ORAL HISTORY MEMOIR

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE FOR ORAL HISTORY

Interviewee:  E. E. “Dutch” Schroeder

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Place:  Marrs McLean Gymnasium
       Baylor University
       Waco, Texas

Interviewer:  Marcus E. Johnson

SCHROEDER INTERVIEW NO. 3

MARCUS E. JOHNSON:  Today is July 10, 1998.  My name is Marcus Johnson.  I am interviewing for the third time Coach Dutch Schroeder, former head baseball coach at Baylor University.  In today’s interview, Coach, I’d like to talk about your head coaching career at Baylor.  The last interview we finished off with—you were promoted to head coach after Lloyd Russell resigned, and what was the transition like?  What were the—how were the players’ reactions?  Was there anything special, or did you just kind of slide into the job?

E. E. “DUTCH” SCHROEDER:  It was more like a slide in because I had done all the off-season training for all the players, freshmen and varsity players.  I had coached all of them as freshmen; they were all my boys.  We were able to come in after two very good seasons with Lloyd Russell.  The ’62 team had an outstanding pitcher named Pete Charton.  Pete won about eight ball games for me and out of twenty-five total games, that’s a pretty good percentage.  Pete was approached by the Boston Red Sox at the end of the season.  There was no baseball draft at the time.  Pete was offered something like fifty thousand, so with my blessings he took it, because he did have one of the most
outstanding arms I’d ever been able to work with. We finished up third in the conference that year. It was an outstanding year. Texas and A&M, of course, had great teams.

JOHNSON: So this was the ’62 team?

SCHROEDER: That was ’62.

JOHNSON: Real quick, A&M and Texas from what I’ve seen of the histories were mainly the class of the conference usually. What was it like having to compete with their resources and, you know, prestige, and other things? How tough was it?

SCHROEDER: It was awfully tough. Of course, I had grown up in Austin and knew Mr. Falk real well. I knew the kind of coach he was and it was a—it was just an outstanding opportunity to get to compete against your old mentor. He did not try to surround himself with all the great players that came out of the high school programs in Texas as we talked earlier. Baseball in high schools was not a sport that was played to the state championship until the late 1940s. But when it became a state championship sport, most schools took it up. And Mr. Falk did get the outstanding players, but his teams usually had about fifteen to eighteen players on it because we didn’t play but twenty-five to twenty-six ball games a year in that time. When they were rained out, we didn’t even play some of them. Mr. Falk built his team on strong hitting and outstanding pitching, but he only had three pitchers on his squad most of the time. Of course, that’s about all we would have with the number of games that we had. But it was an outstanding opportunity to get to participate against the likes of Bibb Falk, and by the time I took over as head coach at Baylor, the head coach at A&M was Tom Chandler, who had played at Baylor here with me during the late 1940s.

JOHNSON: All right. So, the ’63 season, you just had—just come off a third-place finish in the conference. What do you remember about those teams from the mid-sixties?

SCHROEDER: The ’63 team was leading the conference with a seven and two record. We were halfway through. We ended up with an eight and seven record and some blame it or claim it—I had an injury in pitching batting practice early in the spring. I threw a
pitch to a batter and fell flat on my face. I had pulled one of the gastroc muscles out in the back of my left knee. I was not able to walk and was on crutches for three months. So, it was left to me to yell and holler and tell people what to do because I was not able to do a lot on the field. But the team responded well early and we did jump out to a great start. Unfortunately, we took a spring break trip to New Orleans and some of the players blame it that we had too much fun in New Orleans playing. That’s playing baseball.

JOHNSON: I was about to say, it could be some other fun in there.

SCHROEDER: There was a letdown after we got back home and we did finish up poorly and ended up fifth in the conference that year. That was the one year I was quoted in *Sports Illustrated*. I did not make the quote, but I was so quoted. Something about Coach Schroeder of the Baylor Bears, after a season-ending injury for himself, being on crutches, was asked, “What happens when you wanted to disagree with one of the umpire’s decisions?” His statement was—“Looks like I ought to take my crutches on out there and start waving them around and maybe the umpires would see things my way a little easier.” Of course, I never said it and I didn’t have the opportunity to even go out and dispute or discuss the different situations that came up. So it was a low point in the first five years of the sixties. The ’64 team was very outstanding. I’d lost Charton, but I’d picked up some young players who were playing for the team. I had lots of three-year lettermen that year; remember, freshmen were not eligible for the varsity. We’d put up a fight for the championship and we had to go to A&M to play two single games to end the season. If we could win only one of them, we would be the conference champion. As it turned out, we got rained out of the first day’s game and had to play a doubleheader. In the first game, on this wet, wet field, a ball bounced over our right fielder’s head that should have been an easy play to keep A&M from scoring. As it turned out, they scored three runs on this high bounce and we end up losing to them. In the second game, we just got beat. We got only a couple hits off of their ace and were defeated 2-0. So we were thwarted once again; this time for the second place finish. But it was the lead up—
JOHNSON: Who were some of your outstanding players on that team?

