

Interview with: RICHARD STEVENS

Marist College

Poughkeepsie, NY

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For the Marist College Archives and Special Collections

Transcript: Richard Stevens

Interviewee: Richard Stevens

Interviewer: Gus Nolan and Joan Gasparovic Gambeski

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Summary: Richard Stevens talks about his childhood in Beacon, New York, before attending the State University of New York at Albany. He reflects on his time as a teacher before becoming a cross country and track and field coach at Marist College. Richard also discusses his time as PA at Marist, and for the New Jersey Nets, as well as his experience working on local radio broadcasts, and creating his book, *The Easiest Diet in the World*.

Gus Nolan ([00:00](#)):

Today is Wednesday, May 4th, and we have a privilege to interview an old timer from Marist, Rich Stevens, who's come back and visit us today, and he's dedicated this hour or part thereof to subject himself to an interview that two of us on the team will run for the Marist College Archives. In order to get a historical perspective, we like to get the individuals who are here and in their own voice what they thought of and went through. So, it was rather unique. Let's start at the very beginning. Can you say something which you-- where were you born and brought up for the first ten years of your life?

Richard Stevens ([01:14](#)):

I was born in Beacon, New York, and lived there until I went to the State University of New York at Albany to learn how to become a teacher. That was after my graduation in 1964 from Beacon High School.

GN ([01:26](#)):

Okay. You skipped right through college, growing up, are you an only child or you have a sibling?

RS ([01:34](#)):

No, I had a brother. I have a brother. He's still alive, James, who's three years older than me.

GN ([01:39](#)):

I see, and you lived in Beacon, did you say?

RS ([01:43](#)):

Richard Stevens

Yes.

GN ([01:43](#)):

Okay, near the river. Where in--?

RS ([01:48](#)):

You want the address?

GN ([01:49](#)):

No, [laugh]. I want to know, you know, I'm trying to get a feel about your growing up, and your outdoors, and you're a track man. So, you know, had-- is this there from the very beginning? You know, fields and running and all that.

RS ([02:06](#)):

Well, I was always interested in athletics and followed sports, but I wasn't that good in it. Plus, I had another problem that I was a newspaper boy, and we delivered the papers in the afternoon, and that's when the practices were. So, all I did, well, what I did athletically was pretty much the coaching side. I was a basketball manager of the basketball team, the score keeper and manager of a high school basketball team.

GN ([02:29](#)):

Where, in high school?

RS ([02:29](#)):

Beacon High School, Yes.

Richard Stevens

GN ([02:31](#)):

Beacon High School. Okay. You already slipped something in there already. I'm interested.

While in school, what else did you do? Did you have interests, hobbies, and so on?

RS ([02:41](#)):

Yeah. Well, I was in the Honor Society.

GN ([02:44](#)):

The what society?

RS ([02:46](#)):

The National Honor Society.

GN ([02:48](#)):

Oh, okay. And come back and say more now, your favorite subjects? English?

RS ([02:56](#)):

Mathematics because I became a mathematics teacher. I finished all my high school math in the 10th grade. They had nothing else to offer me.

GN ([03:03](#)):

Oh, I see. Okay. You talked about delivering papers after school, through the summer? Did you get a more permanent four hour, eight hour job where you just deliver papers?

RS ([03:15](#)):

Richard Stevens

No, that was my-- you know, that was busy every day, especially Wednesdays. It was like I had 110 people to deliver the paper to, and it was very heavy on Wednesdays. And that was-- my last summer, I started becoming a playground director for the city playgrounds.

GN ([03:32](#)):

[Affirmative] Did you have to go to learning days for that? You get a license or--?

RS ([03:38](#)):

No, it was just, they told you, I think we had one meeting day, probably. And they just told you what to do and everything. You pretty much-- they would sign up for equipment and you'd give them the equipment, the croquet or whatever they were going to play. That was-- and I also was the youngest little league director in the United States. I was the little league director of Beacon's Little League, you know, program. And I became a basketball coach for my church league. And I became a manager of the Lions baseball team in Beacon, on the Babe Ruth League.

GN ([04:13](#)):

Oh, very good. Back in the newspaper, I delivered papers maybe fifty years before you. And one of the problems is collecting people, you know, in those days it was not as simple as it is now. So, you went around and you rang the bell, and you try to get your dollar for the week or whatever it was, you know? And sometimes that was problematic. So, I can understand something about your use of time, and it's using up your clock, as it were, to get those things. Okay. Moving a little bit faster now to college. You went from Beacon to Albany?

RS ([04:52](#)):

Richard Stevens

Yeah. Albany State, the State University of New York at Albany [affirmative]. I majored in math and minored in psychology.

GN ([04:58](#)):

Okay. But you passed opportunities. You could have gone to West Point, you could have gone to Marist, you could have gone to, you know, going up to Culinary Institute or eventually we'll get back to the cooking [laugh] or at least the diet, and say something about that. But what attracted you to Albany?

RS ([05:16](#)):

Well, it was known then as being a very good teaching program and to help teachers out. And they accepted me in their early acceptance program. I didn't have to do much. So, I got in because I was fourth in my graduating class of 164.

GN ([05:31](#)):

Oh, okay.

RS ([05:32](#)):

In the high school.

GN ([05:33](#)):

Yeah. That honors thing stayed with you through grade school, through high school. Okay. I'm not familiar with the tuition at Albany. Is it a state school? So it is--.

RS ([05:48](#)):

Richard Stevens

It's a state university, yeah.

GN ([05:49](#)):

So, it would not have been the same as coming to Vassar or Marist?

RS ([05:53](#)):

A matter of fact, I think it was for in-State, it was tuition free for in-state students like me, coming from Beacon, New York.

GN ([06:01](#)):

Okay. Did you move-- did you have a practice teaching experience?

RS ([06:08](#)):

Yes, I did.

GN ([06:09](#)):

Where was that?

RS ([06:09](#)):

That was at Schalmont High School, a suburb of Schenectady [affirmative] in the Albany region.

GN ([06:15](#)):

And that was in math?

RS ([06:16](#)):

It was math, yes.

Richard Stevens

GN ([06:17](#)):

Yeah, okay. What level?

RS ([06:19](#)):

High school, all levels.

GN ([06:21](#)):

Geometry or--?

RS ([06:21](#)):

Yep, geometry, algebra.

