

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
LEON CALVIN MURRAY
MARCH 15, 2021

Q. Good morning. My name is Kevlin Haire. I'm at The Ohio State University Archives. It's March 15, 2021, and I am here to do an oral history of Calvin Murray. We're doing this by Zoom, and I really excited about this one. Thank you, Calvin, for doing this. I appreciate it, and welcome.

A. Thank you. Thank you for having me. I really appreciate it.

Q. Now tell me, we're just going to get the basics first. Tell me your date of birth and where you were born.

A. My date of birth is October 18, 1958, and I was born in Cape May Courthouse, New Jersey.

Q. Tell me a little bit about your family background. Did you grow up in New Jersey? Did you have siblings? What did your parents do?

A. I grew up in south Jersey, which is the most southern part of New Jersey. I have four siblings, three brothers and a sister. Our county was called Cape May County. My grandfather bought 25 acres of land, and on those 25 acres he allowed his three sons to have acreage. He gave them each five acres to do what they wanted on those properties. It used to be farmland. He was a truck driver. My dad decided to have his own business. He had his own trucking business. The community that we were in was a Jewish and Black community. The reason why my dad started this business was because there were companies that were in our small town that wanted my dad to haul for them as well as some of the bigger companies. They told my dad to go get the trucks and haul for them. My dad did that, and he ended up building what was called Murray Express. He built a nice trucking industry. He took us all over the country. My mom was a secretary and a bus driver. It was

hard for Black people to stay at hotels, so to get around that, because he was a truck driver, he bought a motor home because he could afford it. We traveled that way, and by the time I graduated high school, I had been in every state in the United States because of that.

He also wanted his children ... in our town there was a high school that was 10 minutes from our county, but they said they didn't want us because we were made up of Blacks and Jews. We had to get bussed to another county, which was north of us, to Cumberland County, and we all went to Millville High School. It was 26 miles, almost 30 miles away that we had to travel every day to go to high school. That was an experience. We didn't care. We didn't mind it. We went and we were great athletes and our little town of Woodbine that I grew up in, it was amazing, because we were very, very athletic. We were outstanding baseball players. We would beat teams all around in our counties by 21, 22 points. Everybody was outstanding baseball players. And it was that way for over 50 years. With my father, they were great in baseball, and then it just kept right on going. It just really started to slow down just a few years ago, that we didn't have that dominance. When you were playing Woodbine, you better be ready to play because our little town had some athletes in it. It was amazing how the generations just went on and on. I had a great time in the little town that we grew up in.

Q. You say the students were good at baseball. How did you become interested in football, and were they as good at football as well?

A. Yes. We didn't have enough guys really to have football in our little town, so we went to Sea Isle City, and the two towns collaborated together, and that made it so that we would have a good strong team. We did the same in football. My dad wasn't really sure whether football was for me because the very first time that I was playing Little League football, I

was really skinny, I mean really skinny. As a freshman in high school, I probably weighed 110, 120 pounds, if that. And even when I came to Ohio State, I was only 150 pounds. I was really, really skinny. Our little town of Woodbine, my dad was one of the assistant coaches. I got tackled and I laid on the ground crying. My dad looked at me and he said, "Well, son, I don't know if football is for you." When he said that, I got mad and I was like, "Okay, dad, I'm going to show you something." After that, I just took off and just kept running and wouldn't let anybody tackle me anymore. That was how I dealt with that. I said, "Dad, I'm going to prove you wrong." I don't know how I did it, but I did it. It was just really amazing. He started seeing that I started to have some talent. I have a picture of my brother and I where we were in our little town of Woodbine, and we used to play one-on-one. He was dressed in his Raiders uniform, and I was dressed in my Eagles uniform and had no idea that I was going to actually be an Eagle.

Q. Oh, that's wonderful. When you were in high school, the Ohio State [football coaches] were recruiting, they mostly looked at athletes from Ohio. How did you get on their radar screen?

