Note on the Interviews

JOHN WHEAT

I began my conversations with Coach Royal in the spring of 1993 to record in his own words the story of his legendary career at the University of Texas. I was eager to embrace this project because I had run on the UT track and cross-country teams in the early 1960s, and knew many of the personalities and events from Coach Royal's era. We sat down in the quietest corner we could find at the Barton Creek Country Club: in the wine cellar, surrounded by a thousand bottles of vintage wine.

As head of sound archives at the university's Center for American History, I intended merely to add the tapes and transcripts to the center's growing collection of Darrell Royal papers. The project took on a new dimension ten years later, however, when editors at the University of Texas Press read the transcripts and saw in them the potential for a fascinating book. To that end, I revisited Coach Royal (again in the wine cellar) in the summer of 2004, on the eve of his eightieth birthday, to update his story. Our conversations were all brought together and arranged under different topics. Although they do not include every anecdote from Coach Royal's fabled career, these conversations paint a compelling self-portrait of one of the most honored figures in the history of the University of Texas.

The Interviews