

MY SPORTING LIFE

Growing up, I don't know what I would have done and who I would have become without sports. Artists and musicians would probably say the same thing about their art and music. Maybe mathematicians and chemists say as much about numbers and molecules, and poets about their rhyme and meter, or whatever it is that makes modern poetry.

If you've read any of my rambling stories, you know I can't resist an aside (I'm not sure that word is completely appropriate here but it popped into my brain, and, since I don't remember ever having used it before either verbally or in type, I decided to throw it in, appropriate or not), or, more colloquially, chasing a rabbit. So, here goes:

One of, if not the best teachers (or professors) I ever had was Charles Davis, a West Virginian and Davidson College graduate, circa '58, who taught me English in the 11th grade at East Mecklenburg Hi in Charlotte, '62-'63 and who also coached the tennis team (boys'-can you believe that there were no interscholastic sports for girls in Mecklenburg Co, only intramural, in those days). He loved the poem The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock by TS Eliot ("should I eat a peach...dare I walk along the beach...in the room the women come and go, speaking of Michelangelo...") and, to see if we'd been paying attention, he assigned us an essay on it. I got no better than a B, more likely a C+ or C. My junior year at Davidson College, my girlfriend, Janet Tweed, who for almost 55 years now has gone by Janet Tweed Caldwell, was a sophomore at WC, as we called it then, short for Woman's College, now UNC-Greensboro, was spending entirely too much time at Davidson, waiting for me to finish football or track practice or watch me play in a game or run in a meet. Her lit professor had assigned an essay on Prufrock. For some reason, I still had mine and she copied it verbatim (Davidson had an honor code that made plagiarism a getting kicked out of school offense, but I guess I reasoned, that is, if I even thought about it at all, that aiding and abetting plagiarism with a girlfriend, particularly a girlfriend from another college, especially a secular college with no Honor Code, didn't violate my honor or Janet's. She got an A!

Howard "Hopalong" Cassidy, who won the Heisman Trophy in 1955, his senior year at Ohio State was my first sports hero. I may have thought TV cowboy Hopalong Cassidy was football player Cassidy's job in the off season. Naaah, I don't think that I really thought that, but if I had, brother, Billy would have straightened me out. I've written in some of my earlier stories about living on Sharon Amity Rd (hereinafter "SA") in Charlotte from about 1948 until Christmas, 1955 when we moved into the new brick ranch style house Dad built (I say Dad built it because he hired Charlton Forbis, who Dad had worked for as a carpenter for a year or so when he got out of the Navy and moved Mom and Billy [hereinafter "Bill", born April 26, 1942] from Norfolk to Charlotte after WWII ended in August, 1945, as the lead carpenter, while Dad subbed out all of the other work [he subbed out the plumbing to one-armed Leo Tweed, {*get this*} Janet's father McDonald {hereinafter "Mac"} Tweed's half-brother, and

Leo's son, Emmitt {*get this, too*}: at the time, Mac, who was born in Marshall in Madison Co, NC, hard up against the Tennessee line, was a pilot and Captain in the Marine Corps, and his wife Mary was a Mullis from over on Idlewild Rd, less than 5 miles from our house, and Mary's brother, Herbert, Janet's Uncle, his wife Nell and their two children, Mike and Gail, Janet's 1st cousins lived across Rama Rd and down a house from our new house}}). One other coincidence, which I'm adding here rather than in the previous sentence because adding it there might disturb the carefully and tediously construct ({{{}}}) I was able to construct (how's that for using the same word as a noun, then a verb?), is that Mary graduated from Matthews High School, from which both Dad and Mom had graduated earlier, with Dad's brother, Irvin.

