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Interview no. 1493

Julius Lowenberg

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Name of Interviewee: Julius Lowenberg
Date of Interview: July 28th, 2010
Name of Interviewer: Kristine Navarro

Kristine Navarro: Today is July 28th, 2010. My name is Kristine Navarro, and I am interviewing Mr. Julius Lowenberg. Good morning!

Julius Lowenberg: Good Morning.

Kristine Navarro: How are you?

Julius Lowenberg: Fine this morning.

Kristine Navarro: Good. I'd just like to ask you a little bit – some background questions. Can you tell me when and where you were born?

Julius Lowenberg: I was born here in El Paso, April 14, 1934. You can never forget my birthday because Uncle Sam and I have the same birthday.

Kristine Navarro: That's good you can remember it then.

Julius Lowenberg: I can remember it.

Kristine Navarro: Can you tell me a little bit about your parents?

Julius Lowenberg: My father was born in [inaudible]. My grandfather was German – came over from Germany, went to Mexico, married my grandmother who was a Mexican. He was Jewish, she was Catholic. All of the siblings took the Catholic faith. They came over here – Pancho Villa – my grandfather was a merchant and Pancho Villa took everything away from him, and they drove – came over here on the train, and he worked as a tailor, if I remember – I was very small when he died. And my mother's father, Charles Arniho, Carlos Arniho, who was born in [inaudible], Mexico. And my grandmother was Duvall, she was a French-English. How those two got together, I have no earthly idea. My mother has told me some stories about it, but he came over from Mexico – Pancho Villa ran him out of Mexico also, and he started a – he was a loan shark; that's what they used to call him. They used to call them loan sharks because they would charge a higher interest rate than the regular. Now you can charge ten percent, but in those days it was unknown, so they were called sharks. But he had a very, very good business. My mother grew up there around El Paso street by U-Tech. In fact we were right by U-Tech. I have one brother, Carlos, who has been a coach all his life also. That's about it on – I've got – just for little stories I've

got a bunch of first cousins – all my cousins are – the majority are from Chihuahua, originally, worked for Sarko; my uncle and my dad worked for Sarko in Pararo. And then my uncle worked for Sarko in Chihuahua. And my other uncle – my uncle that lived here in El Paso – he worked for Sears, and he had the Lionel Train little deal there on Yendell Street, sold little trains, and his brother – I mean, his son and I were friends; not real good friends, we were first cousins. Well, I got a call the other day from Bobby and he's in Euphalea, Oklahoma – it's a lake there, I have no idea where; he keeps telling me by Tulsa – he says, "Look, I've got something for you that I would – I'm going to throw it away. Nobody in my family cares, you're the only one in the family that keeps up with the family tree and everything." So I said, "Fine. What is it?" He said, "No, I'll send it to you." So he sent it to me, in framed form. I'll show it to you when we go inside. It's a letter telling my grandfather, H.S. Lowenberg that he has permission to come back – for the people to give him free access back and forth on the boarder because he's a merchant. So he can come back and forth and back and forth. And this is the ironic that he was thrown out of Mexico by a Pancho Villa, and this is signed by Pancho Villa; the letter is signed by Pancho Villa. It's a original letter. I have a duplicate, but the original is there. I don't know the whole story of why he was given – but he was taking stuff from here to Villa's army, so I guess that was the reason that he was able to do that. But I grew up in El Paso. Started out in – the earliest I can remember was down off of El Paso Drive, down off of Pisano. WE lived in a house there. My father worked for the American Furniture Company for many years. And then he left the American Furniture Company and we moved to 1006 North Oregon, which is right where the Community College on Yendell and – I remember my father was a bus driver. And my mother would give me the bucket of food, his lunch bucket, and he'd come by and I'd get on the bus and drive – going up in my seat – and then he'd come back. And then he went to work for the railroad. But we didn't have a car. We, of course like most people in those days, everything was rationed. Just grew up the regular guy in the neighborhood, and went to St. Patrick. Oh, my mother took me to Moorehead. Moorehead was where – do you know where St. Patrick school is?

Kristine Navarro: Uh-huh.

Julius Lowenberg: Okay. Do you know where the nursing school is?

Kristine Navarro: Uh-huh.

Julius Lowenberg: That used to be Moorehead. That was the original Moorehead. So we were at St. Pat's and Moorehead were one block apart. Well, my mother took me when I was, I guess – I don't know if I'd turned six or I was going to turn six – to Moorehead to enroll me in school. Well, they wouldn't let her; I was too young. You had to be six years old or whatever the deal was. So walking back from – we lived there on 1006 North Oregon, right around the corner – so my mother's walking back with me, and St. Patrick's kids are in the playground, and the nun – Sister Grace, who happens to be my mother's cousin; she's a Moreno nun –

Kristine Navarro: Sister Grace Marie?

Julius Lowenberg: Sister Grace Marie. They're all Grace Marie's now.

Kristine Navarro: That's true.

Julius Lowenberg: She stopped my mother, and my mother was crying, blah, blah – that's the story I'm gave, I don't remember it because I was so small – and at that time I could not speak English. Not a word of English. At my house, everything was Spanish. My mother and father spoke Spanish; at my grandfather's house it was all Spanish. So I didn't have any friends until I moved to Oregon Street that spoke English; everybody down on Pisano and all that, we all spoke Spanish. So Sister Grace says, "Bring him in. We'll put him in school. We'll put him in the kindergarten." So they got me in kindergarten, but she told my mother, "You've got to do one thing. You cannot speak Spanish at home any more. You've got to – when you're speaking to Julius, you've got to speak English." Well, they did that, and unfortunately, I forgot my Spanish. So I went to St. Patrick's and we had a lot of kids from Juarez at that time, but they had to speak English. In those days, you heard the stories about putting your hand down and hitting you with a ruler because you were speaking Spanish; that's true.

Kristine Navarro: Did they do that?

Julius Lowenberg: They did that. And it wasn't for meanness. And I'll tell you a story of what happened to me when we went to – when I moved to Mexico. So I learned English; I learned it so well that I couldn't speak Spanish.

Kristine Navarro: Was it difficult to learn English?

Julius Lowenberg: I guess it was, but I guess I was immersed in it at home and at school, so I learned it. And then I didn't really get my Spanish

back until I went to Cathedral, which was in '48. We had a bunch of buddies from South El Paso and Juarez, so I got my Spanish back a little bit. I mean, I could converse in Spanish. Then I graduated from Cathedral and got married. I graduated – we were the first ever graduating class; eight of us that got out in January.

Kristine Navarro: From Cathedral?

Julius Lowenberg: Uh-huh. They never had that. In the old days, the public schools they had high-seniors and low-seniors, what they called the high-senior and low-senior. The high-senior would graduate in January; the low-senior in September, he graduated in May. We didn't have that in Cathedral; we had one graduation. But we had so many credits that we talked Brother into letting us out early.

Kristine Navarro: How did you do that?

Julius Lowenberg: So we got out early. I met Irene, my wife, she was – we were playing football, and I was playing with her brother – her brother played with me; he was a quarterback for us – and my best friend, David Pareto, who had an eye out for Dickie's younger sister, Marylou, and he kept telling Dickie after practice, "Say hello to Marylou for me. Say hello to Marylou for me." So I knew he had another sister; I had never seen her, I didn't know what she looked like, I had no idea. But just so David – because whatever David could do, I could do better, or what I could do, David could – we were best of friends. So I kept telling Dickie, "Dickie, say hello to your other sister. What's her name?" "Her name is Odelia." I said, "Odelia? How can anybody be named Odelia?" "Well, it's Irene Odelia." I said, "Okay, well, I'll call her Irene." So Coach Robastelle had a party, a get-together introduction – meet the football team, and invited all of the parents of the family, so that was the first time I met – I saw her. We were juniors in 1950 I guess. And that's the first time I met her, and I saw her. So then I started really chasing her, and we went steady, got engaged; she was our homecoming queen, I was a captain, so naturally I got to pick the homecoming queen. Well, I didn't – the team voted on it, but the team generally voted the way the captain wants you to vote. And then we got married – we graduated in January and got married in February. I went to work for Fur Foods in the produce department for a dollar – well, the first time I ever – we did feel – the first time I felt some prejudice here. All during high school I never did; I used to hang out with guys from South El Paso. I'd go down to the Boy's Club, I did everything. I rented an apartment on – I lived on 1410, it was on 1306 North El Paso street. It was an upstairs loft; real neat apartment from this older lady. And I went

and rented it. I went to see it and looked at it and I told her, “Honey, this is a great place.” So we – I gave her a down payment, and I take Irene – my wife is dark, she’s dark complected – we go up there to take my wife to show her the apartment, and they says, “I’m sorry, I rented it.” She saw Irene and said, “I’m sorry, I rented it.” So she gave me back my deposit. That happened to us. And another time that happened to us – and I’m going – maybe I’m rambling –

Kristine Navarro: No, no, please go.

Julius Lowenberg: In 19 – we went to play in a state basketball championship in 1950 – and our basketball coach was Doc Modock, he was an optometrist; he was not a full-time coach – I mean, a full-time teacher; he just coached – and we had the majority of our players were Hispanic. We had three Anglos – Pete Cannabin, Jake June, and Francis Jessick – four, and Francis Flood – and I looked – I was Yuelo, okay? The rest were David Pareto Juanitos Dio, blah blah blah. We take off in cars – we didn’t have busses; we took off in cars – we stopped in Fort Stockton, and at Fort Stockton we went into – it was time to get lunch; coach was going to get us lunch – and on the door of the restaurant – there wasn’t many restaurants in Fort Stockton at that time – on the door it says, “No Mexicans or Dogs.” So Doc walks in, everybody says, “We can’t feed you. Sorry, no Mexicans allowed in here.” So Doc’s thinking, “How am I going to feed these kids?” So he says, “Okay, can we come in and get some chicken to go?” They say, “As long as there’s no Mexican.” So the five of us go in – the four Anglo’s and me – go inside, order chicken to go for enough – and we go outside in front of the store – we have pictures of it –

Kristine Navarro: Do you really?