SCHROEDER: That year my outstanding players were the senior pitchers of Porter and Henry Perkins. They, along with Pete Charton, had been an outstanding freshmen trio for me and as they were sophomores when we made our first run in 1962, they were outstanding pitchers for me. They were my outstanding pitchers that year. Other players were just my run-of-the-mill players. They were good college players. We probably had a team batting average of around .280. We were not offensive minded; we were a very defensive minded team. In fact, if we could score five runs, we expected to win. We expected to win when we made two. We expected our defense to hold them, but we loved to get five runs and know we were going to win that ball game.

JOHNSON: How about ’65?

SCHROEDER: Sixty-five was an outstanding season. With a little luck we could have perhaps won the championship that year instead of ending up second. I had one of Baylor’s great athletes, not recognized as such, but he was. Fred Rath. Fred Rath came from the state of Arkansas. They didn’t have high school baseball in Arkansas, but had a good American Legion Junior Program. He pitched for the Little Rock team and they were outstanding. Won their state every year he pitched for them. But he was a track athlete, a high jumper. So good that he was offered a full scholarship to come to Baylor. Now, you have to recall more of Baylor history—sports history. His high school coach was Clyde Hart. Fred got out of Little Rock just before the integration problems began, but Coach Hart had talked Coach Patterson into giving Fred Rath a full scholarship for a man who only did one event, and that was the high jump. But he proved himself worthy by scoring lots of points in track meets in the high jump. As a freshman, he was the conference champion high jumper. As a sophomore in 1963, he was on the last of the three conference championships that Coach Jack Patterson won for Baylor. He placed in the high jump—he never won first, but he always—he either tied for first or was second or third. Always placed. In ’64, the track team did not win the conference
championship—had a strong showing—Fred had an outstanding year. However, that summer he was so outstanding in the Little Rock Adult Men’s League that the scouts wanted him to pitch against college players the next year. So, by now Coach Hart was the track coach and Coach Hart allowed him to come and change his scholarship and all he got was his tuition from me, because that’s all my players were getting. He paid the rest of his scholarship, but he had to do the high jump in the conference meet; that was the only stipulation. Now, we changed it a little bit, because when I could pitch him on a Friday, he would go with the track team on Saturday to pick up a few points for the team. But Fred Rath turns out to be one of the most outstanding pitchers Baylor ever had. One year was all he could play, but in that one year he defeated Texas twice and A&M twice and they were both in the top ten in collegiate baseball. We failed to win the conference because Fred lost a game. He lost a game to the last place team. SMU came in to Baylor and all we needed to do was to win them to assure ourselves of at least a tie for the championship. But that day, SMU defeated Fred. It seemed like the score was 5-3 and we ended up second—no, we ended up third that year. Texas and A&M, they were very, very outstanding. But it gave us an opportunity to have another great year. We’d been eighteen-seven, eighteen-seven those years. The worst year we had was when we were thirteen and eleven, when we were fifth in the conference.

JOHNSON: That was ’63?

SCHROEDER: Sixty-three, yeah.

JOHNSON: Any other players that stand out in your mind from those teams there?

SCHROEDER: Yes, I had a player named Jimmy Mallon who was an all-conference outfielder—was a left-handed hitter. Always hit for well above .350. Was not a power hitter. Was a first basemen and outfielder. Mostly played outfield for me. At the end of the ’65 season, he has one more year to play, but he signs a pro contract. He signs with the New York Giants and got about $15,000, but it assured him that he would have enough money to get his college degree. But he played with the Liberal, Kansas, team in
the Ban Johnson League, which was the outstanding semipro league at the time. He was so outstanding that they wanted to sign him then and get him started. Mallon, with my blessings, went on to play in the New York Giants system. He’s one of the forgotten players in minor league baseball. Led the Texas league two years in a row in hitting. Led every league he played in, but never was able to move up in the system. He had several very good first basemen ahead of him and at that time players were not allowed to switch teams on their own at all. But Mallon came back and helped me coach for years in the time when he was available. Got his degree, even got his master’s degree here. Unfortunately for him, when it appeared he could no longer move up in the professional ranks, he took the job as head coach at Southwestern University in 1970 or ’71. He’s now the holder of probably the third most victories by any college coach of all time. Has well over a thousand victories. But Mallon was one of my very outstanding players. The others were just good college players. Not sure I had any other All-Conference, but Mallon and Rath.

JOHNSON: From a coach’s perspective, you said that several of these players that left to sign pro contracts left with your blessing. How did you approach that knowing that some of your best players you would lose—probably only get at most three years out of them, and were there some that you would not give your blessing to? As a coach, how did you work that out?

SCHROEDER: Any time a team will give you enough money to get your degree, then you need to get started because by the time you’re twenty-seven, if you haven’t made it, chances are not good that you will make it. So, if you don’t get started in your early twenties and learn to fight your way up the ladder through the minor leagues, chances are not going to be good. If you’re twenty-three or twenty-four when you sign, chances are not good that you will ever make it.

JOHNSON: So you were trying not to look out just for your interests, but for their interests, too?
SCHROEDER: We played for the players. It’s good to win for Baylor, but the players are the most important part. There were a couple of times when I did not give blessings because I wasn’t asked for blessings. When pro scouts, and I call them unscrupulous, come in and raid your team without telling you or asking you if they can talk to your players. As long as it was above board, I went along with it easy.

