this game for boys or did girls play, too?

DR. WALKER: It was all guys. I don’t want to sound chauvinistic, but the girls didn’t play; they just stayed nice and pretty. We had volleyball, gymnastics and, in senior high, fencing for girls. When I finally went to
North Carolina, I learned that girls basketball was far ahead of boys basketball. As a matter of fact, the girls would play the first game and then people would leave. I think it's similar to what's now happening at the University of Washington. The women's team filled the arena and drew a bigger crowd than the men's team by something like 4,000 people per game, but they didn't do much other than basketball or volleyball.

ALLYS SWANSON: You mentioned Dad Crawford, the basketball coach at Benedict College in Columbia, South Carolina. Did the fellows on the team regard the coach as a father figure?

DR. WALKER: We did, except that was sort of his nickname. I can understand why he chose a short version because his name was, and we used to kid him, Thelmon Hope Giles Crawford. I used to say, "Dad, I can understand why you've chosen that." I was referring to the occasions when I would write to my mother from college. Her entire name took up the whole envelope. She would get furious because I was doing it out of fun. She was named after all of her aunts. She had a bunch of them, so she was Mary Ann Sally Jane Martha Elizabeth. She really wanted just Mary. Sometimes I put all of the names on the envelope. I knew it must have confused the postman.

Dad was something like a father figure to us. His wife was head nurse at the local hospital. I would watch operations, particularly with Dr. Boyd, the orthopedics surgeon. It was assumed that I would go to medical school because I had a science background. But in those days, if blacks didn't go to Meharry University or Harvard University, they didn't have access to other medical schools.

I finished college in three and a half years. Harvard and Meharry told me that I couldn't get into the next cycle. I would have to wait a year and a half. I went back to New York and tried to convince Jesse Feiring Williams, chairman of
the department of health and physical education at Columbia University, that I wanted to work with people in a field other than medicine. My thought was physical education and health. Dr. Williams did everything possible to talk me out of it. He later smiled. Most of the great physical educators, the Oberteuffer and the Scotts, had come out of Columbia. He looked at my transcript and said, "Why on earth are you coming into this field?" Although I had played all those games and made 11 letters in basketball, football and track, there was nothing on my transcript in health and physical education. Dr. Williams gave me 12 or 13 deficiency hours to make up in these sports, for which he thought I had no training at all. I didn't want to argue with him because he didn't want to admit me in the first place.

Finally, F. W. Maroney, who was a fine biologist, saw me playing with the graduate basketball team. I was in his beginners basketball course, and he couldn't believe his eyes. He almost wanted to shame me out of the class by asking why I would be in an elementary course just to make a good grade, and then play on the graduate team. The graduate team had an All-American center from Oregon, and some great ball players. We would beat up on Ivy League teams: Princeton, Harvard and Yale. I told Dr. Maroney, "I'm here only because Dr. Williams said I had to take this course as a proficiency requirement." The only thing that I could not do well was gymnastics. They finally exempted me from football, basketball, swimming and all the other activities I had been doing all my life, and let me go on to other advanced courses.

ALLYS SWANSON: How did you learn how to swim?

DR. WALKER: In the early days in Atlanta, when I was 7 or 8, we swam in a swimming hole. That was self-taught swimming. When I went to the YMCA in Harlem, a guy named Greg Bell gave us lessons. He
was an excellent swimming teacher. Although I wasn't a Matt Biondi or a Mark Spitz in terms of all the strokes, I could swim well. When I got to Benedict, we didn't have a pool, but they had an open pool as one of the projects, so I continued to develop swimming.

DR. VAN OTEGHEN: In some parts of the country, blacks experienced discrimination with respect to being able to use the pools. Was that not so in the area in which you grew up?

DR. WALKER: It was, except that the YMCA at 135th Street was in a black community in Harlem. The community swimming pool in Columbia was obviously in a black neighborhood, so that was all black anyway. It was only about 20 meters long, but at least it was a swimming pool.

ALLYS SWANSON: You mentioned the fact that there were only two medical schools for blacks to attend, and that Benedict College was a black college. Would you talk briefly about other occasions when you felt that doors were shut or that you had to do things differently because of your race?

DR. WALKER: First of all, being at a historical black institution and playing in a completely black league were foreign to me. When we played in New York, we played against mixed teams. The race issue, although very subtle in some ways, was evident even in the North. It wasn't obvious, like "this fountain for colored only" and "this fountain for white," or "this restroom for colored," and "this restroom for white." At least I was sensible enough to understand the system. It was strange to me, but I'd make a lot of fun of it because it was a serious issue to most people. Having to sit in the balcony of the theater was not a big deal to me because I sat in the balcony of the Alhambra Theater in Harlem. Where we sat depended on the price of the ticket we bought. We just took for granted some of the things that happened in Harlem. Blacks,
whites, Hispanics, Italians and others were in the neighborhood. We went to the Lafayette, the Alhambra and the RKO. The race issue was most obvious when I traveled. We either had to pack lunches or find a place where we could go to the back or the side to get take-out sandwiches.

That practice wasn’t that strange to me because of a previous experience I’d had with Jimmy’s band. When we left Hershey, Pennsylvania for Cleveland, we stopped at a White Towers restaurant in Philadelphia. They sent me in to order hamburgers while they played cards. They didn’t intend to eat in the bus; they were just waiting until the hamburgers were ready. You can imagine the surprise on the restaurant worker’s face when everybody filed out of the bus and into the restaurant. He said, "No, you can’t eat in here." This was the city of brotherly love. I learned from these experiences.

DR. VAN OTEGHEN: The first time that I ever experienced or saw discrimination was after I had graduated from the University of Iowa in 1961. I traveled south with a friend, and we were going to work our way up to a camp in New Hampshire. I went into a restaurant in North Carolina and saw signs on restroom doors that said "whites only" and "blacks only." That was the first time I ever saw that. I’m interested in this subject because I never knew there was discrimination in the North and I’m from Illinois.

DR. WALKER: Discrimination was obvious in the South. People saw signs to remind them every day that this was a fountain for colored only. But in the North, discrimination was more difficult to deal with because it was more subtle. They didn’t see signs.

When we left Harlem and went down below 110th Street in New York, there was some prejudice. Below 116th Street, the neighborhood was mostly Hispanic. Below 110th Street, discrimination just happened. Because we went there so
seldom, we didn't challenge the system. We knew it just existed. I remember when Clayton Powell was the pastor at Abyssinia church. Before Adam Clayton Powell Jr., we never had a black senator or a black representative from Harlem. The blacks weren't politically astute. They would run five or six candidates against one single white candidate.

Now we find non-blacks switching their attitudes because they accept the fact that perhaps they had to make some special allowances for me because I was deprived of some opportunities. The black youngster now is going through the same schools, allegedly under the same teachers and with the same windows of opportunity. Why then, they ask, must blacks have these exceptions?

Some of the deficiencies that minority disadvantaged kids face may be due to early training and early grades. When I was a youngster, the brightest light in our house was over a table where I had to read daily. It didn't matter whether it was a funny book, the Bible or a novel, I had to sit there every night to study and read. It was a ritual. If my mother passed by there and didn't see me, she wanted to know where I was. I couldn't go out to play basketball or anything until my studying was done, so I used to go out and play by the street light.

In the North, discrimination was evident but more subtle. It was a real shock to some people to come to the South and see the obvious by mandate and by law. As late as the 1950s and 1960s, blacks could not be members of the state association of AAHPER. I was going to the national conventions and presenting papers, but I wasn't even a member of the North Carolina Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation; we hadn't yet added Dance. Finally, when the state association met in Raleigh, I got together 50 of my graduates and said, "We're going over there to attend the meetings." When we appeared, they didn't know
what to do with us. They couldn't register us because we couldn't be members. They had a white only clause in the National Education Association (NEA).

In Atlantic City, I met with Delbert Oberteuffer, who was at Ohio State at the time. He was one of Williams’ proteges who had played at Ohio State when Bill Bell was an All-American football player there. Bell headed the department of HPERD at A&T, North Carolina, which is in the same town as the University of North Carolina (UNC), Greensboro, earlier known as UNC Woman’s College. When Oberteuffer and I were talking at the national convention in Atlantic City, he told me that he couldn't understand why Bill Bell wasn't at the program he gave at UNC, Greensboro. We started kidding him. We said, "You must be joking. You must know that Bill Bell didn’t know anything about that meeting until you were there and gone, unless it was in the paper. " That was when we started the Committee to Extend Professional Services for Negroes, the popular term in those days. By starting in North Carolina, we gradually got the white only clause taken out of the NEA. In those days, one had to be a member of the NEA in order to be a member of the state Association. Once the clause was out, we started becoming members. It was a very interesting development.

DR. VAN OTEGHEN: Was that not true for the national Association, that you had to be an NEA member?

DR. WALKER: No, because I was a registered member, of AAHPER and NCAA. As a matter of fact, at a NCAA meeting in Chicago, we put the first black on a committee simply by getting all blacks present to attend a selection process and elect Eddie Jackson. We minorities have not gotten to the sophistication of what we call association membership, which is necessary in order to get a ballot for voting. Therefore, fewer minorities are being
elected to offices in the Alliance. Those were some very interesting, fascinating
times.

ALLYS SWANSON: Let’s talk about your Ph.D. degree. Why did you go to
two universities?