Julius Lowenberg: In front of the store of us eating our chicken right there, with “No Mexicans or Dogs.”

Kristine Navarro: How did he – what did he say to you?

Julius Lowenberg: I don’t – it was – I don’t know, it was just like we had never experienced really – I mean, like I said, we had all hung around – I mean, Francis Flood, Joe Sheppard, Richard June were my brother-in-law’s best friends. They were at Irene’s house every day of their life, so there was no – it was like a shock. And then we sort of laughed – when you’re kids, you laugh it off until you wait around and get a little older and you think about it, and you think, “Yeah, we did experience it.” And then I only experienced it one

time when I was coaching, when I was coaching at Ken Util, I had the first black that ever played at Ken Util. And I went back to Fort Stockton for the Comanche Relays, and we couldn't stay at this hotel because I had Birdie. And then the next year I took him back, they had already changed it. So you experience it, but I guess because you don't experience it all the time. So anyway, then I went to work for a dollar – I used to work 48 hours a week, and my paycheck was \$48.48. It was \$1.01 an hour. And I worked there for a year or two, then my father and my father-in-law worked for the railroad, so they got me into the railroad and I went in as a machinist apprentice, and I got – Irene and I thought we were in high cotton; I got \$1.36 an hour. Boy we thought we were really hot stuff. And I worked there until they laid me off. I started coaching at St. Patrick's at that time, just for free.

Kristine Navarro: Why did you start coaching?

Julius Lowenberg: I started playing football, I guess when I was six years old, seven years? We used to make our own shoulder pads; used to have the old hutch helmets that you could fold up and put in your back pocket. I just loved football. I just loved coaching. I mean, when I got out – that year that I got out and we got married, I coached St. Patrick's just that one year, touch football, and then the next year I started to coach them we got into tackle, the regular tackle football. And I was coaching – I coached football and basketball and everything – I just liked coaching. I mean, it was just – I liked working with kids and I just loved the idea of coaching. And I loved football, and we were going along and going along, and finally I told Irene, "You know what, I'm never going to get – I can't go to teach in the public schools or any school if I don't get a degree." So we'd already had two children – Kathy and Judus – and I decided – she said, "Okay, I'll go to work." So she went to work for the city tax office for \$160.00 a month. And I went and enrolled at U-Tech. and I was still coaching – excuse me.

Kristine Navarro: Do you want to get something to drink? DO you want to stop?

Julius Lowenberg: No. And I had been – oh for about two years – Monsenior Kathy was the pastor, and he said, "Okay Julius, I'm going to start paying you, because you've been doing this for four years." So I got \$75.00 a month for coaching. Which was - \$75.00 and \$160.00; not bad. So I went and enrolled in school. Well, we had – we still talk, and I still meet the guys that I went to school with; we still talk about the one head of the P.E. department, Dr. Syles – and he was a mean, mean old – tough, tough. And he hated any football below the ninth grade; he said it was bad for the kids, it was no

good. You'd get hurt, blah blah. And I would get up – I was coaching it – I'd get up and argue with him. "Doc, it is not. I'm coaching these kids." He got so mad at me. At that time, we only had about 4,000 students in school. He threw me out of his class and he got all of the rest of the professors to throw me out. So I missed a semester of college.

Kristine Navarro: On what grounds?

Julius Lowenberg: You didn't need grounds; you didn't need grounds in those days. So I told Irene, "You know, I've got to go back. I'm going to eat crow, do whatever I have to do." So next semester I go see Dr. Syles because he's head of the P.E. department; I can't get in with him. So I said, "Doctor, I apologize. Next time if you tell me the moon is purple, the sky is green, it's green. Whatever you say. I've got two kids; I've got to get out of school." So he let me back in. I got out – I went summers and instead of getting out – I got out in three and a half years. But in those days you could take like, 18 hours during the summer. So –

Kristine Navarro: What was the environment like in U-Tech?

Julius Lowenberg: Oh, you know, you just knew everybody. I mean, the football player – I used to hang out mainly with the football players and the basketball players, and you'd meet down at the sub, meet down at the student union building, and in those days you paid a dime for a cup of coffee. IF you took the cup back, you got three cents back. Okay? So it was like a deposit. Well, this buddy Charlie Brown – I'll tell you about Charlie in a little bit – we would go around and – if you got up to get a donut or something, your coffee glass was gone. And I'd make up to sometimes a buck a day with coffee cups. And you know, that's how we – we were just all buddies. All of us – one day I'm out with Charlie Brown – Charlie Brown was the first black basketball player in the state – in the south – and we became real good friends. And one night we're going out to have a beer or something, and Charlie says, "Come on, go with me." I said, "Where are we going Charlie?" He said, "We're going to The Black and Tan." The Black and Tan is on the corner of – it was on the corner of Alameda and Chambers. And it was a black bar; mainly black. There were some Mexicans that went in there, but very few. I said, "Charlie, a white boy's not going to walk into that bar." He said, "You're with me." I said, "Oh boy, this is going to be real fun." So I walked in, and there's all kinds of – all of a sudden silence, and everybody turns around and looks at me, and I said, "Oh Charlie, what did you get me in to?" And he said, "Don't worry, he's with me." And that was it. But we used

to hang around Bob Larabo, he played football for U-Tech and then he played for the San Diego Chargers. He'd go into a bar and look for a fight. But these were all – and the students, we'd meet at the student union building. We used to have class at the – I don't know if the Woman's Gym is still there – there's so many new things. But after that, the whole class would go to Hacienda.

Kristine Navarro: Together?

Julius Lowenberg: The Hacienda Restaurant? And go down and get two or three pitchers of beer and sit there and drink beer for awhile and compare notes or cheat. But it was a real – because it was so small, we knew everybody. Now, the Hispanics in those days couldn't belong to a sorority or fraternity, and they had if I remember correctly – we used to play in the intramural league, and we were called the MexTexs or the Mex something; I forget what it was. But there was no animosity. I would go to the SIE – they used to have their own frat houses there on the campus, and I'd go over there with Cochran and Larabo and we'd go in there and study and there was no problem. It was, I'm sure, a completely different world than what it is up there now with – what do you all have, 20 –

Kristine Navarro: 20,000.

Julius Lowenberg: How do you know anybody unless you're right there in the same – So I'm getting ready to graduate from college, and I'm having trouble with 3101 Math; freshman math. I finally pass it, but then I'm having trouble with – we had a professor, Dr. Winston Farquer. His son was a state champion tennis player for El Paso High. I won't – not one of my favorite professors.

Kristine Navarro: We all have a few; don't worry.

Julius Lowenberg: And I took him and I dropped him and I took him and he flunked me. It was a simple course, but I just couldn't get into it. So I took it – I had to have it to graduate, because it was a freshman class – so I took it correspondence course. Of course in those days, a correspondence course wasn't like you all have today; you can't get on the computer and – they sent you a deal, you wrote it out, you mailed it back; they sent you another one. So Irene is expecting Debbie, my third. Before that I signed a contract with the Putnam school here –

Kristine Navarro: Putnam Elementary?

Julius Lowenberg: Uh-huh. It was brand new; it was the jewel of the El Paso Public Schools, west side. I was going to be the football coach and basketball coach. I signed it – I signed the contract for \$5,000.000 okay. Which we were making \$160.00 and \$75.00 – and I had just bought a new house, where Eric lives right next door, and I bought a brand new car. So I'm having a brand new baby, so I'm working little league summer baseball, and Tom Rush was a commissioner, and he came down and used to get, I think, \$50.00 for the little league, and if we did our own grounds keeping – line the field – we'd get another \$25.00. So I did my own, because I needed the money. He came by one day and says, "You want to go look at a high school job?" I said, "What do you mean a high school job? Rush, you're crazy." He said, "No, come on. Let's go." So I got in, we're driving up towards Ken Util, and I said, "Tom, you've got to be kidding me. It's not Lone Star School, is it?" That's what it was before Lone Star was the elementary school. When I was coaching at St. Patrick's, we would have them – we'd invite them sometimes to our tournaments, and every time we'd invite them they'd ransack the dressing room, they'd steal everything, they'd break – they were terrible. So we get up there, and I said, "Tom, you're crazy. This is not a high school." He said, "Let me have you meet somebody." So Joe McDougal was the superintendent – the first superintendent of Ken Util, and he had been the coach at Austin High School – the eighth grade coach when I was coaching at St. Patrick's, and we had played him and beat him three times, so he knew me. So he showed me around, said, "We don't have a field, we don't have anything. I need for you to start an athletic program from scratch." Man, you know, my mind is going, "Great opportunity, but my wife is going to kill me." So I said, "Okay, all right. I'll take it."

Kristine Navarro: What made you decide to take it?

Julius Lowenberg: Just the opportunity, the challenge of starting a program. The state's salary at that time was \$3600.00. The way the salaries work is the state – everybody in the state, every teacher in the state gets the same state salary – but then your school district gives you – they determine whether they're going to give you a \$10,000.00 above it or \$15,000.00 above it – but everybody in the state gets the same amount. It's called the average daily attendance – based on average daily attendance. So he said, "ADA, your salary is \$3600.00." I thought, "Oh."

Kristine Navarro: That's a pay cut right?

Julius Lowenberg: “But, I’m going to give you \$400.00 – “ My salary at Putnam was \$5600, I’m sorry. “I’m going to give you \$400.00. You’re going to be the head football coach, head track coach, head of the P.E. department, and junior high boys and girls basketball coach.” I said, “Okay, I’ll take it. Where do I sign?” So I signed the contract. I come home, my wife’s at work. Well, I go home, go finish the field, come home that night, I come in, I’m all fired up; I’m ready. Irene says, “What’s happened honey?” “I’m the head football coach of a high school.” And she looks dumbfounded. “What’s wrong? What are you talking about?” I said, “Ken Util is starting a new school, brand new school, and I’m the head football coach.” She said, “What’s your salary?”

