

Western Kentucky University

TopSCHOLAR®

WKU Archives Records

WKU Archives

9-23-1982

UA37/5/5 Dero Downing & Kelly Thompson Interview

Harvey Gardiner

Dero Downing

Kelly Thompson

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc_ua_records



Part of the [Oral History Commons](#), [Sports Management Commons](#), and the [Sports Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Gardiner, Harvey; Downing, Dero; and Thompson, Kelly, "UA37/5/5 Dero Downing & Kelly Thompson Interview" (1982). *WKU Archives Records*. Paper 8765.

https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc_ua_records/8765

This Oral History is brought to you for free and open access by TopSCHOLAR®. It has been accepted for inclusion in WKU Archives Records by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact topscholar@wku.edu.



Western Kentucky University
UA37/5 E.A. Diddle Faculty/Staff Papers
Item 5 Dero Downing & Kelly Thompson Interview

Contact information:

WKU Archives
1906 College Heights Blvd.#11092
Bowling Green, KY 42101-1092
Phone: 270-745-4793
Email: archives@wku.edu
Home page: <http://www.wku.edu/library/archive/>
© 2021 WKU Archives, Western Kentucky University. All rights reserved.

Description: Harvey Gardiner interview of Dero Downing and Kelly Thompson regarding relationships with E.A. Diddle

Dates: September 23, 1982

Formats: 1 audiotape

Subject Analytics:

Athletics	Downing, Dero Goodman, 1921-2011
Athletics (WKU)	Football
Basketball	Thompson, Kelly, 1909-1993
Centre College (Danville, KY)	Western Kentucky University

Digital Commons:

Oral History
Sports Management
Sports Studies

Access Restrictions: none

Preferred Citation: UA37/5/1 Dero Downing & Kelly Thompson Interview, WKU Archives, Bowling Green, Kentucky, USA.

Processing Information: Preliminary transcription by Suellen Lathrop, 2013.

Oral History Recording List UA37.5.5 ~ Audiocassette

11/16/2021

Media ID	Side	Start time	Subject
Tape 1	1	1 : :	<p><i>Dero Downing interviewed on 9/23/1982</i></p> <p><i>Dero coached by former Diddle player, W.B. Owen in Horse Cave, KY. 1932-1939 Horse Cave High School in state tournament many times. Dero's brother Alec Downing came to WKU in 1937 to play for Diddle. Dero met E.A. Diddle in 1937, awe-struck, respect, admiration. Discussion of Alec's teammates at WKU. 1938 Dero a junior on the Horse Cave state tournament team. 1939 Dero a senior on the Horse Cave state tournament team. Dero unsure about going to WKU. W.S. Moss going to University of Tennessee invited Dero to come with him to visit. Dero offered a scholarship to play basketball at U.T. A day in March, milking the cow after school, E.A. Diddle came and asked him to come to WKU.</i></p>
Tape 1	1	2 : :	<p><i>Dero Downing elected president of WKU by Regents in 1969. After the meeting Dero went to Diddle Dorm to tell E.A. Diddle about it. Regent Chalmers Embry was already there telling Diddle. Dero went in and Diddle whooped, congratulated him. Diddle reminded Dero that he went to the right school.</i></p>
Tape 1	1	3 : :	<p><i>Kelly Thompson interviewed on 9/24/1982</i></p> <p><i>I've been requested to give a summary of my experiences with E.A. Diddle. Thompson graduated from Lebanon High School in 1928. Received scholarship from Centre College and job in the dining hall. Summer of 1928 working as cub reporter for Louisville Courier-Journal. E.A. Diddle wrote him a letter regarding coming to WKU. WKU charged no tuition and was a better economic choice than Centre with a scholarship. Thompson visited Diddle in Bowling Green, expected to meet for 30 minutes. Diddle met with him from 8 AM to 3 PM. Tour of campus, introduced to faculty. Thompson came to WKU 1928 to play football. Diddle coached the freshmen team. During warm up for first game of season Thompson broke his shoulder on tackling dummy. Dr. Reardon team doctor had only x-ray machine in town. Reardon pulled Thompson off the team. Any other school would have turned him out. Diddle promised to help him graduate. Thompson worked as stringer for Louisville Courier-Journal and any other kind of job he could find. Ran out of money. Diddle found him on steps of Recitation Hall, took him to Bowling Green Bank & Trust. Diddle arranged for \$25 loan with Sterret Cuthbertson. 20 meals per week in dining hall cost \$2.50. Thompson was able to continue education and did graduate.</i></p>
Tape 1	1	4 : :	<p><i>Tell about resentment built up over University of Kentucky's holier than thou attitude regarding basketball.</i></p> <p><i>Thompson: I would have to answer in the negative. When Diddle took up basketball full time his genius began to emerge. Adolph Rupp came to UK at the same time, very different, but as successful. There was room for two good teams in the state. Played various tournaments together with varying outcomes. Rupp appointed scout for Olympic Team in the South. Rupp asked Thompson if Diddle would agree to allow WKU to represent the South. Rupp & Diddle not best friends, but courteous, respectful of each other.</i></p>