DR. WALKER: I lived just below the park from Columbia University at
121st and Morningside Avenue before we moved to Long
Island. I was very familiar with Columbia University, so when I finished high
school, I went back to New York, entered Columbia, and finished my master’s
degree. I think I was the only black class assistant that Jesse Feiring Williams ever
had. In those days, we had a great camp called Lake Sebago. It was a great place
to develop skills during the summer.

When I finished my master’s degree, I had an unusual experience. It was one
of the few times that I found myself being taken down a notch because I went
straight from school into a master’s program. I had a pretty good background. I
had finished as an honor’s graduate, and I went to Dr. Williams to register for my
doctorate. It took me a long time to get over what he said to me because I thought
I was one of his favorite students. He said, "No, I don’t think you should go for a
doctorate now. I think you really ought to go out into the world and learn
something." That was a real blow. I was an honor’s student, and my advisor was
saying that I was not ready for a doctorate. But at the time he was right. I learned
all the book material, yet I was sitting in classes with people who had years of
experience. They talked about things that were strange to me. I didn’t fully
understand how they were applying the principles.

I worked for a while, then went back and got into the doctoral program. At
any school, if you complete the master’s and go on to the doctorate, you literally
exhaust the courses. Therefore, I wrote to my advisor and said, "These are the
questions that I need answers to." I had taken some courses in psychology and different areas. I also went into the science department and took some physics because I was very interested in biomechanics. I couldn’t get any answers to the questions I asked, so I decided to go to Columbia for some answers. I could not get any. The chairman said, "Come back to see me when you’ve passed the comprehensive." That’s when I gave him the sheet that said I’d already passed the comprehensive and the two languages. He said, "Oh, that’s strange." I went over to discuss my plight with Dean Russell. When Dean Russell called the chairman over, sat him down in front of me and gave him a tongue lashing, I knew I was through at Columbia. Dean Russell said, "Here’s an honor’s student that you ought to be proud of. Why can’t he get answers?" I knew I’d had it. There wasn’t any way that the chairman was going to be able to live through that.

I knew Jay B. Nash and Leonard Larson from national meetings, so I went down to NYU. I was home, so staying over another day didn’t make any difference. Although I didn’t have an official transcript with a seal, I had a transcript. NYU listed all the requirements I had to fulfill. The sad part of the story was that I had to do another year’s residence, transfer only six of the 30 credit hours I’d taken at Columbia, and do the languages over. This is the price I paid. Many of the minorities enrolled at Columbia did not want me to transfer. They said that if I left, all of their hopes would be gone. I said, "Well, I think I’ll go to NYU and finish while you still struggle." And that’s what I did. I started all over again and got my doctorate. I think I would have made it in the education department, but the chairman just didn’t think that I could earn the Ph.D. with a research emphasis.

My work at NYU was like getting a second degree. I reflected on the things that my mother had told me: "Don’t let the environment or someone decide what
you can achieve"; "You either fail or succeed on your own merit"; "Circumstances should not be the issue." I realized that my advisor could not decide for me. I started working on the degree as a means to get out of coaching football. Initially it wasn't that important, but it became important when the chairman decided that I wasn't qualified. I know he couldn't make that determination.

DR. VAN OTEGHEN: You indicated on your questionnaire that Leonard Larson and Jay B. Nash influenced you. Did they influence you in a positive way?

DR. WALKER: Their influence was very positive. I worked under Larson until he went back to Wisconsin. Jay B. Nash did so many things. I'd been there, so he knew me. I was sort of the leader at the Sebago camp. As a matter of fact, I led the integration of the camp. We still had a lot of Southerners coming to Sebago, and they wanted to congregate among themselves. Nash said, "I want you to have all the black members here at the camp come early to the meals and spread out around the room. Anybody who comes in and sits down will have to sit among blacks." And we did that. The next summer, blacks and whites were assigned to cabins together because it was really rustic.

If you recall, one of Jay B. Nash's great phrases was "teachable moments." I used to talk to him at Sebago, and then I became a class assistant under him. While Larson influenced me more towards science and research, Nash had a wonderful philosophy about physical education and the profession. My dissertation was used at the big conference in New Orleans when the profession shifted to the competency base and the needs theory.

NYU had a great influence on me. The professionalism that I experienced there led me to stay in the profession in spite of my brother's continued urging, "Why do you go through all that? Come over and run the business." We had three
restaurants in New York and a window cleaning business. Joe said, "You’re working for peanuts. Come over here and you’ll be able to retire in a few years." I didn’t go because I kept remembering Nash’s attitude toward being in the profession. It was very pronounced. I decided that I was not only going to stay in the profession, but along with C.D. Henry, I would try to influence minorities and blacks to join.

It was easy for people like Nash to find somebody to be on a committee. C.D. Henry, Roscoe Brown and I were always obvious and visible. They would say, "Call LeRoy." However, I knew that there were other capable blacks. Many times, even when I didn’t have anything else to do, I would say, "I’m not going to be able to do it, but let me tell you about so and so who is a very good person." Many times, they were sins of omission rather than commission. More blacks began coming to the convention and getting involved. Roscoe and I once chaired the Ethnic Service Committee. I think much of this came out of my relationship with Nash.

ALLYS SWANSON: How did your career evolve after you completed your Ph.D.?

DR. WALKER: I was still in North Carolina when I finished my doctorate, and I had fallen in love with the place. I first went to North Carolina with my brother. We had what is now referred to as "Set Aside", a federal project which Congressman Mitchell of Chicago had introduced. We were in the business of window glazing and window cleaning. We went down to work at Camp Butler in Durham, North Carolina. We were sort of sociological specimens. North Carolina never knew of blacks doing a major contract. We took about thirty of our people from New York, hired a lot of young people in North Carolina, and taught them the trade.
When the war broke out, I went to Texas to head up the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) at Prairie View State University. I served as a physical training officer for the 8th Service Command. When the war ended, I wanted to return to New York to finish my degree. I had actually stopped in North Carolina after leaving Texas as a means of not having to come out and fight with all the other GI’s that were going to be released. I was introduced to Dr. Shepard, who was the founder and president of North Carolina Central University. When he asked me to work at NCCU, I wired back and set a salary which I didn’t think Dr. Shepard could afford. We were making $10,000 a year, which was high for 40 years ago. It was more than the chairman was making, but I asked for it. I said, "Well, at least it will leave me with an opening. I’m not turning him down, he just won’t be able to pay me that now." However, he agreed. I said, "OK, I'll spend a year there, then go back to New York and finish my degree."

I fell in love with the place. It was a beautiful campus. Dr. Shepard had a fetish about the lawns. We had a small campus in a land bound with four major throughways. There were 700 or 800 students, which has now increased to 5,000 students in attendance at the University.

In my early years at NCCU, I coached football and basketball. I later started the track program. Gradually, I discontinued coaching football and basketball because I went from one sport to the next, which left me almost no time to be with my son and my wife. I decided I didn’t want to be on the road all the time. However, to be released from football, I had to take a leave. I advised the president that I wanted to take a leave of absence, which he granted, to work on my doctorate. I thought that if they got someone else to coach, then I wouldn’t have to coach when I went back. That didn’t work, so I finally had to quit.
Eventually I got out of basketball, but I stayed with track and field until I coached the Olympic team in 1976.

In the 1960s, when affirmative action programs made it very fashionable to attract minorities to the affluent campuses and to offer them big money, I received numerous offers. All the reasons they gave why I should go to Southern Cal, Wayne or other places were the same reasons why I thought I should stay at North Carolina. So, I never left for greener pastures.

DR. VAN OTEGHEN: How did World War II affect you personally and professionally?

DR. WALKER: I ended up in a very unique position during WWII. Colonel Anderson, who was a fraternity brother, was probably one of the highest ranking Black officers; General Davis eventually rose to a higher rank. As I was being inducted into the army in Austin, Texas, Colonel Anderson passed through the reception area and saw me sitting with all the recruits. The Armed Services had just started the Army Specialized Training Program at Prairie View State University. The Eighth Service Command was looking for a training officer. Colonel Anderson knew that I had studied military tactics and physical training at Columbia under Francois Deliscu, who was later in charge of the Ranger Camp in Hawaii. As a matter of fact, he was so tough at that camp that guys were volunteering to go overseas just to get out of there. Colonel Anderson asked me if I would be willing to take on the assignment since I had a master’s degree. When I got there, I was told that Prairie View had also lost its physical education director. I decided to be a physical education teacher and a coach by day, and a military training officer by night.

I fulfilled that dual role for two and a half years. As we were preparing to ship out, the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. Everything came to a halt. The
Army Specialized Training Program stayed on for a while, but I was able to resign and go back East. That’s when the telegraph dialogue started between myself and Dr. Shepard.

ALLYS SWANSON: In 1945, you began your long tenure at North Carolina Central University. What were some professional challenges during the first 10 or 15 years of your tenure?

DR. WALKER: North Carolina Central University was a black institution at the time. The term "historical black" came later when schools were integrated. Although we were a liberal arts college in terms of our structure, we were basically a teacher training institution at that time. We were caught in a vicious cycle at times. Individuals who had been trained in black high schools were coming into the black college and then going back to teach at black high schools. My goal was to get my staff to understand that we had a great impact on what we were eventually going to get back. Therefore, we had to be very demanding of our majors. I didn’t allow coaches to give up classes to go look at video tapes or whatever instructional media they used in those days. Coaches had to give full time to their teaching.