Kristine Navarro: She knew.

Julius Lowenberg: I said, “\$4000.00.” She started crying. She started crying. She said, “Honey, we’re having a baby. We have a new car, we’ve got a new house.” I said, “I know, but it’s an opportunity.” So I finally convinced her. So then she goes to the hospital – I’m supposed to graduate on – Debbie was born on the 26th – 25th of August. I’m already started football, I’m already practicing football. I’m supposed to graduate on the 26th – no 28th, sorry – so Debbie was born. I don’t have my grade from educational psychology, so I can’t graduate if I don’t have my grade.

Kristine Navarro: Why don’t you have a grade?

Julius Lowenberg: Because they hadn’t sent it to me yet; the professor hadn’t sent it to me yet.

Kristine Navarro: This is a correspondence course?

Julius Lowenberg: The correspondence course. So I’m – we didn’t have telephone, so I’m on the pay phone there at the hospital, and I call the professor because I had his number, so this secretary answers, and I said, “Ma’am, this is Julius Lowenberg, blah blah blah, I need to get my grade; I’m graduating.” “I’m sorry Mr. Lowenberg, Dr. So-and-so is fishing. We can’t get a hold of him.” I said, “Ma’am,” – I was almost crying – “You do not understand. I’ve got two kids, one on the way.”

Kristine Navarro: Literally.

Julius Lowenberg: “I mean, just born. I’ve got a job; I have to have this grade. I don’t care if it’s a D; I don’t care what it is.” “Mr. Lowenberg, let me see what I can do.” So I said, “I’m here on the phone; here’s a

phone number.” She calls back, says, “I’m calling the university and I’m giving you a C.” “I appreciate it ma’am, thank you.” I come back, and I get my grade – I get an A – how can you not get an A in a correspondence course. But that’s how close I came to not graduating. I almost didn’t graduate because of that one course. And then I took the job at Ken Util, and we had a great run. I mean –

Kristine Navarro: How long were you there?

Julius Lowenberg: Twelve years. And we won – all in all I think it was 21 district championships and 2 state championships in different sports, because I coached basketball three years and won the district all three years in that, and then I gave that up and I coached – I won eleven straight district track championships; two state cross-country championships and four football district championships.

Kristine Navarro: Why do you think you were so successful at winning?

Julius Lowenberg: Let me tell you this story of the first football game. We had no field. We practiced out in the rocks. And then a farmer let us go up to a field that he had up by Ken Util; it wasn’t grass, it was – it had a little bit of grass, but not much – but we went to scrimmage Gaston – I only had 19, 19 kids on my team –

Kristine Navarro: How many do you need?

Julius Lowenberg: Well, you only need eleven.

Kristine Navarro: Okay.

Julius Lowenberg: But you know, generally you want to keep 36 to 40 is what a general high school squad is. And old JV, we didn’t have a B team; we didn’t have people coming up; we just had those 19 boys. Well, we took off to Gaston to scrimmage Gaston – not a game – and I had this kid, Rufus Rivera, he could have passed for black he was that dark – good little kid – and he was the first one off the bus. We pull up there and he jumps out and he starts rolling in the grass. Just rolling in the grass. We’d never practiced on real grass before. I mean, they thought it was the greatest thing in the world. So anyway, we get ready to go play our very first ball game, we go to Cloudcroft, and we go up in an old school bus, so I tell them – in those days we had the Army duffle bags, that’s what we carried our equipment in – and I told our boys, “Okay, everybody is wearing – you have to have – I don’t care if it’s Levi’s – clean pants. They’ve got to be clean. You’re going to wear a shirt with

a tie. If you don't have a tie, I have ties. I'll give you a tie. Don't worry about it. We're going to present ourselves." So we get there, and I'm getting on the bus and I'm standing there, naturally checking, and there comes Rufus. No tie. I said, "Rufus, where's your tie?" "I'm not going to wear one." I said, "Rufus, you don't have one?" "I'm not going to wear one coach." Then all the windows opened on the bus to see what Coach Lowenberg was going to do, so I said, "Okay Rufus, take your equipment and take it inside the building and we'll see you Monday at practice." And I left him there. And then I'm going on the way up, I'm thinking, "Okay, he starts for me at right guard, he's my middle linebacker – who am I going to use to go in there?" Well, we got beat pretty bad.

But I never had another problem – the kids knew that I meant business. And I think – kids want discipline, all kids want discipline. They may not tell you they want it, but they do appreciate it, because you can tell afterwards, they said, "You know coach, I thought you were – " they called me some names. He said, "But we really appreciate what you did for us, that you made us realize." Then afterwards we got a little bit of money and I bought them all blazers, and they had the state of Texas emblem, and then right on the tip of it a little star for Ken Util, because we're right on the tip of Texas. We used to play in those days we used to play Sierra Blanca, Tornilla, Fabons, Klent, Dell City – the little – Sierra Blanca, Van Horn – the girls from those schools, when our guys would come – because we used to travel together. In those days the girls played first and the boys played second; we didn't have JV's to play before us. So we'd all travel together. So I had all my guys in ties and their slacks and their blazers, and in those days everything was clean – crew cuts almost – clean cut look. And the girls from these other schools, they'd go ga-ga over these guys, because they'd look – their guys looked scraggly and our girls were – one of the girls was so upset with me. I said, "Well, you girls are with them all the time, you've got first choice; it's not my fault." But they were so proud wearing their blazers.

Kristine Navarro: Why was that important to you?

Julius Lowenberg: It's how you present yourself. It's just like my mother and dad used to tell me. When you go someplace, you go looking like – if you're going to go to your grandfather's, you're going to go clean. You're going to take a bath or at least wash your hands, wash your face, wash behind your ears and you're going to put a clean shirt on. And I was always taught that way, to present yourself properly. I mean, If you don't have respect for yourself, you're

not going to have respect for anybody else; you've got to have respect for yourself first, and that's what I tried to build in these guys and these girls. Respect yourselves. Just because you come from Ken Util, you're a bunch of little Mexicans. We went to Bront, Texas, which is the Baptist – one of the Baptist capitals of the world, I think. We had a real good football team; we had won the district, and the paper there said – this was about Sylvester, he'll tell you this story if you ask him – we get there and the newspaper, the Bront Daily News or whatever says, "Ken Util comes with the 'South of the boarder' flavor." Okay? So I think, "Man, I'm going to use this to fire them up." And I go up and we get in there, and I'm getting excited, I'm getting riled up, and I say, "You know, you guys know what they're calling you? You realize what they're calling you when they made this comment? They're calling you a bunch of Spics." Silence. Sylvester's hand goes up. "Coach, what's a spic?" They had no idea. These kids had no idea. They were all farm kids, you know? Half of them – we have kids there that had not been to El Paso. They'd not been to El Paso.

I took a kid – Abram – a little Mylar – wasn't very good at all. Little tiny guy, but gutsy, gutsy. Somehow he qualified to the regional meet in Lubbock, so I think we went through Clovis or Roswell, wherever we went to eat, we went to a restaurant. Well, this kid had never been in a restaurant – literally never been in a restaurant. And we sat down, and he's sitting next to me and you know how you have your two forks and a knife and a spoon, they give you the salad – and in those days, a chicken fried steak is all we could afford – so everybody's eating their salad and I'm looking over and Abram's going like this, scared to death, he's just – I said, "Abram, what's wrong son?" He said, "Coach, which fork do I use?" I said, "Abram, any one you want." That's what type of kids I had. And you know, then we took them – there's stories, all kinds of stories like that. Another one of the kids that got transferred in from Phoenix, Mexican kid, couldn't speak a word of Spanish. He was chastised by our kids, I mean, he was – Morio, Joe Morio – and he just never – he was like I was at St. Patrick. He was from Hispanic background, his parents were, but he couldn't speak Spanish. And the kids got on him miserably. And finally I stopped and I told them, "Look, this kid's from Phoenix. This is a different world that he's come to, completely different world." And I get – we take him, we go to play basketball in Redoso, and he did the same thing that Rufus did on the grass. He jumped out of the bus, and rolled – he had never seen snow. Never had seen snow in his life. So those are the type of kids that I had that – and I think that's what I tried to instill in

them that you're as good as anybody else. In fact, a lot of the times you're better. You're better than a lot of these people. And they did; we proved it just with our success. I mean, we had a slider. We walked with a slider, we did. And people didn't like it. Other teams didn't like it. But then, slowly in our district, other teams started wearing blazers and started wearing ties and started looking – we bought a Greyhound bus, an old Greyhound bus instead of the old school, painted it our colors, put a great big eel on it, and we would drive, that's how we went in class. We were a class act. It was just a lot of – it was just probably – I used to take my kids – when we did our first football field, when we finally planted seed – we didn't sod – we had sprinklers that we had to move, we didn't have a sprinkler system. So we went, planted the grass, put the sprinklers – our kids would sleep in bedrolls – not in bedrolls, just sleep out there in a blanket so they could change – because you had to change the water every so often. So I'd have three or four kids sleep one night, three or four the other night. They stayed and got up and moved the sprinklers around.

Kristine Navarro: Your football team?

Julius Lowenberg: My football team. So we could have a football field. That's what they did.

Kristine Navarro: How did you motivate them?

Julius Lowenberg: They didn't have anything. This is something they didn't have. They didn't have athletics. They didn't have – before that, the kids that – if they wanted to go to high school, they had to go to either El Paso High – well, they had to go to El Paso High, because they couldn't go to Gaston because that was out of state – so they had to go to El Paso High, and they had to ride a bus from Ken Util to El Paso High. They couldn't play athletics because the bus from El Paso High/Ken Util came right after school, so consequently we had very, very few, very few high school students amongst those graduates. So we gave them something that they became proud of. That's what I always told people, I think that's the biggest thing is those kids planted that grass and played on that grass themselves.