A. It's really amazing. I have to back up on that a little bit because when I came to Millville my dad took me up to their middle school. The coaches there took me into a meeting and the coach asked me, "Calvin, what are your goals?" I was like, "Goals, what are you talking about?" He said, "You need to have a short-term goal-meeting range and a long-term goal. What do you want to be? What do you want to do?" He said, "You need to write down your goals." I knew my favorite team in college, not my favorite team but my parents' favorite team, was Ohio State. My dad really loved Coach [Woody] Hayes. I didn't know that because he never really told me about it too much. He just kind of said Ohio State was

his favorite team, but he never told me why until later. I put down that I wanted to play for Ohio State. The Philadelphia Eagles was [my parents'] favorite pro team, so I wrote that I wanted to play for the Philadelphia Eagles. The last long-term goal I wrote down was that I wanted to work with kids as a career. I left it at that. It's amazing that I was able to accomplish all three. That started in the ninth grade.

I came to the high school, and it was a struggle. In the ninth grade we only had six games, and I scored 16 touchdowns in six games and ran for over 2,000 yards. If you do the math, you can understand what my average per-game scoring was. My freshman coach, Coach Caldwell, he said, "Look, I don't know if I'm ever going to have an athlete like this again," so he retired my jersey for a year after that season. Then I came over to the high school team and had Coach Tony Surace. There, we had some really great guys. Matter of fact, a lot of people don't know this, but out of our small town, at the same time and the same draft, in the NFL draft, were me and another guy named Anthony Green, [known as] "Bubba" Green. Both of us played on the same high school team together. We were from the same little town of less than 2,000 people. Both of us went in the NFL draft. He was drafted to Baltimore, his dad's favorite team, and I was drafted by the Eagles, my dad and mom's favorite team.

That went on, but that connection for us – we were playing in the state championship against Deptford High School. I scored six touchdowns on them. Coach George Chump happened to be coming to look at some athletes on Deptford's team. The head coach of Deptford said, "Look, you've got to get this young man further south. He scored six on us." They showed him film on me, what I did to them. The next thing you know, we're playing basketball, because I played basketball too. I lettered in four sports

every year. That coach told them about me. He said, “You go get him.” Then Coach Chump came. He was sitting in our gym when we were practicing. I happened to come over, and he said, “Are you Cal Murray?” I said, “Yes.” He handed me his card and he said, “I’m George Chump of Ohio State. We’re looking at you.” I thought, “Ohio State?” I tried to act real calm. I didn’t want to get all excited. I came home and I said to my mom and dad, “Somebody from Ohio State named George Chump, they said they want to recruit me.” My dad about jumped up, and my mom was so excited. They said, “Wow, are you kidding me?” That’s how it happened. It was because of a referral of the coach in Deptford that told Ohio State about me. That’s how I got discovered.

After you get Ohio State interested, then everybody started coming. Minnesota was actually the first one to contact me and said that they wanted to recruit me. Then Ohio State came, then Notre Dame, [Coach] Ara Parseghian, and all those guys. Johnny Majors and everybody. Next thing you know, I’m getting letters from everywhere, and I don’t know where or what I want to do. You’re only allowed six visits back then. I went on my six visits, and after I went to Ohio State, I knew that that was home. It just felt like home. It just felt like this is where I belong. This was the place to be. Plus, the way that Coach Hayes recruits ... his recruiting style was, he recruited the whole family. He didn’t just recruit me. He didn’t even talk to me when he visited. It’s amazing. People don’t understand and ask why did I go when I didn’t even really talk to the coach? I thought, “Coach, I’m the one who has to make the decision.” He’s talking to my grandmother, he’s talking to other coaches, he’s talking to my father and mother and brothers and sister and cousins. He wanted to see the kind of person I was, if I had the character it took to be a part of what he wanted to do with the kind of players that he wanted to keep around. He wanted to see how

my family structure was because what he always did, and he dealt with us when we played at Ohio State, was he would take a Black athlete and a white athlete and he would put us together to get to know each other and learn our strengths and weaknesses, so that we can be as one. He was all about team and all about breaking the racism. There just so many things that he taught me in that area. That's how it got started.