JOHNSON: What about the ’66 team? The last team—Baylor baseball team to take part in a championship.

SCHROEDER: We got the word through the collegiate baseball that our program was eighteenth in the nation over the first five years of the sixties in percentage of victories. We knew we had a good program going; we just needed to take another step and that’s the thought of winning this conference. And we were a very senior team in ’66 and had good opportunities. It would have been great to have Mallon back for one more year, because he either made a run or drove in a run in every ball game we played. But he’s not there—people came up to move into positions and they all worked well. We probably didn’t have a batting average over about .270, but we played as a team and could be motivated by each other to do well. It was a year in which, with a little bit of luck, we should have won it. It just didn’t happen that way. We were not so strong that we could walk on the field and say, “We can beat anybody in the conference,” because we did lose a couple of games to those in the lower parts of the standings. We did beat Texas twice. We did beat A&M twice and we did beat TCU twice. But we lost to SMU and we lost to Rice, and those losses kept us from winning it outright. If we’d had some, I hate to say, fair umpiring at Rice, we could perhaps have won it outright. We got a bad deal in an extra inning game and the umpire took us out of the game. And the game ended in a tie and was called. We had to replay it. Unfortunately, in the replay we didn’t get that close. So, we ended up in a four-way tie for the championship with A&M, Texas, and TCU. And we had beaten each one of them two of the three games. They had beaten us the other. But we had lost two games to Rice and one to SMU; I believe that’s
the way it ended up. So we had—it was a nine and six. Nine victories, six losses. But it was a year in which the conference was so equal. All of our teams had good pitchers. Our team did not have an outstanding single pitcher, but I had five different pitchers who won ball games in the conference. So you can see, I just didn’t have one to throw; I had to be selective and hope I picked the right one on the day they pitched. But it was an outstanding year. This is before we had tournaments at the end of the season. The TCU coach and I asked the conference to have our first tournament. Have a playoff. Four teams. Make a draw. Two play. Next two play. The winners play for the championship. Of course, he was like I was, knowing that we had to slip in to win a championship, and if we had just a two game series we might could be lucky enough to beat Texas or A&M again. The conference fathers wouldn’t hear of it. Guess how we selected the winning team? It was a coin toss. Odd man out. It goes to show you that the church schools can’t win when it’s a gamble. Now, I did not go to be a part of the flip. I sent Mr. Henderson, who was our athletic director, to do it. The first flip, TCU was out. Second flip, Baylor was out. The church schools were out of it in a hurry. A&M and Texas flipped several times. In the end, guess who won out? Texas, again. Texas was able to go on. It was not one of their strongest teams and they did not get to the World Series that year. But it was an outstanding year for us. It was a kind of an end to our great run in the sixties, because from ’60 through ’66 our percentage was about .800 in victories.

JOHNSON: What stands out to you about that ’66 team besides—you said they weren’t—it was quality, very good depth, but it was not going to blow anybody out of the park. They actually had to work for their victory.

SCHROEDER: We had to work. Our pitchers had to hold the other teams to very low scoring games for us to win. We did a lot of stealing, bunting, squeezing. We stole third base twice that year with the goal being tying up the third basemen so that the catcher’s throw would go into left field and our runner could go home. And I remember in both cases, the catcher for the other team wanted to block our runner off and the ball was still
in left field. We were close to several melees over that play. But it’s one that the speed of our players could help pull off—stealing third is the easiest base to steal, and if you get the jump and can get in front of the base, cut the vision off of the third baseman, he has a hard time stopping that ball from going into left field. So, that’s the kind of team we had. I also had two players who had a knack, and I did not teach this and I would never teach it, but their bat would hit the catcher’s glove and they would get first base on interference. But Bill Bain and Andy Wimpee had mastered the art. It’s not one I’d teach; it’s one they learned on their own, but it got us a lot of runners when it was hard for us to get them.

JOHNSON: From what I read in the *Round Up* and other press clippings about your coaching career, you described their—what everybody says—Baylor rarely had a power hitting team, it rarely had an overpowering team, but you played, it seems like, traditional, classic baseball. Great defense, you know, you used—you ran the bases smartly. You always tried to stay one step ahead and outthink the other guy. Would you say that’s a fair assessment?

SCHROEDER: Our players were prepared. They knew they were not going to go overpower anybody. They knew we spent lots of time on defense. We didn’t make many errors. I can forgive physical errors, but we don’t make mental errors. That’s where we were strong. When a play needed to be backed up, it was backed up. Players understood if they failed to be in proper position, they did things wrong, they got to run for me after the ball game. And it’s a little embarrassing to know you’re going to be running and some of the fans haven’t left yet.