Kristine Navarro: Did you have to ask them to stay and change the water?

Julius Lowenberg: Yeah, I said, "Look, guys, we need – who volunteers?" Of course I'm sure they horsed around and had a good time – it was during the summer, you know, they weren't in school – but that's what we did. And then we built a track and Tom Mays, who was our county commissioner at that time – the track was build out of the

slag, they gave it to us from the smelter. So while we're talking about Los Arco, I'm thankful to Los Arco. But we did everything ourselves. Our janitors built our bleachers out of cinderblock and 2x12's. Built a press box.

Kristine Navarro: When you got your first football field, did it make a difference to your team?

Julius Lowenberg: Oh yeah. Well, we would have so many people there. You know, Ken Util was – and still – well, it's not much anymore, because the stadium now holds 8,000, the new stadium – but we'd have people lined up – we had a fence around it. I mean, that's all there was to do, you know? There was three bars in Ken Util. There's no movie house, there's two little restaurants, so it gave the community a sense of pride. This was theirs. And I had great, great parent – I mean, Coach Lowenberg said to do it, you did it; there was no – I never had a problem with a parent. And in those days we used to swat, you know? And we'd get the deal from the kids, "Coach, give me a swat. Just don't tell my father." Same thing I did; I used to get swats at Cathedral, just don't let my father know I'm getting them, because I'll get them twice as bad when I get home. And I think that's continued. If you go up to Ken Util now and you see that new stadium and that new school, there's no graffiti whatsoever on that school. I was – I've been going up there for three years now to the stadium. It's just amazing the pride that that community has, and they still do. They still have great teams there. They have some great, great football, basketball, track, girls volleyball – everything. And back in our day, I don't know if any of you played basketball or seen the women's basketball – women's basketball is played just like men's basketball now. In the old days it wasn't. It was three on one side and three on the other side; you had three forwards and three guards, and you couldn't cross the line. The only ones that scored were your forwards; your guards couldn't score. And that's the way it was played. We had great basketball teams; they were as good as our football teams. It was just – our track team – we used to have what we called the Eagle Relays, and we would have up to 75 teams in a three day meet – two divisions. All the El Paso schools, people from San Marcus, Texas. From Sanguine – from all over. Albuquerque. We had a huge, huge track meet on that little track that we had; it was just a cinder track. It was – but it was – and the community came in. and Irene used to sell burritos – people used to sell burritos – it was a real – it was a family event. Every football game was a family event. Like, our janitor – we had a tradition, and he started it – he'd come into the dressing room and get the game ball that they were going to use for the

game, and he'd take it and take it out and he kept it, and then when the official called for the game ball, he walked out there, and he had to present that game ball to the official. And you know what the kids did, after about three years? They voted to get him a letterman's jacket. He was a janitor; he was just our janitor. But it was a lot of fun.

Kristine Navarro: So at all levels they took pride in the team.

Julius Lowenberg: All levels, oh yeah. And certain people had to run the chains. A school board member, Mr. Gusman, he had to be on the chains. Nobody took that chain from him.

Kristine Navarro: Why?

Julius Lowenberg: That was his contribution I guess. But I didn't have kids running chains; they were men, fathers of the kids. School board members. It was neat. Like Irene says, probably some of the best years of our lives.

Kristine Navarro: So you were there for twelve years?

Julius Lowenberg: Twelve years.

Kristine Navarro: And then where did you move on to?

Julius Lowenberg: Then I left coaching, I said I've done enough, and I went to work for Bob Hays. Remember Bob Hays? Bullet Bob Hays from the Dallas Cowboys. They were selling cleaning – like Amway? Like an Amway. And it didn't set with me. And then my good friend Joe Portillo was at Cathedral, and Brother Emity Long – he was an English teacher at Cathedral for many, many years; very, very well respected. In fact, he got an honor from Notre Dame, and he's the one that helped my son get into Notre Dame. And I'm sitting here at home one day, and I get a phone call from Brother Emity. "Julius, blah blah blah. Joe Portillo resigned today. I would like for you to come and talk to Brother Adrian about the Cathedral job." I said, "Boy, okay." So I told Irene, I was all excited to get back into coaching. I said, "Well, they may give it to me." So I went, interviewed, and sure enough I got the job. And Cathedral had gone, in the two years before they had gone zero – no, one in three? One in 19. And so I took over – I had to keep all the same coaches – good coaches that I had – and the first year we went in there, I did the same thing in there. I changed uniforms, I threw everything away that was old, got them some brand new spanking fancy uniforms, new helmets – we looked like Notre Dame, and

started scheduling some El Paso schools. And the first year we went three in seven. And then I started up a JV, but then the next year I had 45 varsity players, 40 JV players, and 45 freshman players.

Kristine Navarro: What to you attribute the high numbers?

Julius Lowenberg: I went out and recruited and recruited and went to P.E. classes and said, "You need to play football, and you need to do this." See, what a lot of coaches think, because football is standard here, basketball is here, kids are going to flock to you. That's not the case. Sometimes a kid needs a little, "God, Coach asked me to go out for football. Man, he must want me." You give them that feeling. And that's what I did. And then I went to all the Catholic schools – they had tackle football; every Saturday I was at the Catholic schools and I was talking to kids, I was talking to parents. I got the majority of them. So the next year we played for the state championship, and our freshman team beat every El Paso school they played, and our JV only lost one game. So we had a tremendous season. And then, I got involved with Monterrey Mexico, with the University in Provo, Utah. They called me, this coach – an Anglo coach that was coaching; he was just one. He said, "I'm looking for some football players." I said, "Well, I've got you some football players here." So I sent down about three or four of them. And then the head coach started talking to me, and said, "How would you like to come down and coach?" I said, "God, I don't know. I like what I'm doing." They said, "No, let me fly you and Irene down." So they flew Irene and I down to Monterrey and wined and dined us, this is our football – nice facilities. And they play in front of 75,000 people; it's a big time – football down there is big time. I didn't know it. So they said, "We want you to be the offensive coordinator, we'll give you offensive coordinator and I want you to recruit the southern part of Texas." So I came home and Irene and I talked and we talked and – I was making \$1,000.00 at Cathedral a month – a little less than \$1,000.00. And he offered me – at that time, a peso was twelve and a half to one – and he offered me – it came out to \$2,000.00 a month. So I said, "Okay, let's go."

So we took off. I took off. I had four kids, I had a dog – big red Irish setter – and two cars, and we shipped all our stuff – furniture, everything from our house; everything – left the house empty, leased it. Leased the house out. Drove down, found a place down there. My furniture was caught up in customs in Alana; they wouldn't let it go for some reason, so we rented an apartment furnished, and I started coaching down there. I took about 26 kids

from the states. In fact, one of them that graduated that I took down, that was one of my players, is the head football coach at Jefferson. Another one is a principal at Klent. So they made it through. Another one is a dentist. So we went down there, had a great season, and then the peso devaluated to – I think it hit that real rock bottom, so my salary was cut in half, and then it was cut in half – they still paid me in peso's, but my salary was cut in half because it converted – I still had to pay for the house here, I still had car insurance. So we decided that we better come home. So I brought the family home – brought two cars, the kids and the dog – and we stayed at my mother's house, and Irene and I went back to wrap up everything in the other car, and then we came back. And then as soon as I got here, I said, "Well God, what am I going to do?" As soon as I got here, I got a call from a guy that had coached with me at Ken Util, Froggy Barnes. And he was a trainer now at Gaston, and Gaston had lost their coach – had fired a coach – and said, "Julius, we're looking for a coach." And I said, "Where do I go?" And he said, "Let me tell you one thing – Don Maynard," – you know who Don Maynard is? – "He's applied for the job." I said, "Oh, well, they're going to get Don Maynard. He's an all-pro wide receiver." So I go over there to interview. Well, the superintendent was at one time the coach at Gaston when I was coaching at Ken Util, so we knew each other, Benny Trujillo. So I talked to him, said, "What's the deal Ben?" He said, "Well, we need a coach." I said, "Don Maynard's going to get it you know?" He said, "Don Maynard's never coached a day in his life. Just because he played." So they hired me. So I went to Gaston, and I took that team – they were zero and 20, and we did the same thing there. We won four the first year, and the next year we were eight, two, and one. And nobody – not even my brother went up and coached – eight, two, and won – he never broke – to this day, they've never had a season that good. And I kid my brother all the time, because they went seven and three.

Kristine Navarro: He's close.

Julius Lowenberg: He was close. And then I stayed there for two years and then I could see the change in administrators – in administration and the parents, and the second year there I started – in New Mexico you couldn't have major sports period – major sports is the last period and you get your kids and you get an extra hour – so I asked them if I could start a weight program during the day and have my kids come in during the day. At least we'd have weights. Of course, I'd have to open it to all students; I couldn't do it for just athletes. So they did. We bought a bunch of weights – money was no problem at Gaston; they were flush with money. And first day of

school, guys are coming in, “Coach Lowenberg, we can take Lowenberg, esta facil.” So I got them all, I said, “I know you guys are saying this is easy, and it is. All you guys that are not athletes, you don’t have to do anything but sit down. All you have to do is suit up. You have to wear shorts – I don’t care if they’re cutoffs or what it is. It’s a boy’s gym, if you don’t have shorts, come in your underwear; I don’t care. There’s no girls in here. You’re going to get an A. My athletes – some are going to get B’s, some are going to get C’s. Some are even going to get D’s, because they’re going to be given that they’ve got to do this by this time by this time, by this time. They have a goal to reach.” First few days they suited up. After awhile they’re coming in, don’t suit up. I said, “Guys, I’m telling you. You’re going to – it will be the only A you will ever receive in your lifetime at Gatson. I know that. I know you guys.” Good guys, but just lazy. Didn’t suit up. Six week period I flunked 92 guys, okay? Some of my athletes got D’s, got C’s that didn’t do the work. So Benny calls me in. Benny says, “Julius, how can you flunk so many kids in P.E.?” I said, “Benny, you were in it before me. What’s so hard about having a kid suit up and get an A?” “Oh, we can’t have that. We can’t have school board.” I said, “But I’m not changing the grades Benny. I’m sorry.” Well, come to find out, Benny changed the grades. They changed the grades and gave all those kids A’s, and that’s when I came home and told Irene, “You know what, it’s time to start looking for something else, I think. It’s about time.” Great kids – I had great kids at Gaston. But I decided – if the administration’s not going to back you, it’s time to – because you’re going to make – and then we had kids that started in the classroom using the four letter word back to the teachers and not being able to do anything to them, and I told Irene, “One of them does that to me, either I’m dead or he’s dead or I’m in jail. So the best thing to do is get out of here.”