Q. You showed up on campus in the fall of '77.

A. '77.

Q. You had already visited campus, but tell me about your first impressions of campus your freshman year.

A. It was really scary. When you come from a small town, then you go to a school that's bigger than your town, it's like I was going to a major city, like I was going to New York City. That's the way I felt. My goodness, there were thousands of people everywhere. The enthusiasm that was around. It was really amazing because when we were on our recruiting trip – I forget how many guys there were, I think it was about 20 some guys – we were on our recruiting trip together. Nobody really knows each other. You've got to remember, everybody's a superstar from their high school coming to Ohio State. And those of us who are coming from out of state, it's totally a different world. They already know about Ohio State. I never even saw Ohio State's campus. I was amazed at how big it was and just the atmosphere. I ran into a young man. His name was Leon. Leon Ellison. We were on the recruiting bus that they had for us. We were over on west campus when they were showing us around. He came to me and said, "Cal, where are you from?" I told him New Jersey. He said, "Hey, you want to be my roommate?" I said, "Sure." I didn't know what to say because I was nervous. Then I found out his first name was Leon as is my first name. His

high school colors were orange and blue, and my high school colors were the same. I felt we had something in common. He was from Washington, DC, and I was from New Jersey, so I thought that would work really well. He really helped me because he grew up in DC and he was exposed to a lot of things that I wasn't exposed to. He educated me on those things, so that I didn't make mistakes. It was very important. Leon was a very valuable asset in my life that helped me become the man that I am today. I knew that I was going to come to Ohio State. I turned Notre Dame down and didn't even visit them because I was all set on Ohio State. I didn't want to waste their time because I knew where I wanted to be. I knew that this was my destiny. That's why I enjoyed everything that happened to me at Ohio State.

Q. You mentioned some experiences of racism when you were in high school. Did you get any sense of that when you arrived at Ohio State, or no?

A. No, I did not get the same sense of racism at Ohio State, just in high school. As a matter of fact, I didn't tell you, one of the things that was amazing was the way that we dealt with racism. You imagine how I'm going to a high school that is upper-class, white, a lot of money. The school was big. It was one of the largest schools around. The young white kids in our high school, they also didn't like what was going on. How we fought that was, my senior year they said, "Do you want to be senior class president?" At a major white high school with over 600 seniors, nobody ever thought that I would be the first Black president at the high school. That was because the students all came together and told me, "You're very articulate. You know how to talk. You know how to move people. You know how to encourage. You're a leader. We want to support you." We came together and that's what we did. We fought racism by making change. By showing people that people are not what

you may think they are, that everybody, we all have flaws, we all have issues, and we're all brothers and sisters, and we need to treat each other in that aspect, and not look at this life is better than that life. When you do, you're going to hurt somebody else in another life that hurts them. We weren't like you see now the signs out of Black Lives movement, we weren't about that. We were about all lives because all lives are valuable. All lives are important, and if we don't do that, then we're really hurting a whole lot of other people. That's how I grew up.

Q. How did that relate to Ohio State? Your experience at Ohio State?

A. I'll never forget it because Leon and I were in Steeb Hall. We were on the eighth floor of Steeb Hall. The young kids who were there had never been around Black people before. And many of them by the time the quarter was up, I would say the time the school year was up our freshman year, the young kids that were on our floor came to us and they said, "You know, I'm really mad my parents." We said, "Why?" And they said, "Because our parents told us that Black people are like this, this and this." I won't say what they said because I don't like repeating it, but they said their parents had made some negative comments. They said, "You are in no way like that." They were angry, so a lot of them told me they asked their parents, "Why did you lie to me? Why did you tell me that this person was like this and they're not? They're human beings just like us. They talk, they think, they hurt, they have the same pains, everybody's the same." It was amazing just to see that.

Also, I remember the Ku Klux Klan marched our freshman year at Ohio State, marched on campus, and they marched to downtown Columbus, and they really tried to stir things up. What my parents told us back when I was a kid, "Don't go and engage, because if you go and engage them, that's just what they want, so they can create a riot."

So, we just stayed away. We were told by Coach Hayes to stay away from it. I was glad for that advice because it was wise counsel. It kept a lot of us, if you pay attention and you keep allowing those negative voices, to keep speaking, then these are the things that are going to happen in society when you give them the power. By not giving them the power, by not listening, not paying attention to them and just let them go on instead because then their voice becomes less and less. When we react to them, then their voice gets louder and louder. We were taught those skills just from Coach Hayes. We were taught those skills by the people who are on campus, and we were taught by the leadership of those people that everybody counts.

