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UA94/6/2/2 Edgar Stansbury Remembers

Edgar Stansbury

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Dr. Cherry was President during my student days 1926-'30. In those days attendance at chapel was a must. He usually appeared at chapel when he was free to do so. He would usually address the student body and the faculty about whatever was on his mind at that particular time. Whatever the subject, when he concluded his talk, you knew the importance of it, and understood the message. He stood over six feet in height, had a very straight and strong posture. He had a strong delivery, clarity in presentations, he possessed a resonant voice, and his timely body gestures as he spoke, were something to witness. He would talk on the importance of education, and whatever, of setting goals and the fact that success was within the reach of all whom were willing to make the effort.

Dr. Cherry was still President when I joined the coaching staff in 1934-'42. During part of this period I managed some property he owned just east of the campus. This gave me an opportunity to meet with him on occasions. The more I got to know him the more I realized his burning desire and dream to accomplish two major things: make education available to all, and some how instill in every student the idea that success was a possibility for all who were willing to pay the price through preparation and effort. He met his death on August 1, 1937 as the result of an household accident. It was a great loss to those who knew him and to education.

I first met Mr. Diddle in late August 1926, when I was playing basketball with a pickup group in the Old Red Barn -- the first gym. It was located about 75 yards South West of the Cedar House, as was the Cedar House, it was built largely with faculty and student help in the early '20s from salvaged materials obtained from City's old YMCA building that was being torn down at the time. The Old Red Barn was constructed to provide an in house facility for Physical Education. The legislation had passed a law to obtain a teaching certificate one must have 2 credit hours of PE.

Mr. Diddle walked in the Old Red Barn, watched us for a minute or two walked on to the floor, stopped the game, and inquired as to our names and where each of us came from. As he left the court he told me to see him the next day. The only reason he noticed me, so he said later, was "I was doing tricks with the ball -- like passing it behind my back, etc." Up to this time I had heard his name mentioned, but probably would not have recognized him if I had seen him on the street. On my first visit with him he got me a on campus job that permitted me to stay in school. For the next four years I played football, basketball and [baseball] for him. Through his [influence] I returned in 1934-'42 as an assistant in basketball, football and baseball.

His success as coach is a matter of record. His success as a person exceeds most people's capacity to tell it as it was. During my work life of over 60 years with, over and under a lot of interesting people I can say he was out of doubt the most interesting, lovable and perdictable person I ever met or worked with. In my 13 great years with him as player and an assistant I had many opportunities to get to know this remarkable man. As a coach he was unrelenting in his desire to win within the rules. He left no stone unturned in sports and the institution. He had great respect for authority; made certain that his athletes attended class, insisted that they graduated and help[ed] them get [a good job.]

As to his extra currciular activities [during] the time I was his assistant I was privileged to be with or accompany him most of the time. He loved to relax, and he never grew tired of [having] fun and recreating; he enjoyed being with friends, and he had more than his share of them.

He has been the author of more "isms" and "quotes" than most famous people, the difference is, he used them to make a point. I know most of them, but to attempt to retell a Diddleism or quote, would be a mistake without presenting the conditions that motivated him to make the remark. There is no way to [authenticate] the condition without setting the scene, which is sometimes difficult to do. Without the proper setting the Diddleisms or quotes are misunderstood and the intent is lost. I will give you an example.

In the '20s some of us played both football and basketball. When the football season ended on Monday following the last football game Mr. Diddle would divide us into two groups and we would have a full court scrimmage. The purpose was to get us out of playing football, and change to basketball skills. On this one occasion he gave the whistle to Turner Elrod, who was recovering from a foot injury, and instructed him to referee the scrimmage under [strict] game conditions. Along the way Turner and I got into a trash talking contest and the scrimmage got out of hand. Mr. Diddle finally got enough of this, blew his whistle and stopped the scrimmage, walked out on to the floor and proceeded to give Turner a strong lecture on what he expected from him. As he returned to his seat, he stopped and [vigorously] turned me around and said, "if you don't stop that trash talk [I'm] going to [throw] you through that [damned] window." Needless to say he had no more trouble with me.

Years later as his assistant, one day affter basketball practice, I reminded him of what he had said to me about the trash talking years earlier. I had to refresh his memory about the occasion. He smiled and said, "I remember that." I said, "Mr. Diddle were you really going to throw me through the [damned] window?" He said, "yes, but I was going to open it first." If you attempted to repeat this quote today to anyone -- it is not the same, it would fall flat, because too much is missing from the original scene.