JOHNSON: Yeah. Um, going back to your baseball background, you played, it seemed like, almost every position at one time or another in your baseball career. Did that translate as far as—and also your mentors—you talked about—did they teach you this style of baseball, the kind of classic baseball style? Was that how—that’s why your teams reflected that?
SCHROEDER: In high school the one year I played was for Tony Burger, one of the most outstanding defensive coaches. He never developed a hitter. We used the inabilities of the other team and our defensive capabilities to win. And we were a winner. I played pro baseball for lots of different managers, but I had one who was a coach. His name was Salty Parker. Salty was a teacher and taught us many of the intricacies of the game. We understood the double delayed steal well. We had lots of opportunities on double plays. He taught us ways to move around the base. Fortunately, I got to play lots of positions and had to be involved with a lot of this inner baseball. In professional baseball, I played every position but pitcher. I caught probably more than a 120 games. I played first base probably eighty to a hundred. I played at second base probably twenty-five. Shortstop about ten. Third base about thirty or forty. Played all different positions in the outfield a great number of times. However, I did pitch in professional baseball. We used to have what’s called a homerun hitting contest, and if you just remember we got through with one at Coors Stadium [site of 1998 Major League Baseball All-Star Game] in which the ball traveled for long distances in—

JOHNSON: In the 1998 All-Star game?

SCHROEDER: Yes. But when our hitters were involved in homerun hitting contests they chose me to be the pitcher. I think that tells you why I didn’t pitch in the game. I was able to put the ball in a power zone for hitters. Those that were high ball hitters, I could keep it up in the letters. Those that were low ball hitters, I could put it around their knees with pretty good accuracy. It was probably because one of my positions as catcher was to place the ball behind my ear and place it in the direction I wanted it to and let it go.

JOHNSON: So that gave you, as far as the defensive position and other stuff, because you play all of those positions, you knew where everything should be.

SCHROEDER: I was able to help players in every position to improve their skills. I had to—there was no other coaches.
JOHNSON: Let me flip the tape real quick.

(tape 1, side 1 ends; side 2 begins)

JOHNSON: This is side two of tape one of the third interview with Coach Dutch Schroeder on July 10, 1998. Uh, what were the other teams in the conference like during this period? Were Texas and Texas A&M—since they had much stronger recruiting bases—were they more of your power hitting teams? More offensive minded teams? How did they compare to Baylor and the program you established here?

SCHROEDER: I wanted curve ball pitchers. The power hitters feed off of fastballs. The curve ball, they had to furnish most of the power. So I wanted pitchers who could bend that ball, throw off-speed pitches, and devil the other team. Many’s the time they would yell at me because they would want me to get somebody who could throw the ball harder out there. And, of course, when they finally hit one off of one of my pitchers, I’d tell them when they’d come by me, “Well, I finally got a pitcher who could throw one slow enough that you could hit.”

JOHNSON: I’m sure they liked that.

SCHROEDER: Oh, yeah. Nineteen sixty-six was sort of the end of our great run. I had to make some decisions at the end of ’66. Dissentions had grown on the team and it was over religion. Three of my players, all juniors, had come to begin associating themselves with a group called the Nee religion. Nee is N-e-e. A Chinese man, Watchman Nee, who was supposedly either dead or imprisoned by the communists in China, who was continuing to further the cause of Christianity in rooms and cells where they would not be investigated or even known about. This was a great thing for the Chinese Christians. There were Baylor—not just Baylor students, but students in the United States who learned of the movement and who began to popularize that phase of religion. There was a group here on Baylor’s campus who encouraged three of our baseball players to come and be a part, and they were. They were all among the finest young men I have ever had an opportunity to coach. But some of the players felt that there was a growing disunity...
because the niceness of these three, but who kept encouraging the others to come and be a part when they were satisfied with their own different groups that they worshipped with, that there was some coat hanger movements and some haranguing. And I felt like I needed to do something to reduce this hostility toward one another. I asked the three to low-key it, but they were so fervent that it was hard for them to low-key their low-key approach. But when they told me they needed to go to California to an orientation seminar that summer, I asked them to not go and I felt it would further disrupt the harmony that still existed with our team. But it was so important for them to go and two of them went. The other—and they had consultations with their parents over this, but one parent encouraged his son not to go and be a part of it. So, the two that went were not asked to be a part of the baseball program their senior year. They did stay here and got their degrees and became junior high school teachers, which had been the goal of that group, so they could influence students of that age. It caused me the need to go back into the student body and bring out—and open up tryouts, and I picked a couple of players that had never been in my fall program or who had been through any part of my program previously. Both were junior college transfers; both were seniors. And they—one was my shortstop; the other ended up at first base for me. We did not have a very successful season that year.

JOHNSON: Nineteen sixty-seven?