A lot of people don't know that Ohio State there was, and this was taught to me from the older players, that Ohio State's traditions of what it means to be a Buckeye are transferred from captain to captain to captain. They don't do that anymore, but we would have a captain's breakfast and I met guys who played in 1935. They would give stories of what it means to be a Buckeye. How you are supposed to act, that we are all still scarlet and gray. We are all brothers, and we all take care of each other. We are all family. Those are the tools, it's not about the coin toss. It's not about all those parts of the game. The role of being a captain is, you are responsible for your class. You are responsible for your brothers who are there and anything you can do help your brothers. That's what it means to be captain at Ohio State and to transfer that information to the next generation, so that those guys know why they're coming there. They're not coming there just to play football. That's just one thing you do, but it's what you do behind the scenes that makes it so special. Matter of fact, I found out just in talking when I got to the NFL and then after it was over with, years later talking to other schools, they said they didn't have anything like that. We

were one of the only schools in the country that still had a captain's breakfast to transfer who you are as a Buckeye and what it means to you, and it was transferred from captain to captain.

Q. Interesting. I did not know that. Let's back up a little bit. You're a freshman and you're here to go to school and play football. Not only your freshman year, but how did you juggle that, because now I know they have programs, tutors and things like that. I don't know if they had those back then, or if you were supposed to navigate that yourself.

A. Larry Romanoff was one of the guys who was really instrumental in guiding us and putting us with counselors, putting us with tutors. It was mandatory for freshmen and sophomores, you had to go to tutoring whether you needed it or not. You had to go. It was mandatory and the reason why you had to go was because Coach Hayes would show up. And if you weren't there or you were found out to not be there, oh, believe me, the next time you will be there. That's one thing I loved about Coach Hayes. He really held that accountability, so you feared it. Matter of fact, have you ever heard the story about how he used to teach "Word Power"?

Q. No.

A. What Coach Hayes would do to every freshman class, he would teach us "Word Power." "Word Power" was a mandatory class by Coach Hayes for all incoming freshmen. The purpose of class was to help us increase our vocabulary and learn the power of our words. He started talking one time and it's on a video. There's a video on YouTube of him speaking to our class and he's talking to us and giving us a word. He said, "There's a lot of apathy walking on this campus." He said, "You want to stay away from them. They're like a plague." He said, "All they want to do is sit around and look at their feet, look down

at their feet.” He would always give us these fantastic stories. I really appreciate it now. At the time when you’re going through it as a freshman, you’re fearful of this man because he carried himself in a way that was more like a father figure to all of us. Not just a coach. And he really treated us like family. Ann, his wife, she looked at like us she had a 100 and some sons because that’s the way she saw us. She treated us that way. And I didn’t realize it until the day he passed away and we all went to his funeral, and she still remembered us. I hadn’t seen her in almost 15 years. She said, “Cal, how are you doing?” I was shocked she would remember me. I was amazed but that’s the way she was.

Coach Hayes was constantly educating us, constantly teaching us all the time. Teaching us to be better men. Teaching us how we should respond in society. Teaching us how to do an interview. He would be part of the [media] interview. He would help coach the interview because he didn’t want us to say something that we don’t realize that the media can take and twist it and make it into something else that you didn’t say. He knew all that stuff that was going on, and he educated us, and he brought us through those things and showed us how to function within society. As freshman, it was mandatory to participate in the “Word Power” class. We had to get up and be there at 6:30 in the morning and he would do his “Word Power” class with us and educate us.

Q. Back then when you were a freshman, you weren’t playing on the team.

A. No, we were on the team.

Q. You were on the team, but you weren’t allowed to play Varsity I don’t think.

A. No, we played.

Q. You played?

A. Yes. I’m a four-year Varsity letter winner.

Q. Oh, okay, well, congratulations. What was it like to play in your first game in the stadium?

A. It is so scary. There's no word that I can give you that would do any good, to help anybody to be able to understand that experience, especially for the first time. First of all, when you're in the locker room, we could hear the crowd outside. Think about it. I'm running out into a stadium in front of close to, back then it was like 90,000-some people. And I've never experienced 90,000 people in one spot. It was just so frightening, but it's even more frightening to go out in the game and actually play in front of all those people. Not only are you in front of almost 100,000 people, you're also on TV with millions watching you. Everybody is seeing what you do right, and everybody seeing what you do wrong.