The house on SA was owned by Mr. Neal Craig. The Craig family owned a lot of land on and near SA. The house we rented was one house toward the RR from Craig Ave. Dad's 2nd or 3rd sibling, I'm not sure which as she was a twin with Aunt Vernon, my Aunt Verla and her husband Wilkes Kiser, and their 5 children, Gene, Sid, Mickey, Mary Lou and Frankie were living in the house when Uncle Wilkes, who I never knew, a life insurance salesman after he married Aunt Verla and dropped out of Davidson College where he had been pre-med, took his life in the garage beside the house shortly after the suicide period expired on a \$5,000 life insurance policy he had purchased on his life. Aunt Verla took the \$5K and built what I remember as a white asbestos sided story and a half house on Windermere Lane, several blocks from the Craig house. We were living "down in the country" (the title of one of my previous stories) in the white frame house at the corner of the Matthews-Weddington and Simfield Church Rds, which I think is the house Grandma Caldwell was raised in and which had been owned by her brother, Jim Shannon, who had left it to his grandsons, Jimmy Lee and Shannon ("Shank") Forbis, two of the four children of his only child, Eunice, who married Sanford Forbis, Charlton's brother, and who helped Charlton with the carpentry on our Rama Rd house. Jimmy Lee died (I think he drowned in the Aleutian Islands) during WWII and Shank was getting ready to marry LaMarr Garland and wanted to move into his house, so we had to go. As soon as the Kisers moved out of the Craig house into their new house, we moved in. I think Bill started 1st grade at Matthews but finished it at Oakhurst, then grades 1-12 in the Oakhurst community, several miles up Monroe Rd, which it's called in Mecklenburg Co (in Monroe, it's called "Charlotte Ave"), toward downtown Charlotte from SA.

The Craig house was a white frame, with a porch all the way across the front. The front door opened into the living room. Just inside the living room, a door to one's left opened into the "front", as we called it, room, with windows opening onto the front porch, which became Harry's bedroom. I'm not sure of the timing of Harry's birth on January 13, 1948 with respect to our move. I'm not sure that until right now, as I type this, that I've tried to figure it out, but as I think about it, Bill wouldn't have been 6 until April '48 and wouldn't have started school in Matthews until that fall, so I guess we moved to SA in late '48 or early '49, during or shortly after Harry's first year and around my 3rd birthday on Feb 27, 1949 and Bill's 7th in April. That's consistent with a black and white framed photo, displayed on our mantle of Bill and me posing as cowboys, Bill with a rope circled into a loop and slung over his shoulder with his pistol drawn in his right hand and pointed at the photographer, and with his left arm around my shoulder as I hold my wooden rifle which Dad had made me at waist level, also taking aim at the photographer, who

must have been Matthew Brady (for you youngsters, a Civil War photographer), standing behind our little red wagon with side planks and canvas pulled over the top, our Conestoga wagon, headed west.

A door led from the living room into the “family room”, dominated by the cast iron Warm Morning Heater (“WMH”), with its black stove pipe which ran through a metal plate through an outside wall, the plate to keep the hot pipe from catching the wall on fire. The coal burning WMH was the sole heat in the uninsulated, ununderpinned (you could see the ground through cracks in the floor) old house. A door opened into the kitchen with a table against the wall where we ate. Another door opened into a short hallway and doors from it opened into two bedrooms; the front one, Mom & Dad’s and the back, mine and Bill’s. From the kitchen, a door opened onto a small screened-in porch. A bathroom with a concrete floor and, of course, no heat had been added on to the back of the house, which one entered from either the kitchen or the screen porch, I don’t remember which, a step, but only a small step up, metaphorically, not geographically from the outhouse which sat in the backyard near the well house. At some point during our tenure, the outhouse was torn down and, I assume, filled in. In winter we bathed in a tin tub by the WMH, mainly on Saturday nights so our ears and necks (Mom seemed concerned mostly about their cleanliness) would be presentable at Matthews Baptist the next morning.