I think that my position largely set the tone. I was chairperson, holding a national office, working on an advanced degree, and teaching nine hours. If I could do it, then the staff knew that coaching would not exempt them from their academic duties. Coaching is another contribution a person makes because he or she likes it and wants to do it. That’s not quite how we operate these days.

The other challenge we faced was to professionalize our majors. What could we do if we couldn’t get them to the state convention? That’s why I put them on the bus and said, "I’m tired of this. We’re going to go to North Carolina State University and sit in the meetings. I don’t care whether or not we can join. We
need to know what's going on there if we're going to become good professionals."
We couldn't join, so we couldn't have access to the journals and other privileges
that came with membership. I happened to know what was going on because I
went to national meetings and attended lectures and various sessions where people
talked about current events in our field. We were trying to bring to students
current, new, and innovative facts and ideas. I didn't want students to think that
they were getting all they needed to know from textbooks. By the time a book is
written, proofread and printed, the information in it is already two years old. I
always tried to keep students abreast of what was going on in the profession.
However, they had an aspiration that they couldn't realize because we didn't go to
the state meetings.

When we finally were allowed membership, our greatest challenge was to get
students to join the Association. We insisted that all our majors join the
professional organization. I was brought before the board of trustees, which said
we couldn't "force" students to join. I said that it was part of the major
requirement.

As a result of that issue, I started a class for credit called Supervision and
Practice. This class permitted student teaching at the elementary level. Students
currently did most of their student teaching at the secondary level, but they were
certified to teach K-12. Most students never had a clue as to what was going on in
elementary schools. In addition to the experience in the elementary school, the
majors had to coach a team in the intramural league. As juniors they had to do
volunteer work for the elementary schools. They also had to subscribe to the
Journal and write a specified number of article reviews from the Journal. We won
the battle, because I said that was a part of class participation. Their active
participation made them feel good about the profession.
When AAHPERD met in Minneapolis during the 1960s, we had more students at the convention than the University of Minnesota did. We hired buses, picked up some students at St. Augustine and drove there. We sold candy, ran the concessions at basketball games, and did all kinds of things to pay for our trip. I always thought it was important to professionalize the students, and it has remained a priority in the department. It is less emphasized these days because staff people are sometimes hostile to students. Too often the prevailing attitude is that a student does not have to do something that he or she does not want to do. That is not good.

Those were the challenges that we faced. We tried not to permit the environment to dictate how good we could become. The theme that I used as chancellor, "Excellence Without Excuse: A Shared Responsibility," grew out of those days. We were telling our young students, "Just because you have attended a college which is historically a black institution, that's no excuse for not contributing to the profession."

ALLY'S SWANSON: You later became the national president of AAHPERD. Tell us how that evolved.

DR. WALKER: In my early days in the profession, Roscoe Brown, C.D. Henry, Bob Kirk and a few others were constantly involved in the organization. We started the early leadership with the Extended Professional Services to Negroes Committee. We later changed the title to Ethnic Service Committee because there were a lot of Hispanics, Chinese and others who were just as much disenfranchised as blacks were. We worked a great deal through that organization to get our blacks to make their best contribution to the profession.
My leadership role expanded when I began to chair committees. Although I served only one day, I was elected president of the Southern District; I became a national officer at the same time. At the meeting in Birmingham, I went out as the Southern District president and became president-elect of AAHPERD. I followed some very good people: Barbara Forker, Louis Alley and Celeste Ulrich. I felt best about the fact that I didn’t bring in any new programs. Celeste had a five-point program that she never finished; no one can accomplish that much in one year. Before her, Roger Wiley had a great theme, but he also never finished. I just wanted to finish a great program that had already been started.

When I was president, we were battling over the prospect of building in Reston. We spent money right and left looking at new buildings. I said that we were not going to look any longer because we were spending between $15,000 and $20,000 for each property evaluation. We had to pay people to explore viable options for us. I said, "Either we’re going to build this building out at Reston or we’re not going build it." There were certain staff, internal and structural changes that we could have made if we were not moving. By looking at some of the programs and the membership situation, and trying to get some marketing aspects before us, we were ready to make substantial changes as we prepared to move. However, we just picked up and went out there. As a result, we began to lose people.

There is strength through diversity in AAHPERD, but I still have problems with so much turf protection. Various associations’ groups have become so individualized in their body of knowledge that we have lost sight of the real issue before us. As a whole, AAHPERD must be concerned about wellness and good health, and all areas must advocate that thrust. We tried to set that in motion during our tenure. I thought it established a good working relationship. We ended
up with some internal changes; the restructuring of the governance started by Barbara Forker continued at that time. I believe that going through the steps and paying my dues early in my career led to my election as president.

When I was elected president of AAHPERD, I repeated what I had said when I was selected to be an Olympic coach. There were five criteria for becoming an Olympic coach: the number of years in international experience, the number of Olympians or national champions developed, etc. I had taken most of the people running against me on their first trip overseas. One writer asked, "With all the black athletes, don't you think it was about time they had a black coach?" I said, "I don't think that has anything to do with it. I think I was the best candidate."

Regarding AAHPERD, it was appropriate for a qualified black to lead the organization. However, ethnic background should not be the cause for false election. As I looked at my contribution to sport and physical education and to science, I felt that I was elected president at the right time. We got people to work for AAHPERD in a more concentrated way.

DR. VAN OTEGHEN: Glenn Smith related that when he was president, the Alliance was in trouble financially, and that you, with your own money, helped pull it out of financial trouble. Is that an accurate statement? If so, exactly what happened?

DR. WALKER: Most people never knew about my contribution. It wasn't something I did for publicity; I did it because I knew that AAHPERD needed some financial help. I felt that the Alliance was worth investing in. Several programs required financial backing that we couldn't get from foundations. One concerned our publication while others involved committees and board meetings. I was in a position to offer financial help, so I
advanced the money it needed. I knew that if it didn’t work, if I went broke and could no longer support my wife and family, then friends would bail me out.

I had originally proposed a financing plan which the board refused. I had developed a friendship with a multimillionaire from Saudi Arabia when he was here in school. He and I worked out a deal for the Alliance to borrow about $5 million at almost no interest for our building. The board wouldn’t accept it. Board members were concerned about how we would look accepting money from the Middle East in light of what was happening politically at that time. Because we began building much later, Reston cost us a lot more money than it would have cost us originally.

DR. VAN OTEGHEN: Were you able to get your money from teaching salaries or did you have some other personal sources?

DR. WALKER: Fortunately I had some personal sources of income. In college, when all the guys were writing home for money, my sister and brother wrote to me for money. As I said before, I worked with my brother and earned a lot of money during the summer. I handled the payroll for my brother’s business. Each of the 35 or 40 employees would give me a tip as I paid them because they appreciated a college kid working with them. I also had a deal with my brother that I would share in the insurance money saved by early completion of jobs. I saved these funds. When I began to teach, I was very frugal. I didn’t smoke, I didn’t drink, and Katherine and I did not belong to a lot of social clubs. Therefore, I guess I was doing a little bit better than most teachers.

DR. VAN OTEGHEN: Glenn also related that approximately 45 minutes after he was elected president of the Alliance, a black member of the profession came to him and said, “We have a group of black members who would like to meet with you right now.” Glenn met with them. He said they took
him by surprise. They wanted to share with him their feeling that they were not being given an opportunity to serve in the profession or to be elected to office. He said he turned the tables and asked them, "How active have you been? Everyone needs to be quite active before they are elected to office. How often have you nominated someone?" Do you recall that? Were you a part of that group?

DR. WALKER: Yes, and I remember it very well because Glenn and I talked about it. I had an idea of what the meeting was about. He was surprised about the meeting, not the issue. We were talking about what some people called paying dues. First, you've got to serve. Being an officer is not an award or reward; it is a position gained from the service that you give as you move up the ladder. When you finally get to the top rung, there's nothing else left unless you advance to another level. Generally, that is to become an officer or a chair of a committee.

We had just begun to move over to membership voting, which gave rise to another issue. Glenn used me as an example. He said they couldn't say that they couldn't move up because here was a person who had; I was past president. My position gave him credence to say to them, "Nobody is going to block you out if you come in, serve and get your service recognized. But it's not an entitlement." He held to his position and there was no confrontation.

I later met with the same group through the Ethnic Service Committee. As an illustration of my point, I told a story of a young man from New Orleans who attended the AAHPERD meeting in Houston. He met with the Ethnic Service Committee and asked how he could become chairman of the committee. He was a bright student and a young professor. I said, "One thing you should probably do is make sure that you are very active at the state level. I would suggest that, rather than taking up time here, you go talk with C.D. Henry." I was overwhelmed when
he asked, "Who is C.D. Henry?" I said, "Something must not be right if you were at Louisiana and you don't know who C.D. Henry is. You must never have been to a state meeting. You must never have been really involved at all. You want to bypass that to talk about being a chair? You have an apprenticeship to serve."

This illustration made people recognize that the window of opportunity was there, but they had to get up so that they could see through it.

**DR. VAN OTEGHEN:** Just out of curiosity, was Doris Corbett in that group?

**DR. WALKER:** Doris may have been. She was one of my students at North Carolina Central at the time. I just beat on her head all the time. She was one of the group that became professionalized.

**ALLYS SWANSON:** Also during this time, the "women in sports" movement was undergoing a change with the AIAW. Tell us about your involvement with that process.