So I didn’t have any plans, and then my wife was working for an electrical contractor, Nuckett Electric, and they were working for Lloyd Burrs, they were doing – Lloyd Burrs is a builder here in El Paso, Lloyd Burrs is a builder. And I had known Lloyd because he was president of the El Paso Track and Field Association when Wayne Vandenburg was here, and I was one of the officials for the track meets, so I used to work the track meets. So when I got back, I had built – I was building this pool here, and it was a new concept, blown fiber glass, and Lloyd wanted to come see it, so we invited Lloyd and Diane over one afternoon to have hamburgers or something, and we were sitting out here, he says, “What are you going to do this summer?” I said, “Work the summer program, as usual, for \$75.00 a week. Every night, open up the gym.” He said,

“Why don’t you come work for me? You can still do that.” I said, “Work for you doing what?” “I need a superintendent.” I said, “Lloyd, I don’t know a 2x4 from a 2x6. I couldn’t tell you.” He said, “What you can do is manage people. That’s what I need. I need somebody to manage my sons and make sure.” And that’s where this came about. “Make sure that my sub – my electrician is at this address tomorrow morning, the concrete man is at, you know.” I said, “Well, I guess I can do that.” So it’ll pay \$150.00 a week. Well, that’s better than \$50.00. but in teaching, see, you can get your salary either on a nine month basis or a twelve – you can have it extended twelve months so that during the summer time you’re not starving, so I always did mine twelve months, so I wasn’t really worried. So I went to work for him, and my wife makes me – gets me two sandwiches and I don’t know what else – two plain sandwiches, bologna and cheese, whatever it is in the lunch box – so I go to Lloyd – Lloyd lived right over here – I go there and he gives me the truck, gives me the key, gives me a radio, shows me how to use it. Says, “Okay, let’s go.” Takes me around, drives me around to all the jobs, I just have to stop again with Anthony, get lunch, jump back, bring him back over, he says, “Okay, I’ll see you later.” I said, “What do you mean you’ll see me later.” He said, “Take off. You know where the jobs are. Take off.” So I take off and I go around and meet the guys. Of course they don’t speak Spanish. We have a construction language.

Kristine Navarro: Which is?

Julius Lowenberg: Pretty bad. I mean, it’s Spanish, but it’s – I don’t know what you would call it. El Tiler. For the tile man. It’s not tile – tile is also lejo, but over here the guys called it [Spanish phrase.] So anyway, I’m out there – the next day I go out and lunch time and the guys in the garage because it’s cool in there, and I go over there and sit down and I take out my sandwiches, and sometimes they’ve got fires outside and they had caldillo, rice and beans and tortillas – so I got to be known as [Spanish phrase.] So I told Irene, “Honey, make me some burritos or something would you? I’m catching too much.” Then I started getting along with them. I just started asking them, “I know that’s a truss, but I can’t tell a guy where the truss is.” So Roberto, a painter, he spoke English very well. He started helping me. It’s cabrillas, son los cabrillas. So I got to learn a little bit more. So I got to be a pretty good superintendent. I could put on houses, so the first year – oh, then I went to work – he said, “Come to work for me full time.” I said, “Oh, God, here’s my chance to get out of coaching, get out of this situation.” So I said, “Okay.” He said, “I’ll give you \$180.00 a week, plus a truck,

plus a bonus at the end of the year.” Teaching all these years you never get a bonus. So I went up, resigned, and went to work for him and sure enough, my first year I got a \$1,000.00 bonus for Christmas. Then the second year I got a \$5,000.00 bonus. And my last year there, they had a brand new – well, year old Crown Vic, Ford Crown Victoria, and she wanted – Diane wanted a Cadillac, so he got her a Cadillac and they gave me the Crown Vic. And that’s when Carter was President. Of course, you all are too young to remember those days. And the interest rate was up at twenty some odd and builders were – he went broke. And Louie Rico, a compadre of mine, he had his own remodeling business, and we had talked about going into business, and talked about it, but it never materialized. So I called around, said Doogie – we called him Doogie.

Kristine Navarro: Doogie?

Julius Lowenberg: Doogie.

Kristine Navarro: Okay.

Julius Lowenberg: And – Doogie Rico – and he said, “Sure, let’s form a partnership.” So we formed a partnership. We went out to a bank and it’s what is now – what bank is it – State National? – it was a State National. Anyway, Franklin Bank. And Billy Lowenstein was the president, and I had coached Billy before at St. Patrick’s. So I went in and said, “Billy, we want to.” And he said, “Well, I’ve been telling you to go into business for awhile.” He said, “What do you mean?” I said, “Well, I need \$2,000.00 to get started. I’ve got no collateral. I don’t own my home. I don’t own my car. I’ve got nothing.” “Don’t worry.” So I started with \$2,000.00, and I was paying myself \$250.00 a week, and we were almost out of the \$2,000.00 when – was it Dr. Atigo Rodriguez called me – first job I’d ever had. Second story addition to this house in Portsmouth. And that’s how we started. And we stayed together for – excuse me – about three years, and then he went on a joint venture with Memo Recon, Recon Engineering. And I think, “Well, this is a good time for me to go out on my own.” So we talked and split, no problems, no – he took this and I took that, and I started my own business and we did a – put an office, put a desk in the dining room and I ran the deal and ran the office and got going and things started steamrolling, and I hired a laborer – I used to hire everything out, sub everything out; I had no payroll – but then I hired a laborer because I wanted to make sure my jobs were clean at the end of the job. And then I hired Roberto, the one I still have now, and then I hired Rob and I ended up with four workers – two

carpenters and two helpers, laborers, and just started building the business from there. And then we got involved with NARI, which is a National Association of Remodeling Industry – it's a trade organization like the home builders – and I started the chapter here, and then I got to go on – I told Irene, “You know, we need to go to some of these. They have conventions two a year – three a year before. And there's a lot of good seminars that I could – because I'm a football coach; I'm not – “

Kristine Navarro: Why did you think going to the seminars was important?

Julius Lowenberg: Because I had – when we formed the deal here, the organization, just talking with some of the other contractors, it's not so much – you build a wall, you build a wall, you build a wall – but how do you market, how do you bid, how do you – running the people I had no problem, but learning some of the stuff, and Irene for bookkeeping purposes and for construction is different. Keep up with what are my job costs? Am I bidding correctly? She would give me a sheet every week on that job to know where I was and know how much I've drawn, and I'd say, “Oh, man, I'm paying the carpenter too much money because I didn't figure.” Things like that. So we started going to them, and the first one I went to I met this guy that was head of membership development for National. National used to have their headquarters in D.C., and we got to drinking beer there, and he said, “Why don't you start a chapter?” I said, “Okay, let's start one.” So we came back, I got 15 people, we started a chapter. Then I started getting involved with National, and then we had regional vice presidents at that time – there were seven regions in the United States with regional vice presidents that took care of my region – I became regional vice president when our vice president resigned and the president appointed me. Then I was elected for five more – six more years as regional vice president. Then I ran for National Secretary, and I won National Secretary. Then I ran for third vice president, second vice president, first vice president, and then national president. And then I became National President in 2001, I think. But in the meantime, I turned 65, and Irene and I decided – I was doing so much with NARI, I said, “You know what, it's a good time to retire.”

So I sold the business to my son-in-law, my son, and my daughter, and I retired. But I moved the office from Washington D.C. – we bought a building in Chicago and we renovated, and I was down there every week supervising the renovation, and I traveled all over the country to different meetings. And I could take Irene; I only had to pay her airfare, but her hotel and food was free. So I was

busy. and then I became – after president I became – I took NARI to the national convention for the first time in the history of the organization for a convention out of the country. I had our convention in Masamun, and I had it at Osid all inclusive. Well, the people from back East griped about the airfare and griped about the airfare, because it was a little more expensive, but when they found out all they could eat and all they could drink was for free, that was it. that was it. in fact, they still say, “When are we going back to Masamun?” And then I became Chairman of the Board, and all of a sudden we came back on a Sunday and I was no longer Chairman of the Board. There was not an email, there was not a phone call – it was like I dropped off the face of the earth. And right at that time, Eric decided, “You know what dad, I’m going to go work for Enzer Title.” So I came into Pat and Debbie, and I said, “Look, I’m ready to go to work. You don’t have to pay me a salary, just take care of my truck, take care of a little – I don’t want a salary because I’ve got to pay tax on it.” So they’d take care of all the other stuff. So that’s when I came back. It’s been eight years now I guess, and I still don’t know if I can – the nice thing about it is that I can come and go pretty well as I please; it’s not where I’m tied down here. so that’s –

Kristine Navarro: Okay, I have a couple of questions just going back. What did you learn when you first had the first superintendent job? What did you learn from that experience?

Julius Lowenberg: That you don’t know a lot. That you have to listen, you have to sit there and listen. It’s like – when I went to Ken Util, they didn’t know I could speak Spanish, so the first two weeks of school I never spoke Spanish. Never, so that I could go by and the girls, “[Speaking Spanish.]’ Man, I guess it was on Sunday, I got up and hit them in Spanish, it was like, dead silence. Here he knows everything we’ve been saying. But you learn more from listening than from speaking, you know? Of course I’m speaking a lot here.

Kristine Navarro: That’s good, that’s good.