Bill and I slept in the same bed from as far back as I can remember until he left home for college and thereafter when we were both home at the same time. In the winter, Mom would put a hot water bottle, maybe one for each of us, in the foot of our bed, pile the quilts and blankets on and we two brothers would hug up together to keep from freezing. We could see our breath. Thank goodness young boys have good bladders. If we had to pee, it was in the chamber pot or, as cousin Jody Ross called it in a book of memories he’s written and which he gave me a copy of last week (since this story will probably take many weeks, maybe even months [I’m a slow writer, easily distracted and often museless]) to finish, I should say that “last week” was the week of January 23, 2022), a slop jar, beside the bed because you would freeze even worse going out to the bathroom; think bare feet on cold concrete. I don’t remember ever having bedroom slippers until the last few years. I stopped wearing pajamas in college. I never had a bathrobe until after we moved into the house we built on Stack Rd on 62 acres 5 miles south of Monroe in 2002 and Mom, visiting, noted that we didn’t keep it as warm as she did her apartment in Plantation Estates, made Janet a blue and me a green plaid outing bathrobe, which we wear to this day. Man, did the WMH feel good in the morning after Dad had stoked the embers and loaded it with coal! I left little Harry alone in that front room, far from the WMH. I’d better go poke him to see if he’s thawed!

I think I barely remember, maybe Bill can recall that I broke the wooden rifle Dad had made me over the coal pile on SA. It was probably a display of temper rather than an attempt to swing like a major leaguer or like Slammin’ Sammy Snead, who and whose country club sport this blue collar kid wouldn’t know anything about for years. Actually, that’s not completely accurate; I’ll relate a couple of golf ball stories shortly. The kids in the SA neighborhood were mostly boys around Bill’s age or older. Sonny Reynolds, Bill’s age, lived right across SA from us. Joe Johnson, older than Bill, lived in what to me was a huge, but probably not 1500 sq ft, up and down, white, clapboard sided story and a half or two story on our side of SA, a house or two toward Cotswold from Craig Ave. Tommy Hicks, also older than Bill, lived across from the Johnsons with his mother, whose name I think was Juanita, and grandmother, Mrs. Presson, both of whom I think Mom and Dad had known from before we moved to SA; maybe they were from

the Matthews area or below (that's a country expression, which in this case means further from town). Joe Poole, Bill's age and one of his best friends (Joe and his 2 year younger sister, Bobbie Ann, who was head cheerleader at East my sophomore year, both died within the last few years. I wonder if second hand smoke from their chain smoking father JD contributed to their untimely demise) lived behind us. Their white frame house faced Craig Ave. I think Farnum (I've never heard that name before or since) Gray was Bill's age and if I remember correctly, lived on Castleton (can't believe I remember its name), which paralleled Craig. I don't remember if the next street off SA going toward Cotswold was Windemere, where the Kiser's new house was, or whether Windy turned off it. Benton Threadgill (since typing this, I've talked to Bill, who reminded me that the Ridenhours lived on that corner. He remembers Benton's name but that's all, knowing naught about who he was or where he resided. Come to think of it, I don't either.) (*Editor's Note: you will note [it's no wonder English is tres difficile {French, if I recall correctly for very difficult}, what with, for example, "note" having so many different meanings] that my written words are very fluid, like waters rushing down a stream and into a mighty river, oblivious to the obstacles it may encounter and the damage it may cause, neither ponding or even slowing, except where it may eddy, to countenance, much less repair the injuries it may have left behind*) lived on the corner of that street and SA, and, of course, Frankie, our cousin, the youngest Kiser but 4 years older than Bill lived on Windemere. These constituted most of the ball players. Actually, I don't think Benton was a player but I thought, and still do think that he had a cool and thus memorable name.

There were some other boys in the neighborhood: George, about Bill's age, and Byron, about my age, Helms; Tommy Flatt, 2-3 years older than me; the younger than me Bobby and Donnie Swofford (I heard that one of them, I'm not sure which died within the last couple of years, having retired as head of the chemistry dept at Wake Forest); Selby Daniels, 2 years older than me and a half-rear-ended (trying to keep my story G rated) basketball player (he didn't start and I don't think got much playing time) his senior year at East when I was a sophomore, who couldn't pass a mirror without combing his hair and admiring himself, and who probably thought that he was so cool and good looking that the male Eagles (East's nickname, though we didn't have one as a mascot) had appointed him to represent them to the fairer Eagle sex (I started to label female eagles "eaglets", but upon googling, learned that those are the young), and probably a few others I don't remember, but they were the wannabees, or 2nd stringers, not the players, or the 1st stringers.