SCHROEDER: Nineteen sixty-seven. We ended up last in the conference. It ended up so bad that I did something I did only once in my life. I took a team off the field. In our last ball game of the season, TCU needed to win to tie for the conference. They still had a strong team and in order to be able to tie with either Texas or A&M, I’ve forgotten which, if they could beat us. Well, it was obvious from the first inning that we were not going to win by the type of officiating that we got. About the third inning, one of their players hit a ball into some hedge that was inside the field but out in left field. One umpire went out to examine the ball and came back and motioned two fingers and called
the runner back to second, and the runner was on first, so he had to go back to third. The coach went out and talked to that umpire, and he changed his decision and gave the circling movement of arm indicating a homerun, so they trot and make a homerun. Well, as coach I needed to find out why the umpire changed his decision. He would not talk to me. When I would try to get in front of him, he would turn his back to me. It was obvious to me that that coach had gotten to him in some way. He was not going to even give me the time of day. The head umpire behind the plate came out and said, “Let’s play ball, Dutch.” I said, “Whoa. If you will tell me why the decision has been changed and I can find good reason for it, we play. But if you’re not going to tell me why you changed the decision then we’re not going to play anymore.” He said, “Ah, come on, Dutch. Let’s play.” I said, “Look, it’s bad enough what’s happening.” I said, “You’re already ahead 7-0. We’re not going to win. I knew that from the first inning off, but to come out here and cheat us, that’s not right.” And I said, “Would you tell me why the decision was changed?” He said, “Well, let me talk to him.” So they go talk out by themselves, and he comes back and says, “He says the ball’s a homerun.” I said, “Okay, tell me why.” He says, “The ball is a homerun.” I called my players in and I said, “Gang, this is it. They can’t tell us why they’ve changed the decision.” And my left fielder was Mike Adams. He said, “Coach, the guy came out there and looked and saw the ball there in the hedge.” I said, “I know, Mike. We’re not going into a big discussion here. We’re going to go sit in the dugout and when they decide to tell us how they have made a decision to change, then we’ll go back and finish the inning.” And I so informed the head umpire. I obviously could not speak to the other one and told him that when he could give me a reason, we’ll do it. And one minute, he raised his arm and says, “TCU’s the winner. Baylor is not going to continue playing.” So, that was the end of it, but it wasn’t. The president of the TCU student body came down and apologized to me for what had happened. I did not get an apology from any official in the athletic department of TCU, but it was the worst case of hometowning I had ever been a part of, and I have
been a part of a lot of it. And, of course, I was called on the carpet for taking a team off
the field. It was written up in the papers that I was a sour grapes guy and I guess I was,
but I had reason to believe that my team no longer—this game was no longer being
officiated by officials who were going to be fair about the game. So we ended up in last
place. The end of my—really, I guess, my worst, worst season.
JOHNSON: You were known as the kind of person who would not hesitate to get in the
umpire’s face. What was your approach to that? How does the baseball manager, coach,
think when dealing with umpires?
SCHROEDER: You must—baseball is different than football and basketball and other
sports, mainly because it came down from the professional ranks. That umpires’
decisions were to be disputed. In college and in high school, it should only be done by
the person in charge. Players should never be in a dispute with the umpire. They may
say a word or two, but there should be no confrontations. But the coach or managers
should be the representative of his team to let umpires know that some decisions are not
just. Now, how far you go is important. Now, we still see coaches and managers in
baseball chew on umpires for long periods of time until an umpire gets ready to raise his
hand and lower it real quickly indicating that’s all. I’m sure that there were times I
should have been called out. Cussing is completely out. There should be no cursing. It
should relate to the play at hand; no other plays should be discussed. And you should let
an umpire know when you feel like they have not been fair to your players. And you
don’t usually go out in a very calm manner; it’s usually in a manner in which you—if it’s
just happened, you quickly go out and make some remarks to the umpire, but they should
all be controlled, and while you may look like you are being very harsh and very abrupt
and really chewing, it should be reflected straight to the play in question. I am sure I
went out many times to discuss with umpires, but there was a time to walk away. I was
thrown out of one ball game in my entire baseball career. Player and coach. And the
time I’m thrown out, I should not have been thrown out. A fan in the stands, but it was
behind our dugout, kept riding an umpire and he had been pretty brutal. I had been out to talk to him a couple of times, but I found out I wasn’t going to get anywhere with him. I left him alone. My players left him alone. I had told them; they did not get on umpires. But a former player of mine sitting behind the dugout kept after him and after he made one brutal call in the field, my fan was really on him. He came over and he said, “If I hear one more word from the dugout, you’re all gone.” Well, my players didn’t say a word, I didn’t say a word, but the fan in the stands said plenty. He came over—he didn’t come to the dugout, he came to the baseline and said, “Dutch, you’re out.” And I sit. I don’t do anything because my players or I have not done anything. The head umpire comes over. He says, “Dutch, he’s throwing you out of the game.” I said, “What for?” He says, “Dutch, he says ya’ll were still riding him.” I said, “What did we say?” He says, “Ya’ll were riding him.” I said, “No, none of my players or I are riding him.” I said, “I don’t know who’s riding him.” I did, but I was not going to say. He says, “Dutch, we need to finish the ball game. Would you leave the ballpark if I asked you to?” And I told him, “Yes, if that will keep the peace, I will leave the ballpark, even though you and I both know that I haven’t done one thing to deserve it.” And I left the ballpark. And they finished the game. Unfortunately, some fans and the umpire got into it after the game, but my players stayed clear of it.

JOHNSON: Did they go after him physically after the game?

SCHROEDER: I think there were some blows. Mostly it was taunts and booing and this kind of thing.

JOHNSON: Did you ever talk to your former player?

