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Interview no. 1648

David Lattin

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

Interviewee: David Lattin

Interviewer: Luis A. Saenz

Project: 1966 NCAA Championship

Location: n/a

Date of Interview: February, 2002

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Transcript No.: 1648

Transcriber / Summary: Daniel Santana

David Lattin describes his recruitment into the Texas Western College basketball team. He began as a student at Tennessee State but was unhappy there and then later transferred to Texas Western College. Mr. Lattin describes positive experiences with his new team and coach, Don Haskins. He also describes hardships and fears he encountered in the team; since he played alongside others who were taller than him, Lattin feared that someday the ball would go over his head when it was passed to him. Lattin became less weary of this as he began to build trust amongst his team members. Another challenge for Lattin was that he could not stand getting “dunked on” although he did enjoy scoring a slam-dunk against players from the other teams he competed against. Lattin believes that to have a great team there needed to be good teamwork as well as at least two players that could “stand out” to assure a victory. The attitude Lattin displayed during and before a game was criticized by Coach Haskins as being “too relaxed.” However, Lattin states that this attitude was due to his confidence that his team would win. He also comments on racially charged statements that were made when his team played the NCAA championship game in Kentucky; The coach of the opposing team, Adolph Rupp, told reporters that the Texas Western’s black players could not beat his white players. While Lattin believes that the comments were uncalled for, he maintains that he did not want to make the game into a racial issue, although it seemed that the other team did; He only saw it as a championship game. Finally, he describes positive experiences in his life after the game in Kentucky. Thanks to his notoriety, he became a top basketball draft choice and built great relationships in El Paso.

Length of interview 8 minutes

Length of Transcript n/a