Oh, one more I almost overlooked was PeeWee Honeycutt, whose real name is Ellison. He's my age and lived just beyond Mayer's Field (more about it later). I called him PeeWee just like everybody else did. I don't think I even knew what his real name was. I'm sure I called him PeeWee at Oakhurst, which I attended through the 5th grade. After we moved to our new house on Rama, I went to Idlewild for the 6th and 7th grades before going to junior hi at McClintock in the 8th and 9th. The first time I saw PeeWee at Mc, I must have called him that and he asked me to call him Ellison, which I have ever since. He was in a band at East and became so popular that he was the MC at our 50th class reunion. I had an email from another East Mecker a couple of weeks ago telling me that Ellison was in the hospital with a stroke, but a follow-up a day or two later said that apparently the damage wasn't severe, thank goodness.

***I'm typing this on Saturday morning, Jan 22, 2022 in room 156 at the Litchfield Inn at Litchfield Beach, SC to which I fled last Saturday from our cabin near Bakersville, NC, since they were calling for up

to a foot of snow that night and the next day. We've sold the cabin and have until 3/1 to vacate, so I suggested that we head south, which I obviously did, but Janet packed her Subaru Forester and headed north, to the house we bought in Oct, 2020 in Louisville. I was going to leave today but freezing rain coated my '04 Tundra last night so I've decided to stay another night. I'll go through Charlotte to see Bill & Sylvia, though I may not actually see Syl since she has a lung infection and I could be carrying the Covid germ, though I don't think I've got it as I have no symptoms, and maybe cousin, Mary Lynn and husband Dan to show them a short video I made a couple of days ago of cousin, Joe Ross and his wife Erskine at the beautiful home they just moved from Birmingham into last week located in a community called the Reserve here at Litchfield, 30 minutes from daughter Layne and her husband Mike. I'm glad I'm typing this this morning about Ellison, which gives me the idea to maybe go by and see him tomorrow in Charlotte if he's up to it. Another reason to mention my whereabouts is that Anastasia, who spent last night keeping an eye on the front desk, fixed my phone this morning and I told her I was going to put her in this story that I was writing. ANASTASIA, thanks for your help!***

After I listed the roster of ball players above, I texted Bill to see who I'd left out and he mentioned Don Jeffries, whose name I remember but obviously not as well as the aforementioned, who Bill said was a little older than him and lived on Castleton, and Tommy Adams, who I vaguely remember as being between Bill and me in age and living a few houses up, or above (a country term [have I used and singled out "country" terms or phrases yet as I have in other stories I've written] meaning toward town), the Pooles.

Now that you know the players, I'll describe the venues. I've written about some of these in previous stories you may have read, so some of this may sound familiar. Our house was the oldest in the neighborhood and our front yard, unobscured by trees, except one, which will figure prominently into the story before the end of this paragraph, was Yankee Stadium, Ebbets Field, the Polo Grounds, Soldiers Field and the LA Coliseum, all rolled into one. An old concrete sidewalk (it's existence didn't make any sense, since [I've googled but Wikipedia isn't clear whether "sense" and "since" are homonyms or homophones-maybe you can figure it out] it ran from the front steps straight to the edge of the ditch along SA [another]) "since" there was no public sidewalk for it to intersect) with its many cracks and delaminated (I got that word when googling to see if "spoiled" is the correct word for deteriorating concrete, which apparently it's not) spots marked the 50 yd line. You didn't want to get tackled at mid-field. Our gravel driveway was the north goal line and a row of trampled shrubbery along the Edgerton's driveway was the south goal.