Julius Lowenberg: But you just walk around and listen to the guys talking and listen to what they’re saying and listen to how they’re solving this problem, “This door doesn’t fit, and the material came crooked.” You just – and then at that particular time, in the area where we’re working, subdivisionally, U.S. Homes was a big national home builders, and they came into El Paso, and I met two of their superintendents, and became – we have lunch – sit around and have lunch again, how you guys are doing this and how do you guys order material, and that was just it. Just sitting and listening.

Mainly listening. And asking questions. Because they knew more than I did. I'm not going to tell them how to frame a house; they're going to tell me how they're going to frame a house. Show me.

Kristine Navarro: Were they apprehensive of telling you or sharing with you their knowledge?

Julius Lowenberg: No, no, not at all. We became – in fact, some of them I'm still – Chato Beto, I still talk to him if I need a painter. He works for Marty Kruper, she was one of the – and she's in our association – she was the first female superintendent for U.S. Homes. First female superintendent in El Paso. So we got to be friends. They accepted me. They kidded me a lot; I took a lot of kidding. But I deserved it.

Kristine Navarro: Did that bother you?

Julius Lowenberg: No, no. Just like that story, [Spanish], it's gone around construction business here for years. I'll never forget that. Then I quit, no more lunch bucket; get a paper sack or something. Get some burritos.

Kristine Navarro: You mentioned when you partnered for the first –

Julius Lowenberg: For Rico.

Kristine Navarro: With Rico. When you started your own business, how did you choose the name?

Julius Lowenberg: Well, when we started – Rico and I started the business, he had Louie Rico – Louis Rico Construction. Luis. He spelled it Luis. Luis. When we formed mine, we decided – I'm going to capitalize on people know me, know the name – not only me, my brother's in the coaching profession, so Lowenberg is out there – so why change it? So it became Julius – the first one was Julius Lowenberg Construction. It was dully and I partnered. He kept his business; we ran ours. But we kept it for name recognition. Then when the kids took it over – I took the kids in first, they came in to work for me – and we called it Julius Lowenberg and Associates Construction. And then they just kept the name.

Kristine Navarro: Kept the name afterwards? Did you ever have trouble funding?

Julius Lowenberg: Oh yeah, a lot of times. We used to have – and they don't have it now – we used to have a line of credit. We'd go to the bank and

get a line of credit. That's why I don't like to do any government jobs. I don't like to do any city, school, because first of all, they have a retainage, and second of all, sometimes you don't get paid for 45, 50 days, so you've got to have a cash flow coming in to keep you going, because you've got all these other jobs going. You've got these guys you've got to pay, and while they're waiting for the paperwork to come through, or their offices are in Tim-Buc-Tu, they're not here. If there's here – that's why I like the residential remodeling, because if I remodel your house, okay, I give you a draw, and I go on Friday – like I've got one ready to go tomorrow – he's the draw that's in the contract, you give me a check. So it's – I'm remembering yeah, a lot of times we went down and took that \$25,000.00 line of credit down to nothing. In fact, there for awhile I told Irene, about the second year, it was still shaky, and I told her, "Honey, have you paid the telephone bill?" That's when we decided to go to get into NARI, that's when. "Have you paid the telephone bill? It's not ringing." "Yeah, I paid it." "Well, it's not ringing. We've got to do something."

Kristine Navarro: Now why was joining that organization important?

Julius Lowenberg: Oh yes.

Kristine Navarro: Why?

Julius Lowenberg: Why? Because it gives you – professionally, we are – whose members are dedicated ensuring the consumer has a positive remodeling experience. We're called professional remodelers. We want to set ourselves – the people that belong to this – we don't want to be the guy that's in the pickup truck that goes to you, and says, "Yeah, I can fix your roof." He's not a roofer, but he can fix your roof, and he wants 50 percent down. You give him 50 percent down and you never see him again. Or he's going to remodel your bathroom, and he's going to do the plumbing himself, he's going to do the electric – which is all illegal – but they are – I don't know if you saw in the paper, a guy that used to work for Lloyd Burrs, did you see that contact that he was put in jail? Victor? Well, Victor worked – he was my tile man. Victor was his apprentice. And then he got out on his own, and he had already done this once before. But that's the type that we fight, and I think belong to – same thing with the home builders. If you belong – if you're a home builder, belong to the home builders. A medical profession, belong to the American Medical Association.

Kristine Navarro: Should people be looking for members?

Julius Lowenberg: Yes. If you – we always try to tell people look for a professional remodeler. I have a little job I'm doing right now, I didn't have to take out a permit, but I felt, I don't want an inspector coming by, "Where's your permit Julius?" "I don't need it." So I took out a little measly permit, to do a little painting and take a wall out. 99 percent of the guys won't do that. and people will say, "Well, you guys are more expensive." Well yeah, we're more expensive because we have insurance, we're bonded, we have – we do things the right way. We clean up when we're through. If we're tearing up part of this house, we'll put a screen up here so we keep your house as clean as possible. But we consider ourselves professionals. And it's done a tremendous – I attribute 99 percent of our success to them.

Kristine Navarro: Why would that be?

Julius Lowenberg: Because we learn so much from other people. You learn how – there's a guy, Les Cunningham that I'm going to see in Eugene – I go to see him every year – he was the president before me. And he is business networks. He teaches you how to network. And I've gone to some seminar, how to treat people. Just how, when you come into a house, you look around, how to leave a house when you leave every night. Some people just – a home builder is not a good remodeler. You know why?

Kristine Navarro: Tell me.

Julius Lowenberg: Okay, you're building a new home. You've got your sheet rocker, and he's doing the sheetrock and he's cutting the sheetrock and dust is falling all over. Then he comes and starts taping. You know, taping and the mastic falls on the floor and they just scrape it up. The floor – when the slab starts, it's completely clean right, because it's just been poured. It's concrete. They don't cover it with anything. They just leave just the way – the painters, they paint and there's paint all over the floor – you go to remodel homes right now and you take the carpet off, put new carpet on, you'll think somebody got a paint brush and went like this. So there sums you can't use a homebuilder for my job. my guys, when we go in, we're living with you. We're living with furniture. We've got to move this furniture over here to work here, then we've got to move it back over here to move here. We've got to cover everything. And I love when I see homebuilders go in to do it, because they're going to call us sooner or later. They will. And homebuilders – a lot more of them are going in because of the slump in homes, but they've got to find a different sub. And our subs charge more money. We don't go by, "Okay, 32 cents a foot

to paint.” I take a sub in, “Okay, what’s it going to cost you to paint this?” He takes, “Look, I’ve got to move this furniture, I’ve got to move that thing, I’ve got to do this, I’ve got to do that, I’ve got to put this screen, I’ve got to cover the floor because they’re not going to change the carpet.” So he’s going to charge me more.

Kristine Navarro: How did you learn to estimate?

Julius Lowenberg: From Rico. See, I do the old estimating.

Kristine Navarro: Tell me what that is.

Julius Lowenberg: I don’t use a computer. I’ve tried the computer, and I just – it sounds – what I’m getting ready to do is St. Matthews Church, and that’s my estimate. I just write down what I’m going to do and how much it’s going to cost me, and Debbie types it, and sign the contract. But I learned it from him.

Kristine Navarro: You have this pad – tell me this story about this pad, and how it started.

Julius Lowenberg: When I went to work for Lloyd Burrs, it was the first – he gave me this before he gave me – Lloyd Burrs was a builder – he gave me this before he gave me the radio or the keys to the truck.

Kristine Navarro: The pad?

Julius Lowenberg: The pad. He said, “You have this pad every single day. You write down what you’re going to do, and if it gets done. Every day. Every day a different page.” Now sometimes I get two of them on one page, but before I had so much to do. And I had a little box in front of my – all of the folders like this with an address of each house that we were doing, because we would do house running right down the street, one after another. And you’d have the electrician at one and the carpenter at another, this one at this, and I used to get up – six o’clock in the morning – by 6:30 in the morning I was calling subs, okay, because Lloyd probably would have already called me by 6:30. And so he gave me this pad, said, “This is yours. You have that.” And he was a stickler for it. I mean, and when you walked in – when you went in the morning, you walked in with your pen in case he gave you something to do. You walked out, took off to where you were going and in the afternoons you had to go back to his office, report what was done, “So-and-so didn’t show up. The framer forgot this. Cashway didn’t deliver.” And I kept this to this day. But it’s also part of my football deal. I had to write everything down what we were going

to do, but I didn't have pads like this, we had a different deal. But until this day – this has been 30 – I bet I have gone through thousands of these.

Kristine Navarro: Do you save them?

Julius Lowenberg: Yeah.

Kristine Navarro: Do you have them? Probably?

Julius Lowenberg: I've got some folded, but –

Kristine Navarro: Oh, here they are.

Julius Lowenberg: Yeah, they're right there. So sometimes I'll go back, I'll go back to them a year, two years to somebody that called me that wanted a bid, and I bid and didn't get it but then called back, so I go back to see when it was and I go to my files and see if I've got the old bid, because that happens a lot.

Kristine Navarro: Why did you think starting a chapter for the organization was important here in El Paso?

Julius Lowenberg: Because I belonged to what was called a remodelers counsel; it was part of the homebuilders. We had our little remodelers association. In fact, I was vice president; I was going to be president the following year. And we had accumulated \$5,000.00 and what our president – Max Gulfine, who became president of NARI too – decided that we wanted to take out a full page ad in the El Paso Times – or the Herald Post as that time – to let people know about the remodelers association, that we were professional remodelers. Well, we went to the home builders, because all the money went in a general fund. So we asked them for this, and they said, "No, that's not your money. That belongs to general fund." So that's when I told Max, I said, "You know what Max, I resign." And that's when we started. And he resigned and we all came to NARI. So there's no more remodelers counsel; it's gone. It's completely gone.

Kristine Navarro: You're your own separate entity all together.

Julius Lowenberg: Separate entity all together. That's our logo, right there.