**DR. WALKER:** I think that was the only time women hated me. At that time, a particular group from Iowa that you probably know, Judy Holland, Peg Burke and some of the others, had an association within the Association. AIAW was under the parentage of AAHPERD and was a part of NAGWS. We kept books for them. It was very strange to hear of an association that was part of another association. AIAW grew very quickly. The association went from a few sports to several sports, from a few schools to many, many schools, and from a few championships to many championships. Most of that was possible because they had no problems. Then they decided that they didn’t want to be a part of AAHPERD. I didn’t think that they needed to get out and have a head-on fight with Wally Byers. I also knew that the AIAW thrust was not to have conference champions, but to have everyone come through the AIAW. My argument to them was, "If you don’t really like it, you can leave AAHPERD. But
remember, we’ve never refused you anything that you’ve wanted." They said, "We don’t want to ask." I said, "Okay."

I gave examples of conferences that had left their parent organization. The Atlantic Coast Conference was once part of the Southern Conference. They weren’t happy. They wanted mostly state schools, so they left and changed their name. They are now a very strong conference. The Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference was once a part of the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association. They didn’t like the thrust of the CIAA. Private and church schools could not keep up. They became the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference. I told them that I couldn’t stop them from leaving, but that they couldn’t take the AIAW name. That was where the rub came in. We hassled about that for a long time, and I think I finally lost the battle.

I was also disturbed that the AIAW lawyer, rather than the president, acted as spokesperson for the group. I was convinced that AIAW could not win the battle against a powerful, rich NCAA. I still think that the AIAW, with its focus, would have been better than the conferences in the NCAA. It was expensive to go with the AIAW because there was a state fee, a regional fee and a national fee.

I have always fought for more involvement of women in sport. People used to refer to them as women’s sports, but I said, "No, no, no. They’re sports just like all sports. Basketball is basketball." These just happened to be sports played by women. Their coaches had to be up to snuff. They had to know that they had long hours ahead and weekends when they would lose. They also wanted their own rules as opposed to the rules that already existed. Title IX helped a great deal. I still think the separation was a mistake even though they’ve done well. I would like to have seen the association remain because NAGWS was perfectly satisfied. In
the end, we kissed and made up. About three years ago they gave me the award, but for a while I was the culprit as far as AIAW was concerned.

ALLYS SWANSON: How would you describe your professional relationship with Celeste Ulrich?

DR. WALKER: The relationship between Celeste and I has been a professional love affair for three decades. We sort of complemented each other in terms of growth in the profession. She was a great sounding board for things that I wanted to do. She gave me great support when I was fighting for the NEA situation. We had a tremendously successful thrust when she was past president, I was president and we were working with Margaret Coffey. As a matter of fact, she finally said to me, "Let AIAW go. We're holding it up. If they want to take the name AIAW, let them go." I said, "Celeste, you're closer to the NAGWS that I am. If that's the way you feel, I won't fight it, but I still think that they are making a mistake."

Celeste and I have done many exchanges. I taught in Greensboro and she taught at North Carolina Central. Although my heart was broken when Celeste left North Carolina, I knew that she would give great leadership to Oregon. Celeste is still one of my most cherished friends. She is definitely my most cherished professional friend.

ALLYS SWANSON: Tell us more about the NCAA structure and Walter Byers, and your work with that group.

DR. WALKER: Most people have misunderstood Walter Byers. He was a genius in organizational structure. He was the first person to know how to market the NCAA in terms of big television contracts. He was a great behind-the-scenes political animal. Although he controlled the council, he was always behind the curtains at meetings. As a matter of fact, at the meeting
in New Orleans in 1986, during my last year as chancellor, I went back behind the
curtain and said to him, "Walter, I'm going to retire, and I just wanted to let you
know that it's been a fine relationship that we've had. He said some very
complimentary things to me. He thought that the NCAA was the only organization
that should exist in collegiate sport. He wanted to put the AIAW and the NAIA
out of business. Walter Byers also had powerful national influence. As the first
commissioner of the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference, I sat on what I called the
lower level commissioner group of 22, but not the country club group which was
the Big Ten and Pac 10, the Western, and the Atlantic Coast Conference. I was a
friend to all those commissioners. As chair of that group, I had to deal with the
country club group and with all of the bodies of the council. Consequently, I
learned to respect Walter.

Most of my rubs with Walter Byers came through coaching rather than
administration. He recognized that I was probably one of the few people who took
the NCAA to court and won both times. The NCAA took away the eligibility of
two Kenyans whom I had brought over. They were freshmen, and the NCAA took
away all of their years of eligibility because of the age difference and the fact that
these two men had not participated for their national teams. That action kept me
from going to the NCAA championships at Eugene in 1972, which we were favored
to win. Ultimately, the court mandated that the age rule be discontinued because
it could not be applied only to foreign athletes.

Another incident involving Walter Byers occurred at a meet in Austin, Texas.
They insisted that I provide them with the academic record of the same two
athletes that were involved in the previous eligibility case. I argued that if they
were students with 3.5 GPA's, why did I have to prove their academic eligibility? I
didn't have time to do it. I got the letter only because I was commissioner of the
Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference. I wasn’t going to go to Austin and try to prove the point, so I said, "Until I can do this, we’re going to get an injunction against the meet." There were 600 people at Austin waiting to run, but the court ruled that until this eligibility issue was cleared up, there could be no competition. Nevertheless, I had great respect for Walter Byers.

ALLYS SWANSON: I’d like to ask you about your work with the United States Olympic Committee. How did it start, how did it evolve, and where does the committee view itself at the present time?

DR. WALKER: My work with the Olympic Committee indirectly goes back to AAHPERD. In 1959, they had a program called Educational Exchange. Ross Merrick nominated me to participate in one of those programs. I went to Israel, Ethiopia and Syria. Although it was an educational program and I was participating through the embassy, they looked at my vita, saw that I’d been a coach, and asked me to work with their track and field program. They didn’t get very many coaches in those days. Each one of the countries would say, "You’re with our students in the morning, but in the afternoon can you help us with our athletic program?" I worked very hard at coaching in Israel, Ethiopia and Syria. As a result, Israel and Ethiopia invited me back to be a consultant for their 1960 Olympic teams.

I had previously coached two Olympians from my own school who won gold medals in Melbourne, Australia in 1956. I then received a lot of publicity because I was coaching two Olympic teams, Israel and Ethiopia, at the same time. What was even more dramatic was that an Ethiopian, Abebe Bikila, won the gold medal in the 1960 marathon at Rome while running without shoes.

Individuals began asking, "Who is this guy at North Carolina Central? Now he’s produced an Olympian that won a gold medal in distance running." I knew
very little about long-distance running. I had to call the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) to find out what kind of time it took to run a marathon. In those days, our longest competitive distance was two miles. Women didn’t run that distance, only men did. Abebe’s gold medal made me a great distance coach.

People who did not have expertise in coaching started asking for me. I coached Trinidad-Tobago because one of my athletes, Edwin Roberts, happened to be from Trinidad University. In 1964, he won the bronze medal in Tokyo in the 200 meter dash, and placed third in the 4 x 400 relay. In 1968 I coached the Jamaica team in Mexico City, and in 1972 I coached the Kenya team in Munich. Then I began to work with the United States Olympic Committee.

The Olympic committee was composed of various sports. Each sport had its own Olympic subcommittee. Each coach served as a developer of the Olympic program through his or her own sport. The AAU had Olympic committees for track and field, swimming, and all the sports that it controlled at that time. When they reorganized, I ended up on the regular large board and served as chairman of the development committee. After we made money in the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles, the United States Olympic Foundation was started. It was chaired by Bill Simon, former Secretary of the Treasury. Bill made me chairman of the grant making committee for the Foundation because of my relationship to the governing bodies. I had the unique experience of having both the development monies, which was considerable, as well as the Foundation money, which probably led to my present position as treasurer of the United States Olympic Committee. I’ve been on the board through three quadrenniums: 1972-1976, 1976-1980, 1980-1984 and I guess four now. In 1988 I started as an officer.

ALLYS SWANSON: Were you involved in the training center?
DR. WALKER: I was involved to the extent that I thought that Colorado Springs and Squaw Valley should not both be operated. We later closed Squaw Valley. I didn't think that Colorado Springs should be the center of the universe because there were so many colleges and universities that were willing to permit training at their facilities. The 1978 Amateur Sports Act made it worthwhile to create a central focus, which Colorado Springs would be.

Now we're getting back to what I thought the original concept was: decentralization. There is a very fine facility in Blaine, Minnesota, and we're developing a training center in San Diego. However, we've never defined the real mission of Olympic training centers. I've put $25 million in our budget for training centers, but that's not enough. If the training centers develop only the elite athlete then we can't afford them. Many people out there have very little relationship with the training centers. They're a good concept, but we need to figure out how we're going to use them.

ALLYS SWANSON: LeRoy, discuss your position on the role of amateurism and its future directions.

DR. WALKER: As you know, the International Olympic Committee and most international federations have taken the word "amateur" out of their codes and bylaws. With all of the task forces and commissions that were appointed, one could not come up with an enforceable definition. For instance, in Europe and South America, most of the people who play on professional soccer teams join their country's team when they get to the Olympic games. The leaders of soccer would say, "I hired them to work in this business, they just happen to be playing soccer as a pastime." However, all they were doing was playing soccer.
Each national Olympic committee, federation and governing body has the right to determine who is eligible. They refer to the athlete as being eligible or ineligible, rather than calling them amateurs or otherwise. If they say that a player is eligible, then he is eligible. The issue of amateurism versus professionalism doesn't bother me as much as the impact of money on the sport and on the attitude of the sportsman.