GN ([06:24](#)):

Okay. Just want to get this picture straight about who we're talking to here and this background that you have of school and also the various other things that he kind of slipped into it that I'd like to talk to. Track seemed to have survived all the other interests, playground, supervision, and all that, what was it about track?

RS ([06:52](#)):

Well, actually, I didn't really get involved with track until after I graduated from Albany State. I started a running program myself, but right away when I went to my high school that I became a teacher at Franklin Delano Roosevelt High School in Hyde Park. The previous cross country coach, who was the math chairman, said to me, you're going to coach cross country? I said, no, I never coached that. He says, well, come on. And he talked me into coaching cross country. And I just started reading up some books about some of the things. And it was my only losing season. I

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was like four and five or something. It was close, but I know now that if I had known stuff I later on learned we should have had a winning season, you know? But that's just--.

GN ([07:34](#)):

You were a beginner.

RS ([07:36](#)):

I was just pushed into it, so to speak. So--.

GN ([07:38](#)):

Okay, kind of a philosophical question, runners seem to be a different kind of person. And as much as basketball players play before a crowd, you know, baseball players play before a crowd. A runner is out there on the track training by himself. He only has one thing to beat, and that's the clock, you know? And if he beats the clock, he wins. You know, the other guy is running against the clock too, you know? So, I mean, I think, does that say something about the character of, or have you experienced that simply put, track guys are nice guys? From my point of view, you know, had you experienced dealing with them, or do you have some pretty mean guys?

RS ([08:26](#)):

Oh, no, I never had any. I mean, they all, you know, they all certainly, it's a, it's a tough sport that you're running long distance, and you have to train long and hard. And as you said, it's not really a team sport where you will get noticed that much unless you're the standout in the team. So, they sacrifice a lot, and they-- but they're also, as you said, running against the clock, but they're running against their own personal records and trying to achieve their best ever and so on.

Richard Stevens

GN ([08:51](#)):

That's an interesting point. Yeah. And does it matter if you are the last, you know, to bring home the bacon, as it were, the last guy? Is there a ranking?

RS ([09:01](#)):

Yeah, there's a ranking, you know, based upon just how they come across the line for your team, the top seven usually are varsity, then the next seven might be JV, and so on. But I've had some runners, I even had some-- one that I can think of who was a swimmer named Rob Johnson. And he pretty much came out to cross country just to stay in shape and all, but he put in the workouts the same as the other guys and was just as dedicated and was one of the finest. And his attitude was tremendous. Yeah.

GN ([09:29](#)):

Yeah. I noticed that here at Marist, the crew team runs, I noticed they're out running at seven in the morning, you know, and nobody's watching them. I mean, again, it's to stay in shape, you know, it's the name of the game.

RS ([09:42](#)):

Yeah.

GN ([09:43](#)):

You want to row, you got to be able to have the strength to be able to do it. Okay, one last thing before I yield the microphone back to another authority here. How did you come to Marist?

RS ([10:00](#)):

Richard Stevens

Well, okay. I was coaching cross country then at the Roosevelt High School for four years. And one of my runners, and involved with track-- was his last name, I don't remember his first name, was Goldman. And his father was Doc Goldman, who was--.

GN ([10:17](#)):

Howard Goldman--.

RS ([10:18](#)):

Yeah, Howard Goldman, who was the athletic director here. And he said, you know, my team's doing successfully well, and I guess his son must have talked to him about me. And, he said, you want to coach at Marist? And I said, well, I want to finish this cross country season, and that was '71, but I could do it after that. So, he really wanted me, well, for both. Cross country mainly but also for track. They were having trouble with a cross country, maintaining enough guys and so on. So, I started then in the fall of '71, I guess '72 would be my first cross country. So, he didn't really talk me into it because I already now had done it and liked it and knew what I was doing and just--.

GN ([11:04](#)):

The fact that-- are you still at Roosevelt, or did you leave there and come down here?

RS ([11:09](#)):

I left Roosevelt in 2001 and retired to San Diego where I now am.

GN ([11:15](#)):

Okay. No, but while you're doing the Marist coaching, you're teaching?

Richard Stevens

RS ([11:19](#)):

I was still teaching at Roosevelt, yes.

GN ([11:20](#)):

Oh, okay. I just want to--.

RS ([11:21](#)):

In fact, my typical schedule was teaching there, then coming here for practice, and then on the weekends doing, radio work on local radio stations, and also doing public address announcing for Marist and eventually for the New Jersey Nets. So, I don't know how I did all that, but I was doing all that at one time, pretty much.

GN ([11:38](#)):

Yeah. Did you know Bob Newman?

RS ([11:40](#)):

Bob Newman, yes, from WHVW. That's one of the stations I worked for at one time. Yeah. Sportsman. Yeah.

GN ([11:46](#)):

Yeah. So, I mean, you do have a familiarity with Marist, mentioning Howie Goldman. Another name might come out of the woodwork here. He told me because I mentioned you were dropping by for this interview. So, his name is Bob Lewis.

RS ([12:02](#)):

Richard Stevens

Oh, yeah. He was one of the first cross country coaches here, and he was an English teacher, and he coached cross country and everything. And I always invite him to our-- we had, one-time banquets where we had the, we had a hall of fame and a honor role and stuff like that. And he'd always come to those and he would speak, and a great speaker. Very funny guy. But he would just say he just, pretty much-- he claimed, he just showed up, I don't know, for the meets. And he didn't really know much about it, but just was doing it to keep the program going. You know, he always was very modest like that. I don't know what his program was about, but he certainly kept it. He had some great runners. He had some--.

GN ([12:36](#)):

Yeah. Okay.

RS ([12:36](#)):

He did very well. Very well.

GN ([12:38](#)):

Well, he always stated, he said that you would be kind of hard to talk to. Didn't talk very much. I'm being ironic here [laugh]. He says, you'll have no problem talking to Rick, you know, he'll be able to tell you what you want to know, straightforward without any dressing on the side, you know. So, that's another thing about, you know, walking you back for this occasion and giving you a chance to tell the snapshot of your things here. I have a few more things I could go to, but I'd rather give the voice to my friend here who is pretty adept. In fact, let her please speak for herself. So, Joan, why don't you kick off what you and I could talk about.