Kristine Navarro: The chapter logo, thank you. Can you tell me when you started moving up in the organization, in the NARI organization, did you ever encounter discrimination?

Julius Lowenberg: No. The only thing – you know – no, but there are very, very – sadly to say – very, very few nationally that go to the conventions and go – I can only remember one black, the guy was a big time sheet rocker from Memphis, Tennessee. And Hispanics there’s probably about four or five that are in the Board of Directors, and why I don’t know.

Kristine Navarro: Do they attend the conventions?

Julius Lowenberg: No, not many.

Kristine Navarro: Why do you think that is?

Julius Lowenberg: We’re starting – see, I started a chapter in San Antonio when I was regional Vice President. I started the San Antonio chapter and I started the Austin chapter. I started the Las Cruces chapter. Anyway, Austin and San Antonio, they had a lady there – what’s her name; she’s got arthritis real bad. She’s the sweetest lady you’ve ever met. She’s got a tremendous business. She got involved in the – what we call the Cody Awards, the Contractor of the Year, and we have – it’s like the Oscars. In fact, there’s an Oscar there.

Kristine Navarro: What did you get that award for?

Julius Lowenberg: For a kitchen under \$30,000.00. Then I got another one, a national for a commercial building – the old – what’s the name of that restaurant, it’s a Chinese restaurant on the freeway – and they had one on Mason street.

Kristine Navarro: Bows?

Julius Lowenberg: Bows. Uncle Bows. We remodeled all of Uncle Bows. But she got involved in it, so she goes and she’s become – we’re trying to get her to run for office because she’s a great lady; great lady. I don’t know why. I don’t know – it’s just like here. They’ll join, but – there’s an old saying, it’s an 80/20. Have you ever heard, an organization? 80 percent do nothing, 20 percent do all the work. They’re joiners, those people, that just want to use a logo. They just want to say, “I belong to NARI.” They have that on their trucks. Others just get involved. And I just happened to get involved up to my eyeballs. It’s been rewarding. And I’ve met some of the greatest people. Well, this guy I’m going to see. We became friends and we go up there every year and stay up there. They have a beautiful, beautiful home on Mackenzie River; right

on the river, you can fish off of it. Just gorgeous in Oregon. And then my other buddy – well, I’ve got a lot of them – but Big Tony Lapolusa from Chicago, he was the president before me. He calls to see how Irene is, hears Irene’s sick. I call. So we made a great friendship, fellowship that we’ve got. And NARI, it gives you an opportunity to network; that’s the most important.

Kristine Navarro: Why is networking important?

Julius Lowenberg: Because you’re getting new – you get into a conversation and again, listen to what they’re saying, or they ask you what are you doing, or what – because there’s ideas out there all the time that we never thought of, and we never have the perfect vehicle. If we had a perfect vehicle, they would have made a perfect car a long time ago and never changed, right? Something new every day that you can learn. And you go to these conferences and I go to these meetings and there’s maybe five, six, seven ideas that you think, gah. But if you come back and implement just one of them, it was worth going to, if it does something for your business or for – so it’s just – it’s the same thing with the chamber I guess. I don’t belong to Chamber, but I used to belong to it, and the networking that they do down at the Chamber. And your church groups; you get involved with your church. In the Knights of Columbus, it’s a great – I hadn’t been in it for – I joined it years and years ago and now I’m back in it, you’re meeting all kinds of different people. We have a great time; we have the Menudo Breakfast and we all get out there and cook. And that’s what an organization is. Same thing, I used to belong to the Coaches Association. I used to belong to the Texas Coaches Association. And then they had the El Paso County Coaches Association. We’d meet once a month and we didn’t tell people any of our plays or anything, but you got to know your opponent better. He’s not this guy on the sideline yelling and screaming and hollering. That’s the game. After the game, we’re over here drinking a beer, having a cup of coffee. I just feel that it’s very, very important that you get – the more people you get to know, the better the person you’re going to be.

Kristine Navarro: You mentioned the Chamber. Were you a member of the El Paso Chamber or the Hispanic Chamber?

Julius Lowenberg: The El Paso. That was before the Hispanic; that was way back. Now we just formed better business men. You can’t belong to too many things. There’s a limit.

Kristine Navarro: Was the chamber helpful?

Julius Lowenberg: I didn't get involved in it. Nothing is helpful unless you get involved in it. Nothing is worthwhile unless you get involved in it. You can join everything in the world, but if you don't go to the meetings. We go out, every year we have a membership drive, and we try to get the people to come back, re-up. "What has NARI done for me? Have you ever been to a meeting? Have you ever been to a golf tournament? Have you ever been to a gun shoot? Have you ever been – right now we're getting ready to build ramps for the handicapped, that's going to be one of our community projects. Are you involved, can you come down on a Saturday and give us a hand and get a saw or bring one of your guys down?" Naturally you're not going to get anyone. I joined the Knights of Columbus and I just paid my dues, what am I going to get out of it? Nothing. So if you don't participate, you don't get anything out of it.

Kristine Navarro: Can you tell me why you've been successful for so many years in business? What your secret is?

Julius Lowenberg: I don't know if there's a secret. I think it is just – we do very, very little advertising. We advertise in it because it's our NARI – we have our little deal about that big in the church bulletin, and I do that because – to support the church. 99 percent of our business is referral business or you'll tell somebody. Or repeat business. Like right now I'm doing for a doctor – the very first job that I told you I did, I've done three – in fact I'm going to see him today. I've done three jobs for him in 30 years. He left town for a long time and came back. I think it's just the reputation that you build. Somebody told Irene – she goes to yoga, some lady that she talked to said, "Oh, your son-in-law came over and gave us a bid on some bathrooms. You all are very, very high. And then he says, "Yes, ma'am we sure are, but we guarantee our work and we're good." You know, people will tell me – I've got one right now, a nice job, "It's too much money." I said, "Well, what do you want to cut?" "Well, I don't want to cut anything." "Well, I can't cut my price, because if I gave you a bid for \$40,000.00 and you say, Mr. Lowenberg, that's too much money, can you cut it?" And I cut back the next day and I cut it \$10,000.00, what are you going to think? He was getting to me the first part, right? He was trying to get to me. So we don't do that. That's our price. IF you want to take something out of it then we can cut the price, but if you want it just the way I've got it written, that's our price."

Kristine Navarro: Is it hard because you have so many relationships with people that they kind of want you to –

Julius Lowenberg: No, it really isn't. It really isn't. It's surprising. I've never ran into, "Oh, because you're a friend give me a good deal." And I don't – I can't think of close, close friends that I've done work for. I sort of shy away from friendship – I mean, acquaintances or repeat customers – I mean, I make friends with Dr. Rodriguez because we've known each other for so long, but he's not a guy that comes over to the house and we go on vacation together. But no, I think that's been – it's just a reputation that we build, and we have built a reputation that we're – we try to do – it sounds like you're trying to be uppity or whatever it is. We try to do the high-end, as much high-end work as we can. I don't like – we don't go to certain parts of town for two reasons. Sometimes those parts of town, the jobs that you're going to do there are enclose an existing 10x10 patio, or build me a 10x10 patio. You've got to drive – it takes you half an hour, 45 minutes to get to the job, gas. We try to concentrate on the West Side and Piedmont, Coronado – this area. Not because we think we're hot-shots, but because – we've got two or three jobs right now, we just – you can almost walk to them. There's no gas, there's no – and they're high-end jobs. It's a deal where – just to give an example, you'd be surprised what people in El Paso spend. You would be surprised of what people spend on a kitchen or on a bathroom. And outdoor kitchen – we just did an outdoor kitchen, and just the appliances for it – just the cook top and the refrigerator and all the different – was \$11,000.00. Just for that. High-end stuff. Now you can do – we had a guy talk to us at our NARI meeting that sells this stuff. You can go to Home Depot and buy something that looks exactly like it, but it's not the gauge, it's not the middle. So we've just – I guess maybe that's been it. We've satisfied our clientele, we are very, very conscious of cleanliness – I mean, very conscious, because I've had remodeling done at my house, and I know how Irene gets – and then especially – like, I'm doing one right now, the woman's a retired teacher, so she's home all day. A lot of times we have jobs where both people work so you don't have that, but right now you're making the guys clean this off and cover this because she's there. She's not being a pain or anything, but I don't want her to become a pain. I want her to be – I want her to call me back.

Kristine Navarro: Any final thoughts or things we didn't cover that you would think that we should cover? Any advice that you would give young entrepreneurs that are just starting their business?

Julius Lowenberg: Well, you know, don't bite off more than you can chew, to start with. You know, a lot of people will go out there and, "Yes, I can do the job." And then she comes over, "Yes, I'd like to do the job." Then you tell five or six people, "Yes, I can do the job,"

what we do is – here’s the way we do it. And now this is our advice I’d give people – we get a call in – we’re doing jobs right now – we get a job in, Mrs. So-and-so calls, got a kitchen or a bathroom. Where is it? Well, it’s Northeast. “Ma’am, I’m sorry, we don’t go to the Northeast because right now we’re too busy. But let me give you a name of somebody in here.” Or then somebody from close to us. We need a room addition. Yes ma’am. But we need it by September 1st. Mrs. Jones, I’m sorry, we won’t be able to even get to you, first of all, by the time draw plans – because a lot of people don’t realize – and these young guys will just say, “Yeah, we’ll take care of it.” But you’ve got to go draw plans, and you’ve got to take those plans to the city to get the city to approve them. So you’ve got to look at all those factors that factor into it. So what we try to do is we’ll schedule you, but we’ll schedule you for October. If you can wait for us, we really would appreciate it. If you can’t, I understand. And I do understand. We’re going to have a wedding October 1st so we want the house ready the week before. I’m sorry, again let me give you a name or let me send you a book. We send out these books, we have an executive secretary that sends out the book. But you know, be truthful, honest, pull a permit when you have to pull a permit. A lot of people would say – which you could do – in other words – a homeowner can pull a permit. As soon as somebody tells you, “Why don’t you pull the permit,” it’s a red flag. That’s a red flag.