SCHROEDER: Oh, yeah, he and I are best friends. We are best friends. He sent his whole family here to Baylor. His father was a baseball letterman before him. Oh, yeah. He’s a neat person. He just couldn’t stand to see us being treated the way we were being treated. It was not good. Not as bad as what happened to me at TCU. This happened a couple of years later in Houston.
JOHNSON: Versus Rice University?
SCHROEDER: No, it was against the University of Houston.
JOHNSON: You know, any sport with officiating is going to be subjective with humans being umpires; they’re going to make mistakes. In baseball, you know, seems like there are more disputes than other sports. Is it just because of the traditions?
SCHROEDER: Mainly because every pitch has to be a judgment and so much is riding on how an umpire calls the game.
JOHNSON: And there are just some that are incompetent?
SCHROEDER: Oh, I’m sure there’s incompetancy. There’s incompetent players, incompetent coaches. I may be one of those, I don’t know. But umpiring must have integrity for us to have sports. And I believe in officiating.
JOHNSON: Now, you wouldn’t—I take it, rarely you would get a call reversed, or the umpire would see it your way. So what is your—is your purpose to remind him that you know—[both talking]
SCHROEDER: That’s right.
JOHNSON: So hopefully that maybe the next time he will—
SCHROEDER: Remember.
JOHNSON: —be a little more—whereas you would describe “just” in his officiating?
SCHROEDER: I’d rather he just be fair and call it as he sees them to both sides the same way.
JOHNSON: What about your ’68 team?
SCHROEDER: In ’68, we came up with a couple of sophomores to go with a good—sophomores who played on the ’66 squad. And I did have, perhaps, the outstanding pitcher in the conference that year. One of the few years, the Rath year, he was the most outstanding, and probably John Bevil was an outstanding college pitcher. It was another year in which adversity to my family was a problem. We ended up in third place in the conference, but it was primarily that the team did not get worked out that year. I had to
leave the players in charge of one of the other players. It was a year in which one of my daughters came down with Hodgkin’s Disease, and it was necessary for us to go to Houston for treatment at M. D. Anderson.

JOHNSON: How old was she?

SCHROEDER: She was eighteen years old. My wife continued to teach at her job with Waco schools during the week on Monday through Friday. I would stay with my daughter those days and then go coach the team on Friday afternoons and on Saturdays, which is all we were playing at that time. It was a time in which the players could not be worked out as well as we would have liked to have done it, but the players were very supportive of my situation. I remember the day we heard it. We got the word and John Bevil was pitching against a strong TCU hitting team. In the first inning he tried to throw it by them, they got three runs. Then we finally decided, “John, just settle down and throw your game.” They never scored another run and we only scored two, so John lost that one. But it was because he knew of the pain I was in, knowing that unfortunately the doctor tells me about an hour before the game that I’ve got this problem on my hands. But it was a team that had some nice players. I don’t think we had anyone other than Bevil who was an All-Conference player. But it was a team that was beginning to have a little clout for some of the sophomores that year, especially Bill Dykes had an outstanding hitting year. But it was a time when we were about through being a power in the conference. It was a time in which scholarships were being reduced. The last of the sixties was a time of the hippies. Baylor football was going down, down. No money could be put into it. TV money was very scarce. The conference was not getting in a lot of bowl games. Even though we only had the six sports at the time, it was hard to give many scholarships. I remember Coach Beall, the football coach, asking us if we could give up any scholarships to help him. And we were hard pressed to field teams at that time. Most of my players had to be people who just wanted to come to Baylor, that were people I had not recruited. Our teams could rarely be on a par with junior college teams.
They, by their tuition economy, were able to get lots of players to come into their programs. I remember Ranger Junior College had forty players on scholarships. So, lots of good players went to Ranger in the hope that their last two years of college education they might be able to get some financial aid to go to a four-year school. But it was a very weak time for all baseball programs and all other sport programs. Our years began to be—if we could win half our games, we’d be calling it a good season. We didn’t win half the games a couple of years in the early seventies. We began to come back. In ’72, we were able to finish up .500. In ’73, we were able to finish up a little over .500. But baseball in colleges was changing. We were no longer playing twenty-five and then thirty games. We were now playing about forty-five ball games. And I had to have lots of players. I’d gone to about twenty-three or twenty-four players on the squad then because I had to have five, six, seven pitchers at all times. There was no more freshman baseball. I believe the year that freshmen were eligible was probably ’68 or ’69. The economy was such that we had to get four years out of the players now. There just wasn’t enough scholarship help to have freshmen teams and varsity teams. So it was a low time, especially for our sports here at Baylor. We were not able to compete in any of our sports from about ’68 to ’72.

JOHNSON: The baseball teams kind of fell in that malaise.

SCHROEDER: I had no players during that time who signed pro contracts. I had one who was the son of the football coach who had an opportunity to go. He went.

JOHNSON: Beall?