Joan Gasparovic Gambeski ([13:25](#)):

Richard Stevens

Thank you, Gus, and Rich, I'm Joan Gasparovic Gambeski. Graduated from Marist in '83. So came to Marist in '79 and know of your great coaching legacy here at the college. And also your public address work here for the Red Foxes. So we'll talk a little bit about that. But when you came to Marist, to coach track and cross country, the resources were somewhat limited, let's say, [laugh].

RS ([13:54](#)):

Yes, indeed.

JGG ([13:55](#)):

So what was a typical workout? Like, what would you have the team do, and where would they run, and how did that all work?

RS ([14:03](#)):

Well, for cross country, we would really, you know, run the roads. We, even, where we started with doing fifteen mile runs, or ten, ten to fifteen mile runs up the Route 9. And of course, I would come along in a van and give, have plenty of water because we started when it was hot in September. And we would also use the Hudson River Psychiatric Center grounds around the golf course for that. They had a great hill there we would do. And we went to Dutchess Community College on their cinder track they had there. We would go to Poughkeepsie High School. they had an all-weather track to do some track work at times there. Those are the main, oh, Culinary Institute of America, they had lots of trails and stuff we would do there. Those are the main places we would do those workouts. For indoor track, we, and even outdoor I guess to some degree, but mostly for indoor track in the wintertime, we would wait until ten o'clock at night

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when the classes ended. And then, we'd run around Donnelly Hall, which was a circle [laugh], and I think it was, I forget how many laps to a mile. It couldn't have been eleven, it was more than that. It was so many, I forget what it was, how many laps a mile. But it was, you know, small but still reason--. And, you know, it wasn't that wide. So we probably could get four runners across, but we would practice doing that from ten to eleven at night.

GN ([15:12](#)):

What about the gym? Didn't you run in the gym?

RS ([15:14](#)):

No--.

GN ([15:14](#)):

That was eleven, I think for the mile.

RS ([15:16](#)):

Yeah, it was just the old gym, and I don't think we ever ran in that.

GN ([15:19](#)):

Oh, the old gym, yeah.

JGG ([15:20](#)):

Yeah, yeah, yeah, right.

RS ([15:22](#)):

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Eventually, yeah when the McCann Center was built, I was still coaching cross country. And I think I then relinquished track to Joe Shatzo (?) and Len Olson. And, so we, for cross country, I guess it probably was bad weather we would run the indoor track at times [affirmative].

JGG (15:41):

Yeah. That's great. So, from those early years were there standouts? I understand there was a race walker.

RS (15:47):

Oh yeah, a race walker, Tony Wilger was a runner on the cross country team, but, you know, he wasn't the best, but he would always work hard. He was, you know, and then he somehow it got started that he-- if he showed me he could walk fast or I saw him walking fast-- but he became a walker and a very good walker. He won a lot of the conference. We were in the championships and all. He was just phenomenal. He became a very good race walker. Yeah.

JGG (16:13):

Yeah, and then later on, in the late seventies into the eighties, you were recruiting many runners from Long Island. I remember St. Anthony's High School was a major source for recruits and others. And how did that all go? How were you marketing Marist to those recruits?

RS (16:33):

Several ways. We had a distance running camp in the summer. It was the Marist College distance running camp with Marty Liquori, who was a world-famous runner at the time, and now has become a broadcaster and so on. And that was, that ran for eight years. And we had world famous runners coming to that. Marty would get guests like Frank Shorter, and Barry Brown,

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and Tony Waldrop, and Dave Wottle, and so on. The list goes on and on. And, we attracted lots of runners, high school runners to come to that. And they would see the campus, and some of them then would join the team and all. Plus, we had a Marist Cross Country Invitational, which started with I think like thirty-eight schools from across the state. Ended up my last year with like eighty some schools. And that's where we attract a lot of runners, saw the campus then. And we had St. Anthony's and we just-- we again, that was a busy weekend. The teams would arrive Friday night. So, Friday they'd jump around during the daytime, the runners, our team would. Friday night, I would have, I had a clinic where they could-- the teams could come and for anywhere from up to three hours, that there were hour sessions of diet and other things like that. And they would sign up. And we had different speakers. I spoke on motivation or something. And then the next day was the invitational. And then after that, we had either an alumni race at sometimes and sometimes we had a college race. And then even sometimes after that we had the banquet. It was, I don't know, again, how I [laugh] all that was accomplished in one weekend. That must have been busy weekend because we'd get here for Saturday mornings. Invitational about five in the morning, was still dark to try to do things. And Bob Mayerhofer was a tremendous help in that. He would-- he mapped out the course we had around here on campus, and he, lined up the course and he did all the scoring with another assistant who helped us out in the scoring and all.

JGG ([18:19](#)):

So, and Bob graduated in '71. He was one of several siblings from the Mayerhofer family to graduate from Marist, including his triplet brothers, who graduated in 1980.

RS ([18:32](#)):

Richard Stevens

Coach Gerry.

JGG ([18:33](#)):

Yep. Gerry Mayerhofer. And so, what-- and Bob, so, you were here at different times with Bob, but was Bob teaching?

RS ([18:44](#)):

He was teaching at Roosevelt--.

JGG ([18:45](#)):

At Roosevelt, so that's how you knew one another.

RS ([18:47](#)):

He was coaching track and cross country there and all.

JGG ([18:48](#)):

Okay. That's great.

RS ([18:50](#)):

He became my, after I stopped in whatever it was, 1980 or '79, he became the coach then here too. I talked, well, I don't even talk I meant to, but I asked him, I want you to be the successor. And he was. And he did a great job.

JGG ([19:02](#)):

Yeah, that's great. So, at what point did you lend your talent to public address announcing for the Marist Red Foxes? And did it start there or--?