Kristine Navarro: Why is that?

Julius Lowenberg: Because there’s some reason why he can’t pull a permit. He’s either not bonded, he’s been in trouble, he doesn’t know how. And it is, they do it all the time. I’ve had people – I had a lady, three kids, guy put in a second story for her. She pulled the permit. Left the house – it was during winter time – no heat, no water, no insulation – just stud walls. No heater; the guy left – they turned off and took the heater out. So that’s – you’d be surprised. You’d be surprised what goes on. So that’s why we tout our association. And if you have a complaint, you complain to our office, and we have a consumer complaint form and everything. And we have – when you come to join NARI, we check you through the Better Business Bureau. If you have anything on there, you’re gone. We don’t let you in. or if you continue – if you are a member of ours and you get in trouble, and you don’t take care of it, we’ll let you go. That’s – the main thing is be honest. Be yourself and be honest. Nothing like honesty.

Kristine Navarro: Any final thoughts?

Julius Lowenberg: No, not really. It's just been a great ride. I tell you, both of them – the coaching was – some of the greatest.

Kristine Navarro: What did you learn from coaching?

Julius Lowenberg: That there's – you know how people say, "That's a bad kid." There's no bad kids. If you treat a kid correctly and you guide them the right way, they're all good kids. I'd had some of the worst – you would think they were the worst – I had a kid – I was so naïve that first year at Ken Util. We were playing basketball, district game. And the kid – my mother's first cousin, my aunt, she was an epileptic, so I had seen her, growing up, have the fits. I was – we had the basketball game going, and one of the kids collapsed and had this, so we called the ambulance. I called in, and told the guy – the medic or whatever, because I rode with him to the hospital – I said, "I think the kid had an epileptic fit." And the guy said, "Coach, where did you fall out of – what tree did you fall out of? It's an overdose." I didn't know. I'd never been around anybody that'd had an overdose. Well, the kid came back and – great, great athlete. Well, sure enough, his sophomore year he overdosed and died at home. But he wasn't a bad kid. He was a good kid, but nobody had gotten to him. Nobody had reached out to him, they didn't have enough time. But there's no – I ran into some raunchy kids, but I mean, once you sit down with them and they respect you and they know that you mean business, they're good kids. But nobody takes the time to help them out. And it's sad that you see so many. And that's – I think it's – not our teachers, our administrators, and if you go one step further our school boards. They don't demand – and I don't think can, I guess with the laws that we have today, you look at somebody the right way and they sue you. But I guess that's one of the main things that I learned. And another, you learn that if you work – teamwork, that's another thing you learn. If you work together, if you're not a star – just like I tell my guys, I'm only as good – Beto, I'm only as good as how well you put up those cabinets. I don't put them up. My tile man, you do a good job on the tile because that's me putting the tile. So you learn to cooperate and have some teamwork between yourselves and the people that you're working with.

Kristine Navarro: How do you motivate the people that you work with? Sorry, I thought I was done, but now one more. A couple more.

Julius Lowenberg: No, I'm just thinking.

Kristine Navarro: And have them believe in the product.

Julius Lowenberg: You've got to believe – they've got to believe in what we're doing. That we're the best remodeling company in town. That's what we tell them. We're the best. We may not be, but we've got to believe that we are. And what you guys do makes us the best, and as long as you guys realize – there's a lot of people out of work right now. A lot of people in construction out of work. So the better you are at the job that you're doing and the cleaner you are, that person's going to tell this person, and we're going to have more jobs and you're going to keep on working. If we don't have jobs, you're laid off. We just – we don't keep you around here to mow the grass. So I think that. And then we give them bonuses. We give them a bonus at Christmas.

Kristine Navarro: What – a couple more questions – what values did your parents instill in you that had – what do you think they taught you?

Julius Lowenberg: Honestly, one, be as fair as you can. Sometimes it's hard being fair. But be fair. Believe in God. I went to a Catholic school for forever; thirteen years I guess counting kindergarten. Respect other people, respect other people's belongings, their body, their everything about them. Just respect people.

Kristine Navarro: Any final thoughts? I know I've asked this three times.

Julius Lowenberg: Ask, I'm fine, go ahead.

Kristine Navarro: We're doing okay on time?

Julius Lowenberg: Yeah, we're doing okay on time.

Kristine Navarro: Just a couple more questions going back to making the transition from coaching to actually starting your own business. Was that a hard transition?

Julius Lowenberg: Well, let's see, I had the transition from coaching to being a superintendent, so I had that in between there. It wasn't a hard – I had already – I left out part of it I guess. When I quit coaching, I started the football program here at Marwood. It was the Mustangs, it was first year that the parks and recreation started – they used to have seven and eight, nine, ten, eleven year olds. Minor and intermediate. They started a major division. So I was the – the people – the fathers – I'd come and see Eric play, so I'd be sitting there, and the father's would say, "You know, they're going to start this program." I said, "Okay, I'll start if you guys

will help me.” So we started the Mustangs, which was twelve and thirteen, so it was like junior high. Well, the turnout was so tremendous, and I had made a deal with all the parents and everything – I will play every kid, every game. It might be for one play, but I’ll get them in. Well, I had 75 ballplayers. And we lost what was called the Little Bowl that first year, and then we – I stayed on for four more years, and we won – never lost a game again. Won all the Little Bowls, then it was time to get out. So I was still coaching. And we had a – we used to meet at Rosa’s Cantina, that’s where the booster club would meet, down at Rosa’s. And it just made it easier to do it because – I didn’t go to a Friday night game for probably – until Eric started playing. So I missed it, but I didn’t miss it that much. And then I had that to do. And then I had – of course I was with Burrs for those three years, and then I started my own. So I’d already gotten over the – but now I go up to the stadium –

Kristine Navarro: Let’s talk about the stadium and that process. They named it after you, is that correct?

Julius Lowenberg: They named it after me and my wife. The only stadium that we know that’s named after a woman. And what happened is they called me – well, they had a big meeting. Sylvester went to it and a lot of other people spoke on my behalf. I didn’t know about it until later on. I said, “They’re going to name Eagle Stadium.” But Irene used to – I had kids live with me during those first few years, kids that were thrown out of their house.

From Ken Util?

Julius Lowenberg: They came over here and shared a bedroom with little Julius. Many of them. And so Irene was real – they called her their second mother. All the Sylvester – all of them, Sal and Pyon and all, that’s their second mother, because she was. When we first started, we had no laundry or anything like that. So we’d bring – we lived over where Eric lives now. We’d bring – I’d bring the uniforms home and she’d wash them. And we didn’t have a dryer, we hung them out in the – in those days, no tress or anything, the whole neighborhood could see your – so they knew we had a ballgame. And she would make burritos and she would sell this and you know – so she became a mother hen. She was a mother and she knew them all. And she knew them – we’re the God-parents of about four or five of some of the kid’s children. And when they named that, Sylvester’s brother, Raphael called me, he was on the school board. He said, “They named it after you.” I said, “Oh, God.” Tears started coming down. He said, “But they

also named it after your wife. It's called Coach Julius and Irene Lowenberg Eagle Stadium." And God, it's beautiful. It is. When we went for the opening of it – and the ironic thing, on the opening night, they played Cathedral. So it was – but I told them, "I'm an Eagle."

Kristine Navarro: What did that mean to you?

Julius Lowenberg: Oh, it just – it means – It's going to be 50 years this September that we got our first football. It just means – probably the greatest honor Irene and I ever had, other than getting married. And having six kids. But it's – to be remembered like that, it's a perpetual thing. And every time I go up there, every year, three or four games, and every time, they send me in that press box. And I tell them, "I don't want to sit in the press box. I want to sit down here with the people." They have a beautiful press box. Beautiful. And you know, the track. I went over to see Coach Brooks the other day, and they added on to it on the other side, added all of the dressing rooms and weight rooms and bleachers for visitors. And in the hallway he's got pictures of all the football teams blown up, but he couldn't find anything from the early – so I took him all the yearbooks, all my yearbooks, and he's getting copies made of the pictures so that they can put those up there. And they're going to try to have a Sylvester – not Sylvester, but Sal Pyon, who is chief of staff – he was on my first team –

Kristine Navarro: Was he really?

Julius Lowenberg: Yeah.

Kristine Navarro: What was he like?

Julius Lowenberg: He was my quarterback. Sal. You know Sal?

Kristine Navarro: I do.

Julius Lowenberg: Hell of a quarterback. Well, all – the Pyon brothers – there's two families that are very famous families from the old days. The Pyon's and the Aries's. And all the Pyon's were my quarterbacks. Tony, of course, has died, but Sal and Louie and then Mike, his older brother, lives in California – his son is the starting catcher for UCLA. He played in the World Series for College.

Kristine Navarro: College World Series.

Julius Lowenberg: So we're going to try to have a reunion. Yeah, that night was – I still have my jacket.

Kristine Navarro: Your letterman jacket?

Julius Lowenberg: The coaches – it says Coach on it. And I put it on and I wore it, and it was hot. It was hot. But I wore it for a point, and I made the comment to all the kids, "I challenge any one of you to be able to put on your old letterman jacket." Nobody would. Nobody could. So we – a lot of memories of that school are just –

Kristine Navarro: What legacy do you want to leave?

Julius Lowenberg: Remember me as a good father, good husband, and a man that did what he wanted to do, and – how would you say it – I don't regret not having accomplished anything. I think I've accomplished everything I set out to do. I didn't accomplish out to be a millionaire. I accomplished what I set out to do, and I think remember me for that, that I did what I wanted to do when we wanted. We both did, Irene and I lived a great, great life. I mean, great. And you can't ask for anything more than that. Right?

Kristine Navarro: That's right. Thank you.

Julius Lowenberg: You're welcome.

[End of Audio]

Duration: 117 minutes