Nothing has been more unsettling to me than to see countries offering dollars for medals from Seoul. Even the Eastern bloc countries were offering as much as $20,000 to athletes who won a gold medal. When I asked my friends from the Soviet Union about our reference to their athletes as professional players, they said, "Do you know how many rubles Sergei Bubka needs to live well in Moscow? About 6,000 rubles. What does it cost when you give an athlete a scholarship to Duke University?" I said, "If rubles were one to one with the dollar, I must admit that it's a little bit higher, $16,000." He asked, "What does it cost when you give a student a scholarship to Harvard?" I said, "$20,000." According to his point of view, they provide the funds by the country, while we do it for individuals through institutions. So we lose the argument.

The trust fund ruling that was approved in 1983 in Greece permits athletes to openly have sponsorships and to take money. The money must be put in a trust fund to be used only for living and training expenses. It's been so abused that it makes me wonder why I fought so hard for the trust fund. The amateur/professional situation is a lost issue.

ALLYS SWANSON: You mentioned that you twice took the NCAA to court and won, and that you've experienced race discrimination at different times in your life. I'd like for you to reflect on other philosophical battles that you've fought.
DR. WALKER: There are a number of academic and sport participation issues about which I'm very concerned. There is a great imbalance between students' and athletes' work loads. We control the number of hours for which students can enroll. They typically take 12 or 15 hours, perhaps 18 hours if they are bright. If they're exceptionally bright, we may let them take 21. However, we do nothing about the other side of the equation. Athletes can be involved in 150 hours, counting time spent with the strength coach and in the video room looking at last week's games. We need a better balance. We should tell the coaches, "I don't care how much you practice or how many games you play, you have only 25 hours." Then they would stop wasting a lot of time on the practice field and make coaching a teaching phenomenon, which is what it should be.

One of the things that has disturbed me at this convention is that there are more professional minorities in AAHPERD now than there has ever been, but they are less involved. When I was president, there were approximately six minorities on the board. At the general session yesterday, there must have been 75 people on the stage and there was one minority. The system now requires a different approach in terms of minority involvement. A person can't just show up and register at the convention. He or she must be an active, visible, contributing member.

I said to a young group of students, "At these conventions, you can be frustrated trying to figure out how you're going to attend all of the sessions in which you are interested. It's devastating. Unfortunately, you have to divide up into teams." I mentioned to them what happens in Nebraska when the program is held at the Leadership Conference. Each school must send a team of at least six people. When you break up into concurrent sessions, you stay with your session because somebody else is covering the others. Each individual must be in a
position to make a profound contribution to one segment of the Alliance, otherwise he or she will never get a chance to serve on committees, to chair committees, or to be elected to any position.

AAHPERD is getting better in terms of women's involvement. I don't call them minorities. They control the world. To all the males who say they are the heads of things, I say, "Yes, and women are the necks, and the necks turn the heads a little." I think we have reasonably overcome many of the segregation and discrimination problems that we faced. For the less mature minority, we are attempting to recognize and to cope with subtle discriminatory practices. The same is happening with women. They say that there's no discrimination and segregation, and there's affirmative action according to the books. But the people who control minorities and women know how to apply the rules. That's more dangerous than overt discrimination because they don't know that it's happening to them. That is something with which we have to deal.

Another philosophical battle I have is with steroid use. Coaches are getting absolutely lazy. They don't want to work hard to teach their charges good techniques and to motivate them to rise to higher levels of performance. The answer is to go to the strength room, get stronger and bulky. Strength is greatly overrated as an absolute requisite for the performance of many events. It can be a deterrent in some events because athletes often lose some flexibility with added strength. I think researchers can help us with this issue. If I had not been out of the lab for 10 years, I'd like to do the research to determine the maximum strength demands for effective performance.

ALLYS SWANSON: I understand what you're saying. It's the great American myth that if a little is good, then more is automatically better. You just mentioned our profession getting bigger but not necessarily
stronger. A few years ago we had a theme: strength through diversity. What are your opinions about the growth of our profession and the dangers that we need to watch out for?

DR. WALKER: One of the keys is first to have some knowledge of what our mission is. Once you accept that mission, you must define the short-term and long-term goals necessary to make the mission a reality. We have become so separated and, in some instances, segregated in terms of our individual disciplines that the knowledge growing out of the field as a whole is not focusing on the total well-being of individuals. It’s knowledge for the sake of knowledge and for meeting the demands of the publish or perish philosophy.

When all of the diverse disciplines of the profession get stronger, the whole will be stronger in terms of our knowledge of human movement, life skills, wellness and anything else that makes the human being a functioning person.

ALLYS SWANSON: Do you think other professions, such as the fitness "doctor" on television programs, are taking our thunder away from us?

DR. WALKER: The Jane Fondas, the Racquel Welches, the Richard Simmons and the spa entrepreneurs of this era have captured our constituency, and we permitted it. They came to fill what they thought was a void. Diet people have taken over for nutritionists. Even the courts now are dealing with the dangers which result from these diet and weight reduction fads. Our health professionals should be dealing with it from the standpoint of nutrition. The body of knowledge is there but the application of it is lacking. We are losing out to entrepreneurs who are making millions of dollars from what we should have been teaching in the elementary grades through the middle school.
ALLYS SWANSON: Relate to us your experience with the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA).

DR. WALKER: I became active in the NAIA years ago through the invitation of Executive Director Al Duer. Al had watched me function at the NCAA and other national meetings, so he invited me to join the NAIA executive board. I suppose through longevity I became president. I must have stayed on that board for 10 years. I became involved with the NAIA because the historical black institutions didn’t have any access to the NCAA. There are a few small institutions that have become Division I in the NCAA because of certain incidents.

Strangely enough, the NAIA created several threats to the NCAA by admitting historical black institutions into their national championships. This forced the NCAA to start what they called the College Division. The NCAA had no real concern about the small black institutions. It wanted to match the NAIA, which was beginning to draw many of these historical black institutions from the NCAA memberships. Our first opportunity to be a national champion in a sport and to elect a national president was through NAIA.

Unfortunately, a lot of the institutions that are now in the NAIA or in Division II are living a dream of being Division I. They think the numbers I, II, and III mean something. Those numbers don’t mean anything except to separate schools which play football. If a school is Division I, it has to meet all of the requirements of Division I in terms of scholarship requirements, the number of sports it must sponsor, and the number of people it must send to the national championship. The NAIA is particularly a good answer for small schools and historical black institutions.
ALLYS SWANSON: What goals did you set when you were president, and
where are you now with that?

DR. WALKER: I have the same feeling with NAIA as I had with
AAHPERD. A lot of good programs were initiated. Al
Duer was an excellent leader. My main problem was keeping the executive board
out of the executive director’s hair. The stronger the executive director, the more
likely he or she is to have a conflict with boards. They are moving forward, and
they don’t always have time to call a board meeting to confirm decisions with the
president. My main goal was to keep some order and to identify where we were
going. If I accomplished one important thing in the NAIA, it was that I got the
college presidents involved to the degree that the presidents council now runs the
NAIA. The executive director in the late 1980s came from the presidents council.
When he announced his retirement as president, there was a strong feeling that the
next executive director was also going to come from the president rank. Maybe
that’s not all bad. Get the presidents involved because, within the NCAA, the
president signs the slip that all of the rules are being followed in his or her
institution.

ALLYS SWANSON: Let’s talk about The Athletics Congress (TAC) and AAU
and your work with these organizations.

DR. WALKER: When the Amateur Sports Act was passed in 1978, the
AAU had been the governing body for about six sports:
gymnastics, swimming, track and field, wrestling, boxing and others. The act ruled
that no organization could control that many sports. This is why the swimming,
track and field, boxing and other federations re-structured into governing bodies.
AAU would like to have kept track and field, but the final vote was for all AAU
bodies to become independent. That decision affected the AAU in that it has
become much less involved with sports organizations other than the junior Olympic program.

The Athletics Congress was established to govern track and field, and it inherited Ollen Cassell, president of the AAU who came from a track and field background. In the rest of the world outside of the United States, track and field is called athletics, so the new organization was called The Athletics Congress or TAC. This title grieves many of us a great deal because it’s hard to sell if people don’t know what it means. We wanted to fall in line with the rest of the federations, which called themselves athletics. I had chaired one of AAU’s major committees, so I became chairman of TAC’s track and field committee. Over the years, I also headed the development committee and served as president of TAC.

Some things that I did as president had some virtue. I worked to get the trust fund passed, to get women more involved and to get the vote passed that would allow our men’s and women’s championships to be co-championships held in the same location. Our first Olympic trials, which ran for ten days in Eugene, Oregon, were just for men; the women had their trials elsewhere. It was horrible. Spectators brought lunches for the duration. We’d run one event and then wait for the next event because we were following the Olympic schedule, which had the women’s events in between. The delays were anywhere from 45 minutes to 1 hour and 10 minutes. During my administration, we finally brought the men’s and women’s trials together.

ALLYS SWANSON: What is your interpretation of the Mexico City Olympics, and in particular the response of Carlos and Smith when they were on the stand receiving their medals?

