

2-2002

Interview no. 1650

Eddie Mullens

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

Interviewee: Eddie Mullens

Interviewer: Luis A. Saenz

Project: 1966 NCAA Championship

Location: n/a

Date of Interview: February, 2002

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Transcript No.: 1650

Transcriber / Summary: Daniel Santana

Eddie Mullens describes his career as a publicity director for the Texas Western College basketball team. When Coach Don Haskins first invited him to the campus, George McCarty, the athletic director, offered him a job. Mullens did not take the job at first due to the low pay, until he was called back days later with the offer of a higher salary. He believed Texas Western had a great team but did not foresee that it would make it to the national competition. Mullens is credited with giving nicknames to the team members such as Jim Barnes who he called "Bad News." He noted that as the team progressed, the media began to refer to Texas Western College as "a little school in El Paso." When Texas Western competed in the NCAA championship in Kentucky, he remembers that members of the opposing team and its coach did not speak to them. Mullens did not think that race was a factor during the game although others, he believes, made it an issue simply because Texas Western's best five players happened to be black. He also notes that coach Don Haskins received and read bags of hate mail directed towards him and his team. Mullens also describes the long process it took for him to get coach Haskins recognized by the Basketball Hall of Fame. Lastly, he notes the hardships faced by Charlie Brown who was the first African American to play basketball for Texas Western College.

Length of interview 16 minutes

Length of Transcript n/a