Richard Stevens

RS ([19:13](#)):

No, it started at Roosevelt High School. I was the timekeeper. And the timekeeper also would just introduce the starting lineups, pretty much is all they did before me. But I said, can I, you know, I would, I just did everything. I did the timekeeping plus told who-- you know, as they made substitutions or whoever made the basket, I would tell, announce all that. So that was that. And then Doc Goldman also asked me to start doing the Marist Games when they played a few of the games at the Dutchess Community College [affirmative]. And I would do the announcing there, and then of course, the McCann Center when that was open, I did the Marist games there. And then, a really good story, which I tell my college students when I teach of how you always should do your best. Before the Marist games, many times there was a high school preliminary game [affirmative]. And one year, one time it was Arlington versus () high school. And, you know, a lot of people would say, well, I'll just do a halfway decent job, but I just decided I always do my best. And after the game, some people had already come up and complained about how loud it was. And I had no control over the volume because I was down in the center core and the volume was way up in the booth and so on and so forth. So, I listened to them, I was kind of polite, and this man came along and started asking me all these kind of-- and I said, oh, this is going to be another complainer. He said, would you, would you like to do more work like this? And I said, well, yeah, I figured he might ask me to do a COY or something. He said, how would you like to work for the New Jersey Nets? I said, what? He was Fred Winehouse, who was the president of WPAT AM and FM in New York City, which was the flagship station of the New Jersey Nets professional basketball team. And he set me up. He was very influential with them. He set me up with a tryout. Now the tryout was to do an actual game. So, I wasn't nervous because I said to myself, well, I can at least say I've done one professional game. It was against

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the Chicago Bulls. And I did the game. And after the game, they wanted me to come back and do a second try, which I did. And after that, I got the job with the New Jersey Nets.

JGG ([21:03](#)):

And you were there with them for a number of years?

RS ([21:05](#)):

For eight, the first seven or eight years they were in the Meadowlands Arena.

JGG ([21:09](#)):

Yeah.

RS ([21:09](#)):

Center court, I had two free tickets for each camp to give to friends. And, you know, I knew all the players and I was perspiration beats away from Michael Jordan and so on and so forth [laugh].

JGG ([21:19](#)):

Exciting. Oh, really exciting.

GN ([21:21](#)):

Did you ever meet Rik Smits?

RS ([21:23](#)):

Oh, yeah. Yeah, Rik, I announced Rik Smits here at Marist, and my phrase here was Rik Smits hits.

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GN ([21:30](#)):

Oh, yeah.

RS ([21:31](#)):

I always had phrases and stuff like that. And that's what I do with the Nets. I had rhymes. I said, once again, scoring, that's Mike O'Koren, things like that.

JGG ([21:38](#)):

Yeah.

RS ([21:38](#)):

And they liked all that. Now, Rik joined the NBA after I had stopped doing the Marist games, but I knew the personnel there and whoever had replaced me. The scorekeeper, who was there for fifty-two years, Herb Turetzky, as the scorekeeper for the Nets. He just passed away recently. And he told him about my Rik Smits hits and the announcer there did say Rik Smits hits when the Indiana Pacers were playing.

JGG ([22:04](#)):

That's great. That's great. And then you came back to Marist after that, with your announcing?

RS ([22:12](#)):

Yeah. I stopped announcing in, I don't know, in the 80s. At some point, late 80s, maybe early 90s is when Gene Doris was the athletic director.

JGG ([22:23](#)):

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Oh, yeah.

RS ([22:24](#)):

I remember the name now I can--.

JGG ([22:25](#)):

Yep. Yep.

RS ([22:26](#)):

And then, it was funny, they told me that one of my cohorts, Judy Sanford, who's Tommy Sanford's, who's the current crew coach, mother. She told me that they're having tryouts for Marist, you should go back, do it again. I said, okay. So, I tried out again, and they had someone else who got the job who apparently was the husband of a lady who taught here or something. There was some connection anyway, that many times happens in the, especially in the public address because I was just lucky that the guy heard me doing it. Usually you have to have a connection and know someone to get a PA job at someplace. But anyway, he got the men's job and after one year, he stopped, and I became the men's--. But before that, I was told after the tryouts that I would, if I wanted, I could do the women's games, which I did.

GN ([23:14](#)):

Oh, okay.

JGG ([23:16](#)):

Yeah. That's great. And tell us about your radio broadcasting, because you were a DJ--.

RS ([23:23](#)):

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Right.

JGG ([23:23](#)):

You had a talk show--.

RS ([23:24](#)):

Right.

JGG ([23:25](#)):

When did you have time to weave all of that in and when did that happen during your--?

RS ([23:29](#)):

Well, it was just weekends. It was like a paying hobby. Actually, during my college at Albany State, I joined the college radio station and learned all I could and did all kinds of live shows and things like that there. And as soon as I graduated from college, I got a job right away with WKIP. And then I worked WKIP, WHVW with Bob Norman and all and WE well, let's see, it was if I can do it in order, it was, KIP to HHVW, back to KIP, then WBAZ in Kingston, which became WKOT in Kingston. Then back to WKIP for a long stint, and then to WEOK, where I did a trading post show, which was buy and sell items. And then my last stint was my only one on FM. It was Oldies 97 FM.

GN ([24:17](#)):

Oh.

RS ([24:18](#)):

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So my last two years when I finished in 2001.

JGG ([24:20](#)):

Oh my gosh. And are you involved in any of that today?

RS ([24:24](#)):

No. It's a tough-- in the big markets like San Diego where I live now, it's tough to get into the big markets. They usually just have a live guy in the mornings and they have talk voice tracks where the guy could be millions of miles away and just records some voice tracks that they use. And so, it's a difficult, and it's not as localized and as friendly and, you know, localized for people to really-- where the person, the DJ knows the community and everything [affirmative].

GN ([24:51](#)):

Tell me, I have no idea. How financially rewarding is it? What do you get paid?

RS ([24:56](#)):

Radio work is chicken feed locally, you only would get paid a lot if you get to the big time. And then you get paid more than the president of the United States. I mean, like guys like Don Imus and Howard Stern and so on. I mean, they get paid millions, you know. But otherwise, the local markets, it's chicken feed. It's, as I said, for me, I'm glad I didn't get into full-time because, you know, I wouldn't have had the, you know, the kind of pay and stuff that I get as a teacher. So for me, I always considered it to be a paying hobby, a fun thing that I did.

GN ([25:24](#)):

Yeah.

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RS ([25:24](#)):

On the weekends, weekends only [affirmative].

GN ([25:25](#)):

I like that expression a paying hobby.

JGG ([25:27](#)):

Yeah, yeah.

GN ([25:28](#)):

Doing it for it.

JGG ([25:31](#)):

And over the years, I know you've kept in touch with Coach Pete Colaizzo who you coached, and then he became a coach.

RS ([25:38](#)):

Well, I didn't coach him, actually. He came after me as he's just said to someone else. I was, let's see, he was a runner before, he was, after my first stint of eight years.