DR. WALKER: The problem in Mexico City started at Tahoe. This is how Harry Edward became reasonably famous, probably
more so than what his actions dictated. It was 1968, and minority athletes were subject to many prejudices. They were trying to make a statement about the prejudices that they and minorities in general faced. There was an abundance of black athletes involved in the track and basketball programs. Tommy Smith, John Carlos, Lee Evans, Charlie Green, and many others were involved. Jessie Owens and I were there. I wasn’t coaching the American teams; I was coaching the Jamaicans. We simply tried to tell the black athletes to act with class not violence.

You might notice that in the video program one has the left hand up and the other has the right hand up. People didn’t know why. It was very simple. They only had one pair of gloves, so one put a glove on the right hand and one put the glove on the left hand. They decided that they were going to make a statement. I tried to let them know that they would have to pay the consequences. They said they would. As it happened, Tommy Smith and John Carlos were in the first race, which was the 200 meters. They finished one and three, so they both were on the podium. Carlos and Smith went before the committee and they were expelled from the village and from the team. They suffered a lot of consequences for years. When other movements started, their actions were viewed as much more acceptable in retrospect. They were not boycotting the track program. They were trying to relay a message that if they represent the country, then they deserve a little bit more in terms of how they are treated as citizens.

ALLYS SWANSON: You’ve had athletes competing in the Olympics since the Melbourne, Australia games in 1956. What other highlights do you recall?

DR. WALKER: My early coaching in Ethiopia and Israel led to coaching other Olympic teams and eventually the U.S. team in 1976. As a coach, I was fortunate to have young athletes who worked hard. Some
of them were very talented and I tried to bring out that talent. As a result, and this may be unique for a small institution, one of our athletes competed in every Olympic games from 1956 through 1980. NCCU has won 11 Olympic medals, which is probably more than some countries have won. Lee Calhoun was my first Olympian and my first gold medal winner from the Melbourne games. He also won in 1960. Until Roger Kingdom’s victories in 1984 and 1988, Calhoun was the only athlete to win back-to-back gold medals in the 110 meter hurdles.

I still have problems with some of the things that have happened in the games. In 1972, Collette and Matthews were dropped from the team for what was called inappropriate behavior on the podium during the medals ceremony. I lost very dear friends from Israel in the 1972 massacre in Munich. I coached Israel in 1960, and six of those people had been with me on the Israeli team, either as coaches or managers. Weinstein, who was one of the athletes on the 1968 team, finally became the head coach of Israel. He was ecstatic until the massacre.

Two factors kept us from being at a homecoming party in block 31 on the night the terrorists struck. Ester Roth, the young Israeli hurdler, was running in the semifinals. Israeli television commentator Nissm Kivity was telecasting the semifinals back to Israel and had asked me to comment. We decided to wait and see Ester and to have the party the next evening. That night, the terrorists invaded the area. After the massacre, the Israeli delegation decided that the games should continue following a memorial service. If the delegation had canceled the games, it would have been a victory for the terrorists. They wanted to disrupt the games. People said, "Why don’t you cancel?" The games continued because the Israeli delegation said it was the best thing to do.

ALLYS SWANSON: Did you ever meet or work with Wilma Rudolph?
DR. WALKER: Oh, yes, I’ve known Wilma since she was a student at Tennessee State. She’s a very special lady. Wilma was from a very large family. She overcame her handicap and learned how to run. After a number of years, she founded the Wilma Rudolph Foundation. Many good things have come her way as a tribute to her and her commitment to track and field. On occasion, she’s come to North Carolina to speak. I am concerned that she’s not involved enough in the day-to-day operations of the Olympic committee. We’re probably going to correct that during this quadrennium.

Wilma is an outstanding person. She and a lot of the athletes, including Flo Jo, dispel the notion that there’s something about participating in sport that makes a woman unattractive. Both of them have very striking styles. Flo Jo’s long fingernails and both women’s beautiful wardrobes contribute to their being very attractive individuals. Even today, after children and grandchildren, Wilma hardly weighs 10 or 15 pounds more than when she was running her very best. She was an outstanding athlete at Tennessee State and had a lot of training under coach Ed Temple. What she did in Rome clearly indicated that she was the first female to win three gold medals.

ALLYS SWANSON: We have a great deal of respect for Nell Jackson. She did her graduate work at the University of Iowa when Sharon and I were there. Tell us about your relationship with Nell.

DR. WALKER: Nell and I were very close. I knew her when she was a participant at Tuskegee Institute under Cleve Abbott. I followed her career and worked with her in the advancement of her career. All of us were pretty much devastated when we learned of her death. As a matter of fact, when I was stricken on my way from Phoenix to Chicago, Nell was in that meeting. It was ironic that I was spared and then so soon after that Nell passed away. She
was a very outstanding person. She headed up TAC’s awards program. I’ve just finished speaking at a meeting about whether or not AAHPERD and TAC were going to combine two scholarships that are in Nell’s name. We want to be sure that the corpus is not interfered with and that we can keep the scholarship going for years on the interest earnings. TAC misses her greatly.

ALLYS SWANSON: As treasurer of the United States Olympic Committee, what are your responsibilities hopes and aspirations for the future development of the Olympics.

DR. WALKER: I’m treasurer by accident. I interviewed for the vice president position, which is a comfortable position. The vice president just goes to meetings and watches the president preside. However, I was asked to serve as treasurer because I headed up the development committee and the grant making committee, which dealt with USOC monies. They asked me to be treasurer on the day before the nomination committee reported. I accepted the position and it’s been a challenge.

My first year as treasurer, 1988, was very demanding because we were growing far beyond our operations and our policies for operation. At NCCU, I had dealt with a $7 million budget. The previous quadrennial budget of the USOC was $150 million. It was going to be $250 million for this quadrennium. I could not have reported incoming and outgoing monies to the North Carolina general assembly without providing in-depth analyses and justifications. I believe that my previous training and budget philosophy are making us a stronger organization because member organizations have to justify how they’re going to spend the money and what results will be obtained.

The treasurer is also responsible for the budget and audit committee, and chairs the marketing, television and licensing committee. We were starting a new
thrust in that regard. We had not been marketing ourselves very well in terms of the rings, so we established what was called Olympic properties. The first was the Olympic broadcast properties because it was only the television part that we administered it in. Then we expanded into Olympic properties. I think that the next treasurer will have an easier time because we now have the national governing bodies developing four-year plans. The USOC is in a much better position to say it raised this budget by $100 million because it will be able to discern which programs deserve funding support. We would then suspect that our next budget cycles will be effectively projected. Our next quadrennium budget may be $400 million, and we will continue raising it because stipends keep going up. The USOC has a strong stipend program for athletes. Some national governing boards now give stipends up to as much as $19,000 a year so athletes can train without having to work eight-hour days. We try to increase the number of athletes on the stipend program. I'm very pleased with how things are going.

ALLYS SWANSON: I'd like next to talk about North Carolina Central University where you started as a coach and a physical education instructor. At NCCU you worked your way up to the top through every rank, through vice chancellor, University relations, and chancellor. What highlights, trends, directions, philosophical battles, and significant turning points do you recall?

DR. WALKER: As I indicated, I first went to North Carolina Central University as the football and basketball coach and to work in physical education. I eventually started the track program. If you're doing what the embodiment of the spirit of sport is all about, and what the Greeks had in mind, then you are a teacher, an administrator and a counselor. You also have to do a lot in community relations, particularly at small schools that don't have huge
budgets. You’ve got to get the public to believe in you, so you must establish a very outgoing relationship with the community. An administrator does all these things. I worked in the department, coached, and eventually became chair of the department, which put me on the administrative council. The rest of the University administrators began to understand something about me. They lost the attitude that we are "jocks." They found out that I came from a science background, yet I was a jock. I made 11 letters, and I also finished my undergraduate degree in three and a half years. I got a different kind of respect, so I was no longer that guy over there who wears a tee-shirt all the time.

I tried to be a good communicator, and I served on some major committees. The turning point probably was that I was also the parliamentarian for the faculty council. Bill Friday was the president of the University system. He thought that NCCU needed a director of university relations more than UNC, Chapel Hill or University of North Carolina, Greensboro did. He said, "I think I can get it through the general assembly if you are the one I nominate." He based his reasoning on the fact that we’d had success in track, I’d had Olympic experience, and the school had gotten a lot of publicity from our Olympians and national championships. So, I was the first vice chancellor for university relations.

Strangely enough, I missed teaching. One of the keys that made me give up the vice chancellor position and go back to teaching was a flattering remark made by the rising seniors to the vice chancellor of academic affairs. They said that they were not going to finish unless I taught my course. That was very flattering because I was very demanding in terms of professional involvement. The vice chancellor called me in and said, "As vice chancellor for university relations, you’re going to have to go back and pick up a couple of your major courses." I said, "Why?" He said, "Because the seniors have said they’re not going to finish without
having you teach them." I said, "Good, I'll go back." I didn't go back as chair. One of the nicest positions on any campus is a tenured, full-time professorship that doesn't have any administrative responsibilities.

I was granted a leave to work at West Point for 15 months when they first brought in their female cadets. They were trying to revise the testing procedure. While I was away, the current chancellor retired. Bill Friday was not happy with the two candidates for chancellor. The faculty and community groups were in an uproar and started going to Bill Friday. Because I had an excellent relationship with both factions, he asked me what I thought was best for North Carolina Central University. I had been there for many years, including serving under the founder, so I knew what most of the skeletons were. I poured my heart out, not knowing that there was any thought about my being appointed interim chancellor. I told him what I thought we needed to do in terms of raising our academic standards and discontinuing our academic skills center. President Friday simply said, "That's good," and we went out and had lunch. I thought that was the end of it.