Once Frankie broke away down the east sideline, that is, the sideline delineated by the ditch along SA, heading for the south goal line, with enough ground on his pursuers to look back and taunt them, and ran smack into that lone tree I mentioned, a cedar with no limbs below 6', located dead at the corner of the ditch and the shrub goal line. He probably hit the trunk head first because the collision sounded like but was louder than the loudest thump of a carved out pumpkin you've ever heard, but not quite as loud as a shotgun. Frankie crumpled to the ground. I'm sure I wasn't the only one who thought he might be dead. I don't remember how long he lay there, I guess long enough for us to come running. There wasn't any blood, a good sign. In just seconds, he jumped up and shook his head and acted like nothing had happened, probably arguing that he had scored rather than going out of bounds before reaching the

goal line. I don't remember whether he held on to the ball, but I was sure glad he was OK and proud that I had a cousin as tough as Frankie Kiser.

WARNING: Another rabbit just jumped up and ran out of the briar patch Yesterday, Sunday, January 23, 2022, I left Litchfield Beach, heading for Charlotte, stopping at Westwood BBQ in Hartsville, SC and getting Bill & Syl all the BBQ (and 2 drumsticks and hush puppies) I could stuff into the Styrofoam container. They live in the Cotswold community of Charlotte and as I got off the new US 74 bypass in Matthews, I debated whether to get on I-485 and get off at and come up Providence Rd or to stay on Independence Blvd, which is what 74 is called in Charlotte (it's called Roosevelt Blvd in Monroe). There is a serendipitous reason for this ramble, which will become apparent shortly. Since I had just been writing about SA, I decided to stay on 74 and get off on it. I drove past Sharon Memorial Park where Mom & Dad and several aunts and uncles are buried (a sub-ramble: There's a mausoleum in the Park where caskets are slid into drawers. Some old person in the community died and we attended the funeral, my first, and when the casket was closed and slid into place, I supposedly said "It would be hard to breathe in there").

I crossed the RR tracks. Larry Baker's little brick house up on a small knoll is still there, as is the Flatts', Swoffords', Reynolds', Edgertons', and Presson/Hicks. The Johnsons' is gone, as is the Neal Craig house we had lived in, replaced by a nice new 2-story. I wish I had pulled in the drive and stepped off the width of the yard, which can't be much more than 100', but I continued down SA, passed Castleton, and turned on Tanglewood, the street name I couldn't remember earlier. A guy was walking his dog and I stopped and rolled down my window (it was a beautiful, sunny afternoon) and, asked if he lived nearby, which he did. I told him where we had lived from '48 till '55 and that an aunt (Verla- Uncle Jack and Aunt Virginia built a house on Windermere after the Aunt Verla) lived on Windemere, which turned off a block further up. He asked where we moved to after SA and I told him Rama Rd, and that I was a '64 East grad. As usual, after I have divulged that much of my life to a complete stranger, realizing that they're surely thirsting for more, I don't disappoint them. I told him that I'd graduated from Davidson in '68, UNC Law in '71 and practiced in Monroe for 37 years. He told me that he'd graduated from Davidson in '85. Struck by the coincidence, I told him my name and he gave me his, Forrest Ranson. I asked if he had known a Dr. Ranson whose office was on Hawthorne Lane, across from Presbyterian Hospital. Forrest said that was his father, John, who had graduated from Davidson in '45. I could hardly believe it and told him the following story, which as you'll see, ties into my story, but even if it hadn't, I probably would have told it any way as it is one of my better, and has had such a significant effect on my life, stories.

I was going to try out for football in the 8th grade at McClintock. A physical was required. I'd never had one before since Little League baseball, the only organized sport I had played hadn't required one. Mom took me to old Dr. Crow, near Commonwealth and the Plaza, who I'd seen for bronchitis and such. After listening to my heart, he nearly scared the you know what out of me, and probably Mom, too, though she likely knew instinctively that because I was so active, it wasn't what he said, which was that there was something terribly wrong with my heart and that not only could I not play football, I shouldn't be running and jumping and doing what I'd been doing all my life. Mom immediately made an appointment with Forrest's father, an internal medicine doc who Dad had seen on several occasions with his heart issues. I remember having to slowly swallow some awful, chalky liquid while standing in front of an x-ray