JGG ([25:50](#)):

Okay.

RS ([25:51](#)):

And then he was-- and then I did the four years in the eighties, and then he became a coach after that.

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JGG ([25:58](#)):

Okay. So, and you've kept in touch though, and kind of kept an eye on what's happening at Marist and track and cross country and all of that. And have you stayed in touch with other runners? Because I know you're spoken of so highly in my work with our alums, and they, you know, very fondly remember running for you and, and being part of your teams and, and all of that, you know. So, just curious if you're in, you know--.

RS ([26:24](#)):

Yeah. Some of them, Dennis O'Doherty, for instance, who was in the three-year degree program with--.

JGG ([26:28](#)):

Was the science of man?

RS ([26:30](#)):

Yes.

JGG ([26:30](#)):

Xavier Ryan.

GN ([26:31](#)):

Xavier Ryan.

RS ([26:32](#)):

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He, came out and visited San Diego and get in touch with me. And we met and talked about the old times, and like that. And, it's interesting, some of my other runners--.

JGG ([26:43](#)):

And you mentioned Don Rearden.

RS ([26:44](#)):

Don Reardon--.

JGG ([26:45](#)):

From the class of '88.

RS ([26:46](#)):

In Portland where we had dinner there in Portland, a few, probably about ten years ago. Now he's become a shoe designer, a very, very successful one. And, some of the other ones, I just learned that two of Pete's current runners, I learned a new one today. I actually coached two of their fathers [laugh] I learned the second one today was Gary Weisinger was a runner for me from New Jersey, who again, was a great, you know-- he wasn't, we had a great team then. He wasn't the top seven, but he was always close and always worked really, really hard. And he, now I understand from Peter, is a really good successful runner. And after graduation from college, he became a really good runner. And I also coached, Tim Dearie, who now his son is here at Marist running for Pete and so on. [Affirmative] And Tim became, I just read about him. He's a really successful St. Anthony's coach. And he also has a running camp in the summer. So I don't know if he, I forget if he was a counselor at my camp or whatever. Got some ideas from my camp to use for his, but he was really, really good.

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JGG ([27:47](#)):

Yeah and Tim's class of '83.

RS ([27:48](#)):

Alright.

JGG ([27:49](#)):

Yeah. Yeah.

GN ([27:50](#)):

Can I ask a question about coaching? I'm thinking of "Chariots of Fire" and, that's one with the English runners. Is it not?

RS ([27:59](#)):

Yeah.

GN ([27:59](#)):

When you say, you know, there's a story about the old man in there who teaches the guy how he might gain two more yards, you know, in the last, you know-- my reason is, do you do that or do you just do breathing? Or what's the coaching?

RS ([28:16](#)):

Well, there's a lot to it. We would, like even for our camp, we had different teaching stations, I think five different ones. And we would, we sometimes would videotape runners to check their form to make sure their form wasn't hurting them and so on. There would be, you know, we had

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a program where weight training even would help them out in some cases and so on. So, there's lots of things. I haven't had too much problems with the runners breathing incorrectly or something. You know, it's a tough sport where a lot of guys just want to do the shorter distances and not the long stuff, you know, so you have to have the right mental attitude and so on. One of my favorite movies is McFarland, USA. Kevin Costner plays the lead coach there. It's a true story about a team in California. He started the cross country program and then became state champions. It's just a very touching, warm--.

GN ([29:07](#)):

Yeah.

RS ([29:07](#)):

Disney movie.

GN ([29:09](#)):

You started by talking about a ten or fifteen mile run.

RS ([29:13](#)):

Well, yeah, we would start the year we had a five phase training program. And the first phase was long distance running, or it was called, the first phase was called Marathon Training, where they were supposed to do most of that really in the summer. And we even gave awards for, I think we had award jackets and things if they ran a thousand miles in the summer, and shirts if they ran 500 miles over the summer. And then we keep a log and so on. But the first week of our actual training was doing, I think it was more ten mile runs than fifteen. But along Route 9, sometimes we go north or south, we try to vary it, different places.

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GN ([29:43](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. I used to-- of course the marathon is another story, but nevertheless, you know, I'm just trying to think of () to run. Oh, I used to do a mile myself. At least I started, a mile later I stopped. I never stopped stopped in between, but it took me maybe eight or ten minutes to get there, you know, [laugh] yeah.

JGG ([30:07](#)):

Rich, you went on to to write a book.

RS ([30:11](#)):

Yeah.

JGG ([30:11](#)):

About diet and healthy living and all of that. What prompted you to do that? Did you start that here in New York, or was that something that came--.

RS ([30:20](#)):

No, I was in California.

JGG ([30:21](#)):

California. And why did you go to California? What prompted you to go?

RS ([30:24](#)):

The weather is why I went [laugh]. I hated the winters here. You know, you can't run. And I was running, myself and not competitively, but just to keep in shape and for health reasons. I was

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running an hour every day in the hard surface roads. And eventually I needed hip replacements. And I worry about all my distance runners because your body's not really made for running the pounding and the stress. The only three safe cardios, which I mentioned in the book, are walking, bicycling, and swimming. So, I changed eventually to just walking now a lot. But, in California, I wanted to lose a little bit of weight. And so, I went to a diet and I went to a special kind of diet that I devised pretty much. And I don't want to tell the secret of the diet because that's in the book there [laugh]. But, it's a very simple diet. And, I was talking to someone and I said, I said something, I should write a book about it. And the person grabbed me by the shirt. He says, yes, you should write a book about it. And so I never had written a book and so on, and I thought I was just going to dictate it into a thing and then type it. But I just went right to the typewriter and it wasn't that hard at all and it's--.

GN ([31:31](#)):

Yeah, I was hoping you'd bring them in, copies of them, you know.

RS ([31:35](#)):

Well, I didn't even know. I'd be here today [laugh].

JGG ([31:38](#)):

And the title of the book is:

RS ([31:40](#)):

"The Easiest Diet in the World," and it works.

JGG ([31:44](#)):

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And it's in its second printing?