SCHROEDER: Yes. Phil Beall signed and went on his way. I didn’t have anything to do—I wasn’t mad at Phil, but a scout out of the San Antonio area signs him without me knowing it, and that was, uh, that was not right. Phil was a good player, but could have benefited probably—I don’t know. He had a chance to go. It was all right.
JOHNSON: So you would say lack of depth and scholarship money and other things contributed to a decline in the talent level at Baylor? You don’t have the players to work with anymore like you had earlier in the decade. Is that a pretty fair assessment?

SCHROEDER: That’s exactly it. I was having to use players who would have had a hard time making the team in the early sixties.

JOHNSON: Anything else stand out from those latter years?

SCHROEDER: Well, I’m going to tell you a story, but you have to hear it from my eyes and my ears and my mouth because a lot of it, I have to take others’ words what happened. In 1970, we were obviously going no place. We were going to end up, probably, fourth, fifth or sixth in the conference. We were winning a few games. But I had a pitcher—wasn’t a pitcher, he was my first baseman; it was Dykes, who I mentioned earlier, one of my outstanding hitters of all time that I’ve had. Came to me and said, “Coach, I’d like to pitch a game before my college career is over.” And I knew he had a very strong arm. Most of my pitchers were curve ballers and when we’d try to throw by somebody, they’d hit it. And I asked him how he’d like to pitch against Texas. Texas who had—it was either one, two, or three in the nation. I said, “What I would like to do is to prepare you to pitch against them and when I announce that you’re going to be the pitcher, they’re going to laugh because they know you’ve never pitched.” And he says, “That’s where I would like to pitch.” So, the team knew that Dykes was going to pitch our first game against Texas. Now at this time we were playing a doubleheader on Friday and a single game on Saturday. One year at one place and then the next year at the other home team. We went out to play Texas and when I announced that Dykes was going to be the pitcher and we went down to warm up, Texas players were in amazement. They could not believe this is what I was doing to them, but psychologically for us it was a lift. And Bill Dykes went out and pitched an extraordinary game.

JOHNSON: I take it he had some pitching experience before?
SCHROEDER: He had not pitched since he had been a youth player about fifteen years old and he’s twenty-one now.

JOHNSON: He must have been able to just throw heat then.

SCHROEDER: He threw no curves; he just threw the ball hard. [both talking]

JOHNSON: Straight fastball.

SCHROEDER: Bill Dykes shut them down. They didn’t score any runs. But we didn’t score any runs. We were playing against a premiere Texas pitcher, James Street.

JOHNSON: The famous quarterback.

SCHROEDER: The quarterback who threw the pass that got them the number one ranking in the nation in a victory over Arkansas. He was not an all-American quarterback, but he was an all-conference quarterback, as I recall.

JOHNSON: So this is 1969?

SCHROEDER: No, this is—

JOHNSON: Nineteen seventy?

SCHROEDER: Spring of ’70.

JOHNSON: Okay, yes. So he had just finished—that fall he had thrown the pass against Arkansas.

SCHROEDER: That’s right. Now there’s a lot of controversy over James. James did not—

JOHNSON: Just one second. Let me flip the tape real fast.

(tape 1 ends; tape 2 begins)

JOHNSON: This is tape two of the third interview with Coach Dutch Schroeder on July 10, 1998. When we changed the tapes we were talking about that the pitcher for Texas that day was James Street, the famous wishbone quarterback and that Dykes was pitching a great game and throwing it right past them. So what happened?