type of machine (I think it was a floriscope). Dr. Ranson said the photos showed something out of the ordinary but he wasn't sure what and referred us to Dr. Frances Robichek, who had or would found the Sanger Clinic, still one of the top cardiology groups in Charlotte, probably now most of the Carolinas. I'm sure Ranson must have sent the pictures over for his review. When I got there, a young doc listened to my heart for a few minutes and then Robichek came in and listened for less than 30 seconds and exclaimed, in his thick Slavic accent, "You just got a congenital heart murmur. You be fine. You play football, you do whatever you want." WOW! I was way beyond relieved (I say that, but I don't remember being worried, probably, like Mom, thinking that if I had a serious heart problem, I should have been hurting or at least had symptoms of some kind), actually just excited that I could play.

As a 13 yr old, I had just learned that there are doctors and then there are doctors, and that you need to find the right one. I feel sure Dad and Mom didn't have health insurance. I wonder what my heart murmur cost them. Most every doc who's put a stethoscope to my chest since has heard my murmur, but don't usually mention it unless I ask them, after which I usually give them an abbreviated version of the above. There's no telling how much my ticker has cost someone, mainly the government and Blue Cross, starting with a heart attack followed by stents in 2002, double bypass surgery in 2010, various tests, including several stress tests, the last being 2 years ago at the Norton, a large medical and hospital system in Louisville, on Brownsboro, where Tim's wife Sara now works as an RN on the stroke victims' floor, that last hospital visit because of some chest/abdominal discomfort, probably brought on by the fried chicken I had for supper the night before!

Forrest Ranson seemed to enjoy the story. His dad passed away several years ago, as did Dr. Robichek, who I helped with some real estate issues on a farm he owned in Union County many years ago. Just think, if the freezing rain from the once in a decade, or longer, winter storm had not reached down to the SC coast and left my truck completely coated with ice Saturday morning, delaying my intended departure until Sunday; if I had left earlier Sunday and gotten to Westwood in Hartsville before they opened at 11; if I'd gone up Providence Rd rather than staying on 74, if I had turned off on Sardis Rd N and gone up Sardis to Cotswold, if I'd turned off on Idlewild and gone down Rama to Sardis, all of which I considered; if I hadn't turned off SA on to Tanglewood, I would never have met Forrest and gotten to tell him about his father's part in allowing me to enjoy My Sporting Life. Complete serendipity? You decide!

Well, back from the detour and onto the main, the sporting road again. We also played baseball in the front yard. If one viewed the front yard from SA, as though looking at the states of Colorado or Wyoming from their southern border, home was in the NE corner, near the willow oak our parakeet Charlie lit on a low branch of when someone opened the screen on the front door and he flew, not the coop, but the house (he was often out of his cage, flying around and, as Janet pointed out as I am reading to her as I'm typing this, [I asked her if they had a parakeet, and they did, a blue one, who apparently wasn't significant enough in her life for her to remember her/his name; what she does remember is that he/she hung her/himself on the trapeze bar] pooping wherever he pleased). I think Bill climbed an old ladder or maybe someone gave him a boost (a willow oak's bark is too rough to shinny up) up to retrieve Charlie. From then on, he had to show his ID to get out!

In LITTLE LEAGUE, one of my earlier stories, I told about our baseballs, barely plural, since we only got one new one per year, our bat, tacked and taped back together after Baby Ruth or the Mick or Duke forgot to turn the trademark up and cracked or broke it completely in two, and JC Higgins and much later, Rawlings gloves, so I refer you to that story for our baseball equipment acquisition, maintenance and repair, and eventual replacement details. I don't remember our football, probably some kind of fake pig, cow or real warthog skin. I'm sure the basketballs were rubber as all outdoor balls were. We were always looking for the needle to keep them inflated.

