

2-2002

## Interview no. 1645

Don Haskins

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## THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

Interviewee: Don Haskins

Interviewer: Luis A. Saenz

Project: 1966 NCAA Championship

Location: n/a

Date of Interview: February, 2002

Terms of Use: Unrestricted

Transcript No.: 1645

Transcriber / Summary: Patrick Driscoll

Don Haskins was the Head Coach for the 1965-66 Texas Western Miners basketball team that won the 1966 NCAA Men's Division I Basketball Tournament. Don Haskins served as Head Coach at Texas Western College (renamed the University of Texas at El Paso in 1967) from 1961-1999; he played basketball at Oklahoma A&M; he played with the Artesia Travelers in the National Industrial Basketball League; he went to a coaching clinic in Albuquerque, New Mexico where Texas Western Head Coach George McCarty convinced Don Haskins to complete his degree; explains that in the interim he took a job coaching basketball and driving the school bus in Benjamin, Texas and later Hedley, Texas. Mr. Haskins recalls that while he was coaching at Dumas, Texas, George McCarty Dean from Texas Western College recruited him to be head coach. Mr. Haskins addresses his reputation as a tough coach by stating he wished he made practices harder; he says it was a good team but difficult to motivate players at times, he was sometimes frustrated with the players lack of excitement but that they never seemed to be stressed during games and performed well. He explains that he started his best players that happened to be black on their ability not on race; he clarifies that at the time black players were common in New Mexico, West Texas, and Colorado but not in eastern colleges that were nationally well known; he mentions his regret that 1965-66 team's victory over the University of Kentucky has overshadowed the success of other great UTEP teams that came after. Don Haskins describes how proud he is that his players have done well with their lives after college; he recounts the good reception the team received on their return to El Paso, good for college basketball and the city; he mentions that he is proud that his team helped racially integrate sports. He ends by giving credit to black players at Texas Western like Charles Brown and Nolan Richardson that gave the school confidence to recruit black players before he coached there.

Length of interview 17 minutes

Length of Transcript n/a