SCHROEDER: It was a seven inning game. We always played seven for the first one. If it went extra innings then the second game became a seven inning. We were planning
on a seven inning game. In the fifth inning, we had gotten four or five hits off of Street, but they had only a couple off of Dykes. They had not had a man in scoring position. We’d had runners at second. We had runners at third, but we couldn’t score. James Street was an outstanding pitcher, but in the fifth inning with one out I signaled my batter to bunt to squeeze in a runner from third. Unfortunately, my runner is running in; my batter completely misses the ball. The catcher has it. My player coming from third stops, turns around, and runs back to third. When he gets real close to the base, he slips in the sand and falls to the ground, but the catcher didn’t just tag him, he hit him with the hardest slam of his arm and ball he could have hit him with. I was coaching at third. I immediately started for home plate to discuss the situation with the umpire. And for some reason I didn’t get very far. I woke up sometime later, very woozy, and would you believe, I went right back out again. And when they brought me to, again, I am trying to see what has happened, because I had been knocked cold. There was no one in front of me as I was running toward home plate. I was nearly fifty years old. I was not real fast, but somebody had hit me in my back and knocked all the air out of me. My players tell me later it was James Street, the pitcher, who came straight from the mound. If he’d have been at home plate, where he should have been, he would have been in my sights. My players say that there was nothing that they could do, but he was heading straight for our dugout and they saw it coming and they know he lowered his shoulder and raised his forearm and hit me in the back. And I do remember some young player coming up and saying, “I’m sorry, Coach.” I was so woozy I had no idea who it was. I am not able to coach anymore. I asked the umpires what happened. Can you believe that neither umpire saw it? Neither umpire was going to call this in Texas Clark Field. I don’t know if they saw it or not. It’s kind of funny when two umpires on the field don’t see action that happened like this. After we—I had a player who acted as my assistant coach—he was eligible that year—was Rick Butler, who later on went out to MCC—was an outstanding coach. I go and sit on the end of the dugout and Rick takes over the team.
We finish the inning. Dykes goes back out and they make two runs off of him, but we never score a run and Dykes loses 2-0. We have to get ready for the second game of the doubleheader. Now, it just happens that Baylor’s football staff is in the stands. Coach Beall, Coach Sullivan, who was on the football staff, and two or three more who’d come down to watch the game. Beall came over to me during the—between the two games. And I can remember him saying, “Dutch, I witnessed this. I’m going to report it to their athletic director what happened.” I’m not sure what all went on, because I was woozy into the second game. Now the players tell me that Butler was so nervous that between games he was throwing up all the time. So, I don’t know if this was getting him ready for his MCC coaching or not, but they beat us pretty good the second game, probably 8-1 or something—I don’t recall that game because I really didn’t remember much about. But I did come to about the seventh inning of the second game, and then the players began to explain to me what had happened, because my memory was very hazy then. I know that at the end of the game I wanted to slip out and try to get back to the dressing room and get on the bus and come home, because we were coming back to Waco that night then going to go back the next day. But the Texas coach and his assistant coach and two players kept waiting for us; they would not go away. We finally had to leave the field. We tried to avoid them, but they came on over and the Texas coach wanted to introduce me to James Street and said James wanted to apologize and then I said, “Look, somebody’s already apologized and I now know what happened. And I know what happened was not right.” And he said, “Coach,”—this is Coach Gustafson, who I’d helped get the job at Texas, and he was my friend and we’re still friends. This didn’t make us enemies. He just says, “We’re just real sorry.” I said, “Okay, that’s good. Bye.” And we left. The next day, I was so sore that—my back was sore, but I was not going to let Texas know it. I wanted them to think I was as tough as anybody. I did hit the infield and outfield practice, but the outfield practice was hit with one arm; I just was not able to get my left arm up. But it was reported in all the papers, even the pictures
were in the *Austin American Statesman*—I’ll show you those after while. What’s going to be done about it? Absolutely nothing. The next week we’re supposed to play Rice on Friday and Saturday and my players are quite upset. They want the Southwest Conference to do something about the situation. They’re not going to play. I’m going to have a sit-out on my hands. They want the conference to either take a stand, investigate, or something. You got to remember this is the sev—1970s. This is when there is student power. But Baylor, through our athletic director, makes a statement to the conference, but the conference doesn’t come back with any kind of return statement. So, on Friday before we’re to play Rice, I invite Mr. Bill Bailey and Mr. Herman Coleman—Mr. Bailey, because he’s a Baylor regent and who is a Baylor tennis letterman, and who is a friend of mine—to come and talk to them.

JOHNSON: I need to stop the tape real fast.

(pause in recording)

JOHNSON: All right we’re back. Uh, you were talking about your players wanting to do a sit-in. I take it you weren’t too enthusiastic about that.

SCHROEDER: No, but I was for the players getting a say, and their idea was we came to play baseball and not to have to fight our way on and off the field, because there was a little melee after I was knocked out. Some of the players—there was some fisticuffs. But Mr. Bailey came and talked to them. When it was over we went out and played. And I think it was one of the best series we’ve ever had.

JOHNSON: They were motivated.

SCHROEDER: The end of the season, though, A&M, that real good friend of Texas University, took it up and they wanted the Texas team to have some sort of penalty for what happened and their lack of control of the game. So it was taken to the conference. I was not called. I don’t know how it happened, but the coach was reprimanded, James Street was reprimanded, and the catcher who started it all was reprimanded. But there was not much done about it and they continued on and played in the College World
Series. What it got out of Texas was though, Well, we don’t have to be in the Southwest Conference anyway; we’ll just go to some big conference with better teams. That’s how they felt about it. They were so used to having their way that if they run over and do something wrong, so what? But it was the highlight of the 1970 year. Those players have something to remember the rest of their lives.

JOHNSON: I’ll bet. Anything else before we finish this interview?

SCHROEDER: No. The last couple of years we began to win a little more, but we were just getting over .500. At the time, in ’73, if I’m to believe Tom Chandler, Texas University had twenty-eight baseball scholarships. They had fourteen pitchers on scholarship, any one of whom could have been a starting pitcher for me. All the way down to number fourteen. Tom was upset because all he could get was eighteen, and I was just happy enough that I had been raised back to eight. Things had to be more equal in sports, and it was only a couple of years later that the NCAA began to put a maximum number of scholarships on the other sports and made it much easier to be able to compete with the powers that had been because of their greater financial resources. In 1973, I had continued being the part-time coach. I coached full-time, but I taught in the physical education department and there was a move to make more coaches full-time. Bill Menefee, who had been the basketball coach, had still taught a class or two in the physical education department. It was only the football coaches who had full-time jobs out at the athletic department. So, in the move to have a full-time baseball coach, who spends his time doing that, it was decided that I would become a full-time teacher in the P. E. department instead of a three-quarter-time teacher. I would teach full-time.

JOHNSON: All right. Well, we’ll take back up with that at a later date. Thanks a lot.

(end of interview)