I think I also explained in LITTLE LEAGUE and maybe another story or two (if you read far enough you'll find that many of my stories get told more than once, maybe even thrice) where I fit into the lineup, and thus my use of the pronouns "we, us, our", but as my appearance is a big part of this story, a little refresher may be in order. As I've noted, Bill is 4 years older than me (grammatically, if this should be "I am" instead of "me", put a red mark here, but I like "me" better and am leaving it) and some of the gang was older than him. As I've said, I think Frankie was (Frankie died a few years, maybe as many as 8 or 10 ago) 4 years older than Bill. They were all considerably older than me. And also as I've said before, if not in this story then in others, and I'll underscore it here, I couldn't have had a better older brother than Billy. He always let me tag along and consequently the others did too. I never got bullied.

I've written before that the Kisers (see my story KISER MEMORIES) frequently used a couple of answers to my barrage of questions about what they were doing and why I couldn't: "That's for me to know and you to find out" and "you're too little in the britch", "es" if they were being formal. I doubt if that slowed my questions, and I'm sure that it didn't stop me from wanting to join in the games. I don't remember much about playing football with the big boys. They may have let me play center and snap the ball but I don't remember getting blocked or tackled, probably their way of keeping me from getting hurt and squalling to Mom, who might have thrown her flag for unnecessary roughness. I do remember kicking the ball, both punting it and holding it on my raised toe for someone to place kick, as well as getting a chance to try to place kick it myself occasionally. The key to being a good holder was keeping your finger on the tip of the ball to hold it upright until just before contact was made, hopefully with the ball and not your finger. For place kicks, an option to finger holding on the toe was to finger hold it on the ground or to slam the heel of your shoe into the ground and make a divot deep enough for the ball to stand up on its own. Of course, as any place kicker as well as any golfer knows, it's much easier to kick or hit the ball when it's elevated.

As for baseball, they let me play, but with the proviso that whichever team got me got to take my last strike. I was usually the last one picked when dividing into teams, in which case it was a given that they got my last strike, but, as on the rare occasions, such as when a 2nd stringer like Tommy Flatt was playing, that I was picked before last, my selection was always accompanied by "we'll take Tommy but we get his last strike". The fortunate among you have probably never been the last one picked and so may not be familiar with the concept of taking one's last strike, which, on reflection, may have been invented by the SA players just for me, so I'll explain it. I got to take 2 cuts (the vernacular for "swings"), and they had to be cuts to be considered strikes because we didn't call balls and strikes, and if I didn't hit a fair ball with one of my cuts, a teammate took my place at the plate with 2 strikes on him and I

went to the bench. If I was ever humiliated by the Tommy/2 strike rule, I don't remember it. What I do remember, fairly vividly, was that it made me a better hitter because I wanted to get on base.

Tommy Hicks was the catcher, maybe for both teams since he had a catcher's mitt. In the early days, that is, before Mayer's Field, I don't think he had a face mask and if not, then surely no chest protector or shin guards, and more surely, no cup, maybe even after Mayer's Field. After a game, I walked out to the pitchers' mound, just a mark in the dirt, and told Tommy I wanted to "burn" (I think I actually remember using that term) some in to him. He squatted down in catching position, took off his mitt and told me to burn one in. I wasn't exactly humiliated, though I'm sure I didn't feel about it as I do now: an inspiration. I probably thought to myself, or maybe it just entered my subconscious, "I'll show them".

Continuing on our venue tour, the basketball arena was in the Poole's backyard where a backboard and rim were attached directly to a pole, not jutting out from the pole so as to keep you from running into it when doing a layup or driving the baseline. For non-round baller readers, a net is not a necessity but it sure makes it easier to tell whether a shot is a swish or an air ball, and it makes a swish sound sweet. It also causes the ball to drop straight down instead of bouncing off the pole and rolling all the way to the gully.