We just had our reunion a year ago, when they were allowing us in the stadium [associated with the Covid-19 pandemic]. It was our 40-year reunion from the Big Ten Championship. And I saw what it did to the guys, just us going back into the stadium, standing in the end zone, and all we could do was cry. We all came together, and we all started crying because that's the thrill. That's the excitement. We couldn't believe that we actually had that experience. And just to be able to be back there 40 years later and remembering and seeing the other teams when they were being honored, now we are being honored after 40 years. We said, "Man, are we getting old or what's going on here?" I still remember the guys just crying. There were 65 of us and we all were crying. They had to force us off the field. They needed us to move off the field and we were like, "We don't care. We want to stay right here." That's the way it was. It was so exciting. I get tears just thinking about it because it's a bond that people don't understand. I don't know if most people ever feel that oneness. You've been in battle. You remember all these guys and you look that we accomplished something that some people never get in their life to experience,

that oneness of what it feels like and how it carries and how everybody cares so much for each other, and how much love there is for each other. It's just an experience. Like I said, I can't find the words to give you that can really convey that excitement. It's just something you have to experience. The experience is so emotional that you can't even find words for it.

Q. Now you had said that your ultimate goal was to be on the Philadelphia Eagles, but when you were here, was that still in the back of your mind? I know you left early to go pro, but say your freshman and sophomore year, were you still thinking of that or were you just focused on the here and now?

A. I was focused on the here and now. I was just trying to enjoy the moment, enjoying where I was, and realizing that the lessons that Coach Hayes was teaching us, there were a lot of things that happened to me the two years I was under Coach Hayes. I really learned a lot of things. When we went down to play in the Sugar Bowl [in 1977], Coach Hayes was acting as if the Civil War hadn't been fought. He was saying, "Those southerners, I'm going to give them a good left hook." We said, "Coach Hayes, the Civil War has already been fought and won. What are you talking about?" When we were down in New Orleans in 1977, my freshman year, and I never knew what New Orleans [was about]. I didn't understand why he didn't want us to go on Bourbon Street. He wanted to keep us away.

We had to do some things for the Sugar Bowl. They took us to this restaurant called Pat O'Brien's and they served this drink that was called the Hurricane. It was a huge, it looked like a jar of fruit juice or Kool aid. Guys were sitting around sipping on it and really just enjoying it. Finally, somebody told Coach Hayes that there was alcohol in that drink. Oh, man. In the middle of the restaurant, he went up and snatched one of the drinks from

one of the guys who was sipping on his drink, sipped the drink, tasted alcohol, broke the glass, called management over and said, “Why are you serving my boys alcohol?” I thought Coach Hayes was over-reacting but then I realized what he was saying that a lot of people get trapped in alcohol and become alcoholics. That’s what he was angry about, he thought his boys were being taught to go down a wrong path that would hurt them, that would hurt their lives, and other people were going to be hurt by it. And that’s what he was saving us from, and that’s what he was telling us. That’s why he wouldn’t let us go on Bourbon Street. He told us to stay away from it. When you go on Bourbon Street, you understand why he was saying to stay away from it. He was not trying to be a control freak; what he was trying to do was to save us from going the wrong path that could be very, very destructive to our lives. I’m so, so thankful for those experiences.

He took us early Friday mornings to the other campuses to look at other campuses and took us into other student unions, so that we can see them. We were actually taking tours. When we would go to play at other Big Ten schools, he was taking us on a historical tour teaching us about this school that we’re getting ready to play. Coach Hayes was always educating us. He said, “When you go someplace you’ve got to know, ‘Why did you choose Ohio State?’ ” That’s when he would come back and say, “Why did you choose?” Then you would know what you chose. We had Bob Hope and all those kinds of celebrities that would come to our practice, and we loved it because that’s when we got a break. We loved that. One time, this young guy came, and we had never heard of him. Coach Hayes stopped practice. Here’s a guy who never played at Ohio State. He was a walk-on, but he was there through the whole time, never got into one game. But Coach Hayes stopped the practice, and he told beautiful stories about this young man and how he persevered and never gave