RS ([31:46](#)):

Yes. And I was able to get amazingly for the website, www.theeasiestdiet.com. I was surprised I could get that when I first did it. So they can go on there and see there's ten different pages. One has a two minute video shot from my backyard in San Diego, and all kinds of different things; how I lost thirty pounds eating anything I wanted, ice cream and so on and so forth. There's a secret, actually on page ten of the book, the secret does come out page ten of the website even. But, you know, and it worked for me and I wasn't-- I was trying to lose five or ten pounds is all, and I lost thirty pounds and three or four inches off my waist and all.

JGG ([32:21](#)):

Wow. Wow.

GN ([32:22](#)):

Very good.

RS ([32:22](#)):

Still eating pretty much anything I wanted. Just had to be something-- I just put salt and pepper on it and I puke-- No, that's not [laugh].

GN ([32:31](#)):

Well, yeah, but I mean, you had been to school, you went to university, you did graduate work, so it was not like starting off, well, how do I start, you know, what's a paragraph?

RS ([32:42](#)):

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Sure.

GN ([32:43](#)):

You know, that part of it. But, and did you have an advisor? How do you move from typing and the book being sold?

RS ([32:55](#)):

There was a company called Author House and to them you send in the plan and they even have editors that check it over for misspelling, stuff like that, and give suggestions and had some pictures taken by a professional photographer. And they designed the cover and all. And then they came out with a slightly different cover. And actually they had, I talked into my book about how you can lose that last inch by something called lipo dissolve. And they thought I was talking about liposuction and they wanted-- so the second edition doesn't even have the lipo dissolve stuff in there, which was wrong because that was an easy technique. It's minimally invasive and so on. And it's not liposuction, it's lipo dissolve, but that's not, so I recommend people buy the first edition because it has the lipo dissolve in it. Otherwise, there's not many changes [affirmative].

GN ([33:40](#)):

Very good.

JGG ([33:41](#)):

And when you were out in California, you also taught at a college out there and-- tell us.

RS ([33:46](#)):

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Yeah, I thought I was finished teaching. I retired here in 2001 from the high school and was retired, I thought. But I missed teaching probably after half a year and got my California credential. And started as a substitute teacher at several different suburban high school districts and a summer school teacher also. And then I got a offer and started teaching at the community college level. And now I've taught three different community colleges, which I like a lot.

JGG ([34:11](#)):

And which community colleges were those?

RS ([34:14](#)):

The Grossmont community college district, the San Diego, let's see, what is it called now? San Diego because I taught at Grossmont College, and Cuyamaca College, and Mesa College. And those are parts of two different districts, really.

JGG ([34:34](#)):

And are you still teaching now?

RS ([34:36](#)):

No, because of COVID I stopped when they wanted the math to be taught and everything to be taught online. I just didn't think that was a good way of teaching math. Plus I didn't want to learn all the different technology stuff. So I retired then. But now I want go back because I do miss it. And I'll go back maybe in the fall of 2022.

GN ([34:56](#)):

Okay, time is running on, so let's, I want to come back into Marist. Marist has changed.

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RS ([35:05](#)):

Oh, has it changed? Wow.

GN ([35:07](#)):

Okay. That's a good beginning.

RS ([35:09](#)):

I'm amazed by it. It's just tremendous. I can't believe it. It's beautiful. It's tremendous.

GN ([35:13](#)):

So you were a number of years. You in 201, you're twenty years out of the area, or?

RS ([35:19](#)):

I haven't been to the area-- well, I was in for a couple, I did a couple book signings at Molloy Pharmacy in Hyde Park. But I didn't, I don't think I came into the campus, so I haven't seen the campus in, you know, twenty years probably yet.

GN ([35:29](#)):

Yeah. Okay. So, the visual probably strikes you. We put up a new, few buildings in the interim.

RS ([35:36](#)):

Oh, wow. Yeah.

GN ([35:37](#)):

Yeah. In fact, Dennis Murray, was he here when you--?

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RS (35:41):

He was my president. He was the president. And, yeah, we talked, he liked to, he would talk to me about my PA announcing. He said you'd do a good job and stuff. Yeah, he was very nice.

GN (35:49):

I see. Okay. That's true. He was here for forty years, so twenty ().

JGG (35:53):

So you had the first few years though, were with Linus.

RS (35:56):

Linus Foy. I had yeah, very smart.

JGG (35:57):

Right. And then transitioned to Dennis.

GN (35:59):

Oh, Linus Foy. That's another story. We were colleagues years ago.

RS (36:08):

He would stop and talk to me too. I wasn't doing much of the PA announcemnet then, but I was cross country coach and I would always go into his office once a year and say, how about a track? Can we have a track on campus? How about a track [laugh]? And he always would come up-- and we, many times it was even had blueprints for it with () blueprints for it to put it around

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the football field, I guess. And every year he'd say, I think we're going to get it this year, but we never got it, and I was surprised. We still don't have it. Oh.

JGG ([36:33](#)):

We are still asking for it. It's still out there. It's still a hope.

RS ([36:37](#)):

Yeah.

GN ([36:38](#)):

Yeah. There's also been a change in the student body here. Were women here when you, did you have women on track?

RS ([36:49](#)):

Not right away, no. Eventually it came around and I think when it came around is when I stopped doing the track. And we didn't even have women's cross country, so no, I don't know when that came around, but we didn't, so I didn't coach any-- I've never coached women actually, or girls even in high school.

GN ([37:05](#)):

I see.

RS ([37:05](#)):

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So I don't know if I would even be able to-- I'd have to read up because, you know, I don't know the proper limits and what you should do. It's you know, it's similar, but it's still different. You know, you have to know the limits.

GN ([37:15](#)):

Yeah. Oh, well, just () to show how ignorant I am, talking about track, are we talking about jumping over obstacles and--?

RS ([37:29](#)):

Well, that would be for the steeplechase, maybe, for the steeplechase event. But just the track is just the circular track. That would be 400 meters or four, forty yards. And you would do like four laps to the mile or the--.

GN ([37:41](#)):

But not, nothing to jump over.

RS ([37:42](#)):

Well, in one event there is, and the steeplechase you would jump over-- but there also are other events. There's the hurdles, which is for faster, it's a sprinting event, the hurdles, the low hurdles, and could have intermediate hurdles for college. That goes one lap around with her. And then the steeple chase has a jumps and it has also a water jump.

GN ([38:00](#)):

There's a high jump and all that stuff.

RS ([38:02](#)):

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There's all those things, that's called the field portion. And Len Olson was my field coach when I was coaching track here. He took care of the field events. Len Olson.