The GULLY and the THICKET below it weren't exactly sports venues. They were a poor boy's Outward Bound, places to explore his adventurousness and develop his manliness. I talked with Bill about them yesterday. Who knows what caused the Gully. A stream didn't run down it. The Edgerton's lot next door to us was fairly deep and ran back to the side of the Pooles' lot. Our lot joined the Edgertons', running back to the Pooles' and to the Gully directly behind us, which continued on down but becoming shallower behind the Flatts' where it was the gateway to the Thicket. The Gully was a canyon in my memory. As Bill and I have discussed, it probably wasn't over 8-10' wide at its widest and no more than 4-5' deep at its deepest. We, and I guess some of our neighbors deposited our raked leaves in the Gully, making a relatively soft landing for our daredevil leaps and flips from its banks. Many a cowboy and Indian battle took place there. WWII was fought in it. The cowboys who took an arrow or tomahawk in the back, the Comanches shot from their horses and the Krauts and Japs wiped out by machine gun, bazooka or hand grenade all made belly clutching, screaming, Hollywood inspired death descents into the Gully. The only live rounds fired were mud clods.

If the Gully was for open warfare, the Thicket was for jungle fighting. It was thick with small trees and saplings with vines climbing up them. I started to say we'd climb the vines like Tarzan, but on second thought, the only vines strong enough to climb were wild muscadine vines which climbed bigger trees than those in the Thicket. We would shinny up the saplings till they would bend down from our weight and redeposit us on terra firma. I don't know who invented artillery in the jungle. We'd make a howitzer by cutting a small sapling, leaving a 4-5' stump and loading it by slipping a glass bottle or jar over its top and firing it by pulling the stump back as far as it would go and turning loose. I don't think, or at least I hope we weren't dumb enough to fire at each other, but who remembers?

While I'm telling about natural, maybe not exactly sports venues but fun spots at our house on SA, I can't leave out the big sweetgum tree toward the chicken house that was in the back right corner of our

lot, near the Flatts. It had lots of branches and Bill and his buddies could climb nearly to the top. I was afraid they were going to fall out. I never got higher than a branch or two. And there were a couple of smaller trees, maybe chinaberries, near the back of the house. Somehow we got our hands on a 8-10' length of galvanized pipe, maybe 3" in diameter and put it between the 2 trees, probably 5 or more (I was going to say 4, but as you'll see, it would've been hard to do some of the stunts we did at that height) feet off the ground, wedged in place between their trunks and a limb growing upwardly and at just the right height. That was as fine a balance beam, trapeze bar, tight rope/bar, and chinning bar that any kid would want. We would hang from the bar from our arms and "skin the cat", hang from our knees, toes and even our heels. We got so we could walk it forwards and backwards. Tommy Flatt fell off it and broke his arm and I think the ringmaster, err, mistress, Mom, tightened up on our stunts, maybe even, I don't remember, making us take the bar down. I do remember that at some point it came down, maybe when Harry got old enough to get killed on it.

Now, back to sports; Mr Edgerton knew something about track and field, maybe even having run but more probably having high jumped, maybe even in college. He and his wife didn't have children when we knew them, and since we were always kicking or hitting a ball in his yard or running through his, or maybe they were our bushes for a touchdown, perhaps he saw a little athletic potential in us and decided to help channel it. With his encouragement and probably guidance, we built a high jump pit in the backyard. We dug up what patches of grass and weeds there were and hauled, I guess in our wagon with side planks but maybe we also had a wheelbarrow, sawdust from an old sawmill down in the woods behind the Swoffords to soften our landing. We sunk two 2x4s and nailed finish (with no heads) nails in the back sides of them every inch, starting about 3' above the ground and going up to maybe 5'. We used a piece of shoe mould as the bar. Mr Edgerton taught is to do the scissors jump, in which you ran toward the bar and simply jumped as high as you could and raised your lead, if you were approaching from the right it would be your right, leg up parallel to and over the bar, bringing your trail leg over in the same manner as your vertical trunk cleared the bar. He also taught us the Western roll, in which ran toward the bar and jumped as high as you could, while head first, causing your whole body to become parallel with the earth and thus the bar and rolling yourself over the bar. Bill and I became pretty good high jumpers, technique-wise if not gravity defying-wise. I don't remember any of the other "players" high jumping. The closest geographically, Joe Poole was probably built more for curling, I'm