up, and what he brought to the organization. Even though he wasn't good enough to get out there to beat somebody, or got out to play, he still meant a lot. When we as freshman heard that story, we didn't hear it, we experienced it with him, we thought, "Whoa, we all count. We all mean something. Everybody is important." Not everybody can be a starter. Not everyone can be the superstar, but every person is so valuable. The guy who is not out there playing is more valuable than the guy you see who is out there making his name. Because without the people that are behind the scenes, that guy doesn't get to the level that he or she gets to because there's other people that have to push them to make them who they are. That opened my eyes to the importance of every single human being. That's the way I continue to live today.

- Q. You're talking about Coach Hayes. Tell me about the Gator Bowl. That was the game in which he hit an opposing player who intercepted the ball. Given what you said about Coach Hayes and everyone's relationship with him, that must have been a devastating experience.
- A. If you really knew why he did it, then you would see that what he did, because it was another player and he actually hit him in the pads right here. I was right there and saw the whole thing. It happened right in front of me. I was near Coach Hayes when it happened. But what happened was, that season, Coach Hayes started Cornelius Green, Corny Green, who was a Black quarterback. Then, Rod Gerald – and they won a lot of Big Ten Championships. Coach Hayes was getting pressure to stop starting Black quarterbacks. So, then Art Schlichter was brought in. He [Hayes] kept telling us, "Rod, you're my quarterback." When we ran out against Penn State that game, that's when Art ran out on the field, and that's when all the players lost faith in Coach Hayes. Once a coach loses a team, it's very, very hard to get them back. A lot of the seniors were very upset and thought

Coach Hayes had lied to them. They lost faith in him, and it really hurt him. I don't know who it was behind the scenes but there was pressure for him to start Art. He had to start Art. He started Art and throughout the whole year, the buildup was building and building, and the pressure was getting greater.

Coach Hayes, at that time, people don't remember that he was a diabetic. If you know anything about, especially back then, we didn't know. I'm a diabetic today, so I understand the nuances of how it can change your personality within a second if your sugar level is not right. My teammates and I heard that he had forgotten to take his medicine that morning. There was a lot of tension at the Gator Bowl against Clemson. We could have easily blown Clemson off the field, but because of the tension – [at one point] we were in the same movie theatre that Clemson was in. Clemson comes in, because Coach Hayes always made us go to movies before the games. We're in the same movie theatre. Then we go to another event for us, then Clemson comes in. The police were called, in case fights would break out, which eventually did break out, but that was the whole explosion that came, was at that game. And Coach Hayes said, "If I go out, I'm going to go out fighting." That's what happened. There was a lot of tension and a lot of stress on Coach Hayes. A lot of people don't know he had 29 years of one-year contracts.

Q. That's right. You're right. Did you have a relationship with him after he was fired as Coach, but he was still a staff member and taught and all that?

A. Yes, I would go over to his office all the time and we would sit down, and we had many, many conversations. My oldest two sons would come with me, and they would sit down with him and hear a lot of the great stories from Coach Hayes themselves. They remember that. And my oldest boy, Calvin and the other one, Andrew, and I have Brandon and Corey,

and then Isaiah and Hannah are my children. And my wife, you know, is Emunah. I would take those two boys to talk to Coach Hayes. He would give them all the same stories and a lot of great things and great wisdom he shared with them. We kept talking about a lot of things. He guided me. As a matter of fact, the commissioners from the Hall of Fame of South Jersey wanted to honor me back in Jersey and put me in the Hall of Fame in south Jersey and they asked if Coach Hayes could come and be the speaker. I asked him and he said, "Yes." When he got there, he said, "I'm going to set the record straight. The only reason that I am here is because of that young man sitting right now. I'm not here because you think you brought me here, but the one who brought me here is young man here, Calvin Murray. That's why I'm here." The people thought they were the ones that brought him there because they were all puffing up themselves about, "Oh yeah, we got Coach Hayes here." How he knew what was going on, I have no idea, but he did.