GN ([38:11](#)):

Okay. Views about Marist again. The diversity of the population here has changed. When you were involved. We were probably involved with Connecticut, Pennsylvania, New York, and that's about it. We, of course, to Hudson since, you know, when we're out-- we of course to Mississippi. And we have like ninety students from California, I think, or something like that here, you know, so we're beginning to try to get a spread. And even out to Hawaii.

JGG ([38:43](#)):

Hawaii, I was going to say we have about fifty students from Hawaii.

RS ([38:45](#)):

I don't think we had anything like that in California. Students here in semi.

JGG ([38:49](#)):

No. But water polo, many of our water polo student athletes come from California, actually.

GN ([38:56](#)):

Yeah. Along this line, one of the questions now of course is, is college necessary? You know is it worthwhile going to college? You have to, it's a big investment. Big investment in time, big investment in money, big investment in socialization. You're giving up your home and coming to a campus and so on. Is it worth it?

RS ([39:21](#)):

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Definitely. It's worth it. I just think that some of the programs should be changed. Like, for instance, the teaching program. I had to take one year of history. Well, why exactly? I was a math teacher and so on. I think they would've been better for like a teacher to learn how to teach algebra one course, another course, how to teach geometry, like methods and so on, and motivation and what to do simulating students that may act up and so on. So for the teaching field, I think they should be really completely revamped and changed. And maybe a lot of the college programs should be less in time than four years. I'm not sure, other fields, like, I just know the teaching field, and I can think of broadcasting since I've been in that and how that could probably be done in two years and so on. That would be my recommendations for how things should change. But I think college is important because in high school you don't get those those finite type of ideas of, you know, that you get in college. And I also, one of the best things you learn in college is how to live with other people and just how to live.

GN ([40:22](#)):

Yeah. Absolutely.

RS ([40:22](#)):

How to associate with people, how to live with them, how to, you know, the students make noise in the dorm, how do you handle it? And so on. Just getting together and living your life on your own away from home.

GN ([40:32](#)):

Yeah. And that's another problem is college, learning how to live or learning how to make a living, you know, in other words, not just, well, taking business courses and computer science

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and so on, reading literature, poetry, you know, or looking at some of the wider liberal arts would seem to be a necessary ingredient for the world developed person. You know?

RS ([40:57](#)):

Yeah.

GN ([40:57](#)):

The only thing is, we may be losing the race. There's not that many students on the horizon to be able to fill the colleges, you know, so to convince those who are out there that they should invest this and not do what right away and get a job at IBM, or, you know, even though IBM's going to need mathematicians, you know, and they're gonna need all kinds of people. So, I'm talking, you should be talking, looking in the crystal ball. What do you see?

RS ([41:32](#)):

Well, I think, you know, again, I would like to see a change in the, the programs and how they're run. And I think, I think a college education could be streamlined into two or three years, more. But I don't think that's going to happen, I guess, because no one else is doing it to my knowledge. I mean, we used to have a three year degree program here. I'm not sure how that was, the science of math, how that was run and what they, if they just took more, I think they took more hours each semester and so on [affirmative]. But, I think a good college education can be done, still broad enough to cover different ideas. Because I see these programs, not programs, I see these interviewers with these-- asking people in this, college students on campuses, these questions they should know, like, who was, what was the Civil War? And they can't even answer some of the students can't even answer basic questions that you should know.

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GN ([42:21](#)):

Yeah.

RS ([42:21](#)):

So, in my year, one year of history, I, maybe I'm saying I didn't see it was necessary because I had American history in high school and I was a pretty good student and so on. And maybe I didn't learn anything new, I think, in my one year of American history that I had to take in my math program. But, you know, I mean, students that college students that can't answer some basic questions about the history of the country or something, it's kind of, it's very embarrassing. And that's not a--.

GN ([42:45](#)):

How do you feel about the Constitution [laugh]?

RS ([42:48](#)):

Oh yeah. Some don't even know what that is or that it exists. Yeah.

GN ([42:52](#)):

Yeah. Well, I, you know, I don't want to just keep talking. I appreciate all that you've offered and I just turn it back to Joan to say some final-- we said we'd be finished at three, and the clock is moving up to that time [laugh]. So, that's why I'm sitting here. I don't want to--.

RS ([43:12](#)):

I have more time--.

Richard Stevens

GN ([43:14](#)):

Lose your good graces.

RS ([43:14](#)):

If you have more questions I have more time. I'm not, I wasn't under, I was under a time constraint originally. Because I was going to meet with Bob Mayer, but now I can't for reasons, that he had a change of schedule. But, I have more time, so if you have more questions, I'm happy to answer.

GN ([43:27](#)):

Okay. Let's not all () [laugh].

JGG ([43:28](#)):

So what I-- what are your favorite memories, if you will? What, I guess, you know, from your time at Marist and, focusing on that sort of, what were your favorite takeaways from your experience here?

RS ([43:42](#)):

Definitely was the, just the relationship of me as a coach and the runners and how even though I think, as you say, they respected me. I wasn't a meanie and I was a little bit of-- I was above them, but I wasn't much older than them. I wasn't much older than them at all. But, just the camaraderie we had, you know, we would go on trips, overnight trips to different invitationals and, you know, we had four to a room, three hotel room, motel rooms and so on. And you just got to know their habits, what they liked to eat and so on because we had meal money and stuff. So it was just the respect I think that I had for them and that they had for me, I guess, you know.

Richard Stevens

[Affirmative] It wasn't, you know, a situation where I was bossing them around or like that. It was-- and they did, they really appreciated it and they appreciated the time and work that they were putting in. And also the time work that I was putting in. So that was--.

GN ([44:39](#)):

Well, you didn't have devices. You weren't smoking and drinking--.

RS ([44:41](#)):

No, no.

GN ([44:42](#)):

Heavily.

RS ([44:42](#)):

No [laugh].

GN ([44:44](#)):

So I mean, that's another big positive up in the work you were involved in. Back, more team memories. How do you-- treated by the rest of the staff? Do you think you got a fair break?