I went to the national championships of the NCAA at Cobo Hall in Detroit. When I returned to the campus, I had several messages to call President Friday regardless of my arrival time. When I called him, he made it known for the first time that he was not going to accept either of the recommendations of the board of trustees and that he would like me to take over as chancellor to "heal" the situation. I thought he was kidding. I laughed and said, "Okay, do you know any other good jokes?" However, he was serious. He said that different factions of the faculty and community had said that I would be a good person for the job. Hiring me was not a popular move with the board of trustees and its search committee. I said, "You know, we haven't even talked about how I would do this, what responsibilities I'd have, and what support I'd have from you. And he said, "I'll
give you all the support you need. We've been friends for 20 years. You do what you have to do. I said, "Well, you just made a big order."

I first called the admissions officer and said that I wanted 25 percent of the next incoming class to be in the upper 10 percent of the graduating class. I gave him $100,000 for scholarships. We changed the whole face of the class. Our SAT, which had been horrible, was raised by 110 points over two and a half years. The community got behind us because I kept saying that Duke University was not their school; NCCU was the taxpayers' university. I called NCCU the best kept secret in town. I developed a theme, "Excellence Without Excuse; A Shared Responsibility." I declared, "Don't give me any reasons for failure, for there are no more entitlements. Don't tell me that your grandparents were slaves; you've used up all that interest." Although I refused to accept another five-year appointment, the enjoyment of my tenure was that I saw changes every week. That's unusual in a job that you take over. Often you work like crazy and see a little change in five or more months. I could see it every week. I got the faculty to throw away those yellow pads, which they had been using for 15 years, because the brighter our students were, the more creative and innovative we had to be.

My time as chancellor was fun. When I say this to people who were my colleagues, they think I'm crazy. The life of a president or a chancellor is a tough life, but I had fun because I could see the University improving. I wanted to leave the University as I had left the track program: at peak performance. When I retired, I left the track program with three national champions and two Olympians. The new coach didn't have to do much except point them to the track. President Friday was also going to retire, and I didn't want to remain after his retirement. Furthermore, they wanted me to assume responsibility for the NCATE review that was coming up in five years. I didn't think I had five years in me. Therefore, in my
fourth year I announced that I wanted to really retire. I didn’t want to go back to the classroom or do anything. Everyone was upset because they knew we were on a roll. I said, "Good, keep it rolling."

Fortunately, the new chancellor was on my administrative council. He picked up my last report to the board of trustees, which was a very elaborate report on where we were and how far we had come. He’s adapted that as his program, so he’s kept things moving.

ALLYS SWANSON: You said that NCCU was a state-supported school. Didn’t you have to raise money for the school? How did you secure your funding?

DR. WALKER: As you know, the funds from any state will not take care of all the requirements of a university. The state gave us the basics, which was only about 40 percent of our total budget. We still had to go through our development office for fund raising for grants and overhead. NCCU is state assisted, not state supported. The University has to raise 60 percent of every dollar that it spends. Alumni and friends never thought that we needed a lot of money because they perceived that the state gave us everything we needed.

DR. VAN OTEGHEN: Obviously, you were effective during the times that you served as an administrator. How would you describe your leadership style as you worked with faculty, perhaps deans, chairs of departments and the like?

DR. WALKER: The first thing to realize is that leaders succeed through the efforts of others. If an administrator believes that, then he takes them into his plan and gets the confidence that they have helped to determine the mission. An administrator has to be very precise in terms of his expectations. Many times we evaluate people without letting them know what is
expected of them in the first place. I never let my colleagues have any doubt what my expectations were. I always kept before them and said, "Don’t make your procrastinations my emergency." I gave them responsibilities, and I made some changes. When I first came in, a personnel committee determined salaries. The personnel committee can’t do that because they don’t know what’s happening in the departments. That’s a job for the dean and the person who runs the department. The dean, not a committee sitting up in the ivory tower, knows what people do. I gave money to the dean and said, "Give the people you’re happy with an increase." We had a good relationship.

As I have indicated, leaders succeed on the efforts of others. They must be comfortable and happy with their colleagues. I rewarded them for good things, but I also talked to them when things were not what we expected of them. That is the way I’ve always been, as a coach and as a chancellor. My administrative council was my policy group. The members were responsible for the policy, but we also had to have reasonable policies that could be implemented.

DR. VAN OTEGHEN: LeRoy, have there been any disappointments in your career?

DR. WALKER: I’m sure there are, but I have to think a little bit. I’ve had a fine career. I didn’t accomplish some of my goals as quickly as I would have liked to. All of the goals that I set, in terms of what I wanted, for my church, my athletes, my students and myself were accomplished when I received AAHPERD’s Gulick Award. The one disappointment in my life was the early passing of my wife, Katherine. She was the first girl friend I had when I walked onto the campus at Benedict College. She was the only woman I ever loved, and we married when we were in school. She had a very unfortunate passing. That’s about the only regret I’ve had in a long career.
I’ve shared all of my accomplishments with my children. One or more of them will always be present when I receive an award, no matter where they are. When I received the Board of Governors Award, LeRoy Jr. and my grandchildren were there. Carolyn, my daughter, could not be there, but she came, when LeRoy Jr. couldn’t, to represent the family at other awards ceremonies.

Everything doesn’t come as you want it. There may be stumbling blocks, but you use those to rise above the problem. My children and grandchildren haven’t been affected by my success. One reporter finally asked one of my grandchildren, "Did you know that you have a famous grandfather?" He said, "No, no I don’t. He’s just my papa."

DR. VAN OTEGHEN: What do you believe that you’ve given students and colleagues over the years. In other words, how would you like to be remembered by them?

DR. WALKER: As a teacher, I have always tried to maintain a high level of excellence with my students. I always thought that the good teacher tells, the very good teacher explains, the excellent teacher demonstrates, but the superior teacher inspires. I always wanted to keep students inspired and motivated. I wanted continually to push the horizon back so that they would become better people and better citizens, whatever their careers, and realize that success is not final and failure is not fatal.

My philosophy as a teacher, coach and administrator was that you’re going to have setbacks, but you should always use them to rise above the occasion. People have to believe that it’s fine to build castles in the air, as long as they put foundations under them. I have experienced great joy and fun as a teacher, coach and chancellor from watching good things happen to the people with whom I worked.
DR. VAN OTEGHEN: You were president of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance from 1977 to 1978. You’ve received an AAHPERD honor award and the Gulick Award. These must have been special moments or times in your life. Of what significance were these or any other awards to you?

DR. WALKER: Any award is really only a symbol of recognition from your peers that they approve of what you’ve been doing and that your contributions, although perhaps ordinary achievements, have become extraordinary. They say, "Through this award we are recognizing your contributions. We hope that our recognition will inspire you to continue in what you are doing." That’s how I’ve accepted any award. You don’t get any award just because you go at it. You do what you’re supposed to do and you try to fulfill your mission. If you do it well, your peers will recognize your work. That’s what always makes these awards so exciting; they come from your peers, who know all of your frailties and insufficiencies.

DR. VAN OTEGHEN: Briefly indicate the sports in which you’ve been involved, beginning with high school, your college years, then the years that you taught and administrated.

DR. WALKER: As a child, I played that strange game called stickball, I played basketball, and I swam. In college, I made varsity letters in football, basketball and track and field. I have a very short-lived baseball career because a tipped ball hit me in the face and I almost lost an eye. Somehow I thought that baseball was more hazardous than football. My first coaching job was to coach football, basketball and track and field. I learned how to play reasonably good tennis, and I played volleyball. As a matter of fact, I co-created a
game called "volleybounce." It's played in pairs, and the ball can bounce once. It was a very interesting game.

As I begin to get a little older and suffer all those pains from football injuries, I tend to reduce my active, competitive involvement. I play, or at least hope to play, a bit more golf, but I find I don't have as much time for it as I would like. I've always felt that sport is a great way to enjoy people's company. I could never see myself playing a round of golf just to go and see how well I could score. The beauty of golf is talking and having fun with people as I play. It doesn't make any difference how bad they're playing or how good I'm playing. I just enjoy being outside and not having a telephone in my ear.

Sport has been a great reliever for me, so to speak. Sport is probably how I've kept my heart rate and blood pressure in line. I also like to watch sports. I go with some of my children and other people, and I sit there being an analyst all the time. That habit comes from coaching. I'm not one to yell and scream, even when I was coaching. People used to say, "You know, you'd be much better if you'd get out there at the officials sometimes." I said, "I can't keep up with what's going on if I do that. If I take somebody out of a ball game, I don't want to tell him just what he's doing wrong. I want to tell him what he's doing wrong and how to correct it. I can't do that if I'm yelling at the referee and losing track of what's going on. I don't have time to argue with the official during a time out; I want to be telling my team something."

DR. VAN OTEGHEN: Do you do anything special in the way of nutrition or stress management?

DR. WALKER: Stress management is keeping away from stressful situations, which is not easy to do. My philosophy about sport and young people that I'm training is that I train them as well as I can. There
are five people out there representing my every dream in basketball, or eleven of them in football. In track and field, stress management was easy because whatever was going to happen would happen very quickly. For instance the 100 meters is 10 seconds, and the 4 x 100 relay is 40 seconds. There isn’t time to build up very much stress.