The Clemson game, I wish that they would have gave him more time and gave him an opportunity, but when you hit somebody else, especially another player, there are consequences, and Hayes, rumor was he didn't take his medication and he wasn't himself. All the pressure, he told me many times he was sorry about what had happened, but he's still Coach Hayes.

They brought in Coach [Earle] Bruce. Coach Bruce, he wasn't Coach Hayes. We as players had to gel and understand that it was a different style of coaching. Coach Bruce did a great job in bringing a different type of offense that Coach Hayes would not do. Coach Hayes hated to throw the ball. He said, "Two things could definitely happen that are wrong. I'm going to keep the ball on the ground." That's just the way he was. He was old-fashioned, but he was a great man that taught us and taught a lot of good values. When we

would travel to away games, a lot of parents would be traveling, too, and sometimes the guys lived in the state that we were getting ready to play, and a lot of those parents would host the parents who were traveling. That was part of that family. That was the way Coach Hayes did things. And those parents would stay at those houses and get to know them, and they would come to the game together.

Q. Tell me about your decision to leave school early to go pro, and maybe it involved a conversation with Coach Hayes, but why did you decide to do that? Or maybe it's not even a decision.

A. It was out of frustration of all that was going on. I spent four years at Ohio State, and we didn't win one bowl game. Things were changing. Coach Bruce's style was totally different from Coach Hayes, and I was used to that style. I'm not saying Coach Bruce's style was wrong; it was just that we were all recruited by Coach Hayes. Our mindset was of that way. I thought, "I have an opportunity here and don't want to lose it," and that's what I did. Do I regret it? Sometimes I do; sometimes I don't.

Q. Let's talk a little bit about that because you actually are in a program, or I think Emunah, your wife, told me you're temporarily not doing it, but you're in a program for former athletes to complete their degrees. Is that correct?

A. That is correct.

Q. How did you find out about that and when did you start that?

A. I found out about that a few years later, that there was a program and that I qualified for it, to finish my degree. I went back and started taking some classes and found out that, I found out a whole lot of things. The way the professors were teaching when I was at Ohio State the first time, their own philosophy and thought processes, was not the same today.

They were talking about issues when I was actually living that issue, and I had to straighten them out a little bit. I said, “I’m sorry, I don’t mean to sound like I’m arrogant or something, but I’m just saying, hey, wait a minute, tell these kids the truth. This is what was going on. This is what was really happening.” It was amazing when the kids would hear me in the class say that. I didn’t challenge the teacher disrespectfully; I did respectfully. They were amazed and they would ask me questions and I would tell them the answer, and this is what was really going on. I told them that the media doesn’t always give you the truth, and you have to learn how to search out for the truth and look for the truth, and find it, and be open-minded. You have to keep your mind open. You have a great gift, which is called free will, free will to choose to do good or free will to choose to do bad. I think a lot of us forget that.

There was a program and I’ve been working in it. I’m still kind of working in it with them, but because of COVID, it created difficulties because you can barely get in the classes. I think I only have a couple of classes left and I can finish. I’m retiring, so I may take those few classes and be done with it. That way, I can show my children and also the students that I work with, almost 30 years later, that I’ve worked with, that you can do it. You can keep trying and be moving forward. There’s no deadline. Just keep plugging away. You’re always learning. Once I finish, I’m going to still be learning. I’m still going to try and improve myself. How can I help other kids and help other people? I realize the power of words, and those are the things that I encourage people with. How are you treating other people? Those are things that I’m trying to do with myself when I have these opportunities. There’s a great responsibility that I will be held accountable to. I’ve got watch what I say to people because the impact is great. Coach Hayes always taught us, and Coach Bruce as well, is that when you do something wrong, everybody that you associate with, former

Ohio State, former NFL, they go down that whole line and they try to bring everybody else down because of who you are and what you've accomplished. Those are the reasons that I really want to go back and say that I finished my degree. It's in my heart but I've been working with them to try to do some things online. They're working with me on a couple of the classes that I may be able to get online, but most of my classes are in-class, so it's really hard right now with working fulltime.

Q. What is your favorite or the memory that stands out to you the most being a football player at Ohio State, and is there a different memory as a student? As a football player, it might be, "my biggest memory or my favorite memory is when we beat Michigan" or whatever. But as a student, it might have been this class or this girl or this party, or whatever.