RS ([44:59](#)):

Yeah, but you know, you always want more. Like, I would ask for budgeting. Matter of fact, I almost quit. Ron Petro was the athletic director, and he was good. And, I don't know if I actually went in and said I want to-- I guess I must've gone in and said, I want to quit. Maybe it was four years into my run here of the eight years that I started teach-- doing the coaching. And, he said

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me nice, okay, what do you want? What do you need? It was, you know, it was budgetary things. And he gave me pretty much everything I wanted then and so on. So, I continued on. Matter of fact, I think Jerry Scholder was going to, you know, was going-- he was our great runner. He had won the New York State Two Mile Outdoor Championship. And, for his first year here as a freshman, he, every single meet, he either, it was either a small meet where he set the course record or was an invitation where he set the meet record. And he was just like, he was hard to believe that he would want to come to a small school like Marist College when he was offered scholarships in Manhattan and so on. But, through the admissions department and he had financial aid needs, we were able to give him pretty much everything. And he, I think he was threatening to transfer too, if we, you know, we didn't make a bold, bold plea to Ron, but I think, you know, we-- I was going to leave him and I think Jerry was going to transfer, and Ron gave us what we wanted, and that was good, you know.

GN ([46:17](#)):

Oh, good.

RS ([46:19](#)):

Ron was a very good athletic director. Very good.

GN ([46:22](#)):

Okay. Well, anything we didn't ask you that you want to say [laugh]? You know, this is--.

RS ([46:31](#)):

My fond-- some of my fondest memories would be the, you know, the high school invitational and actually my favorite meet that we ever had after the high school invitational, one year we

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had a meet against Lowell University, which was a top rank division two. We were division two then, cross country team. And they had two all American runners and Jerry Scholder, for instance, wanted to beat them. I said, Jerry, you can try beating if you want, but you better come in third place overall for us, you know? And so, and each guy was given a goal, and we actually had a meet, this was on the Marist campus. We actually had a meet on the Marist campus the previous Tuesday against University of New Haven, which was a bad team. And I told the team I wanted them to go out faster than they ever had before. And they all were saying, oh, I'll die. And they all did that, and they all set their personal records. It was incredible what they did. And then I said, this, we were using-- as a matter of fact, I apologized to the coach from the other team, in a nice way as I could. He was just flabbergast-- I mean, we probably had a whole team in before his first man even. And he wasn't-- the team wasn't that bad, but we just floated them like that. And I said, this is going to be, we're conducting this, this meet as a practice for the tough team that we had Saturday. And in that tough team Saturday, they were ready for them, and we won it. I still remember doing the scoring, on the, we used to finish the race in front of Champagnat Hall, and I was doing the scoring, and I figured out we had won like by two points. I looked up, I said-- and the teachers went excited. So they just--.

GN ([48:01](#)):

Yeah.

RS ([48:01](#)):

Just jump for joy. So it was, it was the best, there's no question it was the best win we ever had in my time. It was against Lowell University.

Richard Stevens

GN ([48:10](#)):

Yeah. You just remind me of, we talked to, oh, the band leader.

JGG ([48:18](#)):

Fred PolICASTRI, right?

GN ([48:19](#)):

Yeah.

JGG ([48:20](#)):

From the class of '67?

GN ([48:22](#)):

No, the, director of the-- Art Himmelberger.

JGG ([48:28](#)):

Oh, Art Himmelberger.

GN ([48:29](#)):

Yeah. And he talked about the Marist band. From a, a school of 4,000, he's able to put on the field, a band that's equal to schools is 40,000, you know, and say, how does this happen? You know? And it's pretty much what you're saying, you know, you get the guys that are there and you motivate them and do the best you can. And even better you know, and it's amazing what the turnout will be. You have to be serious and committed to it. And I think that's written all over what you've done here, you know, and that-- we're certainly happy that you were here and made

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the mark you did. And, we're recording it for our future people to come along and say, and this was our day, you know. Good. [Imitates bell noise]. The rail was ringing at three. We don't have to stop. I just, I can't offer you drinks or anything because I don't have you () [laugh]. Yeah. So that's the way it is.

JGG ([49:40](#)):

So, I would just say plans for the future. What do you have ahead of you? Do you have another book in mind or what--?

RS ([49:45](#)):

I haven't even thought about going back into-- I tell, I was at the track with Pete and I missed and so on some of it. But I've thought about going back and maybe trying to do cross country either for a high school team out in the San Diego area or a college team. I don't know.

JGG ([50:01](#)):

Yeah.

RS ([50:02](#)):

But it's, you know, I almost, you know, I've been blessed because pretty much everything I wanted to do in life, I was able to do. I wanted to teach, I did that. I wanted to coach. I've done lots of that. I wanted to do radio. I did that. I wanted to do PA did that. So, I mean, I've done everything I wanted to do. It's really amazing. I never even said I wanted to do-- write a book, but I did that also. But, I've just been blessed that I've done pretty much everything I wanted to do. Only thing I didn't do that I wanted to do, although in a way I have done it, is I wanted to be a comedian. Alright. But I was a comedian on the radio and I was a comedian in my classroom.

Richard Stevens

I'm a comedian also. And maybe even some of the coaching, I know I can think of the guys when we went to supermarkets and they would say I was a comedian in the supermarkets. Some of the things I would do and so on. So, yeah, I--.

JGG ([50:45](#)):

And I have to ask you because listening to you and your presentations for years, you know, did you ever have any formal voice training or--?

RS ([50:56](#)):

No. I mean, just the college radio station I learned and did everything I could with that. But no, no formal voice training.

JGG ([51:02](#)):

Incredible.

RS ([51:03](#)):

And I was surprised. The Nets thought, and people thought-- matter of fact, I was really shocked that people, I don't think I have that good of a voice and people, but I do project, I do change my voice a little bit when I'm, whenever I'm doing the announcing and so on. And people, the guy, there was a guy that had done some of the Nets things before or something. He says, boy, when I heard you, I knew they hired the right guy. I didn't, I just was shocked. Yeah.

GN ([51:28](#)):

Good.

JGG ([51:28](#)):

Richard Stevens

It's a wonderful gift, really.

RS ([51:30](#)):

Thanks.

JGG ([51:30](#)):

Lovely. Yeah.

GN ([51:32](#)):

Alright. I'm finished.

JGG ([51:37](#)):

Thank you.

RS ([51:38](#)):

Thank you.

JGG ([51:38](#)):

Thank you so much.

RS ([51:39](#)):

Pleasure talking and bring up all these memories.