In terms of nutrition, I try to eat sensibly. I eat a heavy meal during midday because I know that a person can’t save all the calories and pile them up for dinner. I don’t go on any diet plans. I’m a little heavier than I probably want to be because I ate like crazy when I was recovering from an illness. I had a terrible time in Barcelona because they don’t have dinner until 9 p.m. I must have eaten fish every night there because it was light and I couldn’t eat all those steaks. I try to follow the same rules I give my athletes. I never drink and smoke, which perhaps has helped a lot. Now I have to do all the score keeping with my golfing friends because I don’t wear glasses, and they can’t see the score card anymore. I could cheat them to death if I wanted to. I also have a little stretch instrument that I take with me when I travel to use when I can’t ride my bike. That’s about all. I just keep it reasonably sensible.

DR. VAN OTEGHEN: What advice would you give to a young person who asked your opinion about whether or not he or she should major in physical education?

DR. WALKER: Our key goal should be to get potential young persons to understand that, unlike any other profession, physical education can have a great impact on people’s lives because of the basic life skills we teach. We are affecting their whole thrust with regard to wellness, health and fitness. However, I like to tell them that physical education is a very demanding profession. We have to do a lot of preparation to make sure that we’re not
encouraging people to lead a sedentary lifestyle because they don’t believe in what we’re trying to get them to do or they didn’t have any fun doing it. More and more, we have to turn our young professionals on to the great impact they can have.

Sometimes I dislike the fact that we try to make too many claims for the profession. If you ask the mathematician, "What do you do?", he’ll say, "I teach math." Sometimes we get carried away in believing that our profession does all things, that we help people mentally, physically, socially and emotionally. All of these components are essential, but we can’t be all things for all people. At best, we can let them see that they are successful in their movement and that they are participating. We certainly can help them to remain fit by doing explosive activities rather than just playing chess! Very few professionals can do that. The fact that I can have that much impact on a person’s life gives me a good feeling. I can now look at all of the people whose lives I’ve touched.

DR. VAN OTEGHEN: What is your philosophy on continuing to be active in the profession upon retirement versus not continuing to be active in respect to holding office, serving on committees and the like.

DR. WALKER: Upon retirement, people should continue in the profession, primarily because they are in a better position to do so. They allegedly have more time and are supposed to be a bit wiser because of their many different experiences in the profession. They’ve served on most of the committees and should know the profession’s pattern fairly well. I think that retired individuals should continue to attend conventions, give occasional service to the convention if requested, and serve on committees where their wealth of knowledge is going to be useful. They have the advantage of being able to say, "I don’t want to do this right now because I’m on many committees right now." I think that our retirees, past presidents and past officers should
continue to be active. I go to every convention, but I try to do a little bit less than I used to. During my first couple of years in retirement, I must have been on six programs. Now I’m doing two or three and working with you. It’s been fun. I’ve spent more time with my friends than in the past.

DR. VAN OTEGHEN: Did you make any special plans for retirement, financial or otherwise? What might you recommend to others as they prepare for retirement?

DR. WALKER: One of the things that helped me was the advice that my mother gave me. She used to look me right in the eye and advise me in very strict terms to set aside 10 percent of all my earnings and 90 percent of all the free advice I got. I started saving very early. I grew up attending a church in which we tithed. I said that if I give 10 percent of what I earn to the church, then I ought to give at least 10 percent to LeRoy Walker. Because I didn’t smoke, drink and go to social clubs, most of my earnings were for the enjoyment of my family. Even years later, when my children had children of their own, Katherine and I took the three grandchildren for a month each summer and traveled throughout the country and sometimes out of the country. I had set aside the funds for that and for all three of our grandchildren’s educations.

Retirement should be something you always plan for. You know it’s coming; it’s not sudden. Therefore, I think that even if you are truly an academician, there should be something else that you enjoy doing. I have to limit what I do because of my involvement with TAC. I’ve also maintained my involvement with USOC, with certain boards and with community work. The last three years of employment are the basis for a person’s retirement fund. Mine happened to be fairly substantial because I was a chancellor. I have more money to save now than I had when I was working because of my retirement plan.
DR. VAN OTEGHEN: What are your plans for the future, LeRoy?

DR. WALKER: To keep on doing what I'm doing, have interviews, talk to nice people! I like the Olympic program. I think we need to get closer to Olympians and the real spirit of the Olympic games. I still like to conduct a few clinics. In particular, I like talking to high school coaches because they do a lot of teaching. College coaches recruit. If they don't see what they need in New Orleans, they go over to Memphis. High school coaches have to do more teaching, so I like to talk to them about my philosophy of coaching and how to develop techniques. In coaching, 1000 words are better than one picture. You have to explain to athletes; they have to understand why they do the things they do. When athletes see a video, they don't understand the skills; the video is meaningless to them and to many coaches. I'll continue to do clinics as long as I can remain active. I'd like to do less traveling because traveling is the absolute pits. It would be nice to wave a magic wand instead of having to fight the planes. I would go on forever, but unfortunately airplanes are my only hope to do some of the things I do. I enjoy what I'm doing and I'd just like to continue.

DR. VAN OTEGHEN: Are there any aspects of your personal or professional life that you'd like to share that you haven't had an opportunity to talk about today?

DR. WALKER: Your questions have been pretty provoking. One story did occur to me. One year at Penn University relays, a reporter said, "You probably are regarded as one of the most successful track coaches in the country." I said, "Thank you." He asked, "Well, what do you think are the highlights?" He had come to Penn relays every year. That's just the way we are. We're almost like a family. I was refereeing at Penn for about 20 years. They would get a suite, and everyone in the area who could come would gather on
Friday night. The reporter came to this gathering one night and said that it was sort of unusual. I said, "It's not unusual for us. We've been doing this for a long time." When he asked me about the greatest highlights, I said, "Just scan the room, and there they are." There were young men there, from all walks of life, who are outstanding citizens in their communities. In that room were lawyers, physicians and presidents of schools. They were good solid citizens, which was important.

In that room I judged how much coaching has meant to me. There was not a single plaque or medal in that room, but I just looked at all of the athletes. Some had children who attended North Carolina Central University. They still call me often to say, "You know, I have this in mind," or "I'm getting ready to do this. What do you think about it?" Some, like Vance Robinson, finished back in the 1960s. Not a week passed when he didn't call and say, "What's up coach? What are you doing? How are things going?" He'll be back in two weeks, and he'll bring his wife. The highlight is seeing what has happened to the young people whom I've coached and whose lives I touched.

ALLYS SWANSON: You're the director and program planner for the African Continent Peace Corps. How did you become involved and what does the program do?

DR. WALKER: I was first involved with the Peace Corps as a consultant. Then I met Sargent Shriver, C. Payne Lucas, Jack Vaughn and other notable people. They still embodied the Kennedy tradition of the Peace Corps, by which they educated B.A. generalists to go into different countries to implement a plan of action. Because of my background at the University, I became director of program planning and training for the entire continent of Africa. It was very enjoyable.
Several changes that occurred under my administration are now considered part of the Peace Corps regimen. First, we stopped conducting immersion training in the United States. We previously had language training in the Virgin Islands at St. Thomas and St. Croix. I thought that immersion training would best be done in the country in which an individual was to serve. Secondly, it seemed very strange to me that there were host country nationals working at the office of a particular country, but they could not work with any of the sensitive information in the office. What can you do in someone’s country that is so secretive they can’t know about it? Therefore, we abolished the policy that a host country national could not work in the administrative office. The third change concerned the directors’ meetings. Perhaps twice every year the country directors would be brought to Washington, D.C. to go through reviews and to talk about the budget, the things that are important to them in dealing with the country, and any sensitive issues in the country. During the course of the meetings, I found myself repeating everything because the directors were in and out all of the time, going to talk to Congressmen from their states, to shop or do other things. So I said, "Enough of this. We’re going to have the country directors meeting in Africa." The first one was in Ghana, where the meetings are now held. Fourth, we felt that leaders of individual countries should work with country directors to decide what programs, such as farming, water conservation or education, were to be staged in their respective countries. I wouldn’t accept any 104’s that had not been signed by the agency that dealt with that particular program in the country. For example, if they were planning an education program for Kenya, I wanted the education department in Kenya to say, "Yes, a good education program is what we need."

I think I would have stayed with the Peace Corps, but President Nixon sent over Secretary of State Rogers to replace the director, Jack Vaughn. I thought that
the attitudes of John Kennedy and Sargent Shriver were going to be lost. I recalled my letter of resignation and remained at North Carolina Central University, but I had a couple of very good, effective years with the Peace Corps.

It’s important to make the separation between French and English speaking African countries and to understand the influence of major French or English speaking countries in Europe. I was fluent in French and spoke it most of the time I was there. That made it a little bit easier for me to function in both groups of countries, whether it was Ivory Coast, or Senegal on the French side, or Kenya, Ghana, or Tanzania on the English side. I didn’t have to depend on an interpreter, who would sometimes mislead me about what was going on.

ALLYS SWANSON: LeRoy, you’re an individual with high principles, goals and expectations. You have accomplished success in every endeavor and you place a high value on the integrity and worth of the individual. You expect no less than the best from yourself and others. These qualities have served you well. You have been blessed with a very rich life and have had the good sense to enjoy your experiences along the way. It’s been a pleasure for us to interview you today and we want to wish you all the best for the future. Thank you very much.