A. One of my greatest highlights regarding football, I would have to say at Ohio State, there were two actually. One was, I caught a little dump pass from Art Schlichter, and I went 80 yards with it. It was a record and it still held in the Horseshoe, but as far as outside of the Horseshoe it's been broken, but still today it's still the longest touchdown pass in the Horseshoe. I was proud of that and beating Michigan is always a memory, to have the gold pants. Gold pants is a solid gold pendant that players received for beating Michigan. I had four gold pants, but I have, and there's guys who didn't get one gold pants. I was very proud of that. But also, being on the Ohio State campus and being with such great people. Just the kind of people that were on the campus. There were more people who shared the love and shared responsibilities and cared enough for each other. That's something that you don't really experience in a lot of other places. I think it's unique and special to OSU. I was very grateful for the experiences that I had on campus. Another favorite football memory was playing Indiana on my birthday, and I ran for 226 yards.

One more story about Coach Hayes. One day, after a particularly grueling practice, some of the players were complaining about sore legs. Coach Hayes wanted to teach us a lesson about complaining. He gathered up a few of us and took us to Children's Hospital. We visited kids who had diseases or had been badly burned, yet they had smiles on their faces when we came to visit them. This really made an impression on us, making us realize that we really had nothing to complain about, and that there are people in much worse pain than us. Nothing really stands out as a favorite memory as student other than enjoying certain classes and hanging out with my teammates and other friends. Getting back to Coach Hayes, he didn't say stuff just to say it; he said it because he had the experience he wanted to share. When I go out and I'm talking to people in the community and trying to inspire them, I'm speaking from experience. I'm not telling you do something that's going to hurt you; I'm trying to save you from pain. And if you need to go experience that pain, that's your choice. I can't hold you back.

Q. You said when you were in high school, when you were told to put down your goals and one of them was to work with kids, do you think, how do you think playing football at Ohio State has affected your career now? You've obviously been good at it because you've been doing it for 30 some years.

A. I don't even play that card anymore. What I do is come in as a counselor. The kids start telling me they want to go and do this, or they want to be that. Some of them say they want to play football. I tell them who I am and what I've done. They're like, "Really? You are? What?" That changes the whole relationship. I say, "That's why it's so important that you treat everybody on the same level because you don't know who is sitting in front of you. You don't know who you're talking to. It could be the very person to help get you where

you need to be and what you need to do in life.” That’s why I don’t tell them who I am, and that’s why they get so excited about our conversations. I tell them, “You can do it, but if you aren’t getting the grades, if you don’t want to study, you can forget playing at the highest levels of football. You have to study. You have to be on top of your game. You don’t have any idea what studying is if you want to play at Ohio State or any of the big major schools. Any schools actually. You really have to be a student, and if don’t really want to be a student, I don’t care how talented you are. You won’t make it. College is about learning, and you will learn. There are two educations you get and they’re both with people. The one will help you learn and be successful, and the other one, you get with the wrong crowd and all that’s gone.” That’s what I did.

I’m retiring this year, so it’s going to be tough because I still like to encourage kids. I’m going to do that. I tell them, “Make your goals. Write your goals down because football is not your goal. It is not your goal. It is something you do. You want to be an engineer, you use football to help you get your engineering degree paid for. That’s how you use it. That’s what you do. You use that athletic ability to get your education paid for, so your parents or you are not in debt. That’s how you can overcome.” But otherwise, kids today, some of them are so lazy and they don’t realize they are going to have to change that attitude first. Employers will hire you if you know how to talk, you know how to carry yourself, you know how to do all these different things. They want the cream of the crop too. They don’t want the pain. You know what I’m talking about. You’ve probably interviewed thousands of people and it’s the people who are excited about being who they are and thankful for what they’ve done and appreciate. We don’t say thank you enough.

Q. I'm going to thank you because this has been very interesting, Calvin. I'm so glad your wife recommended you. I've learned a lot about you and about that era and things even about Coach Hayes because we have lots of information about him, that even here at the Archives that we don't know. This is wonderful. Thank you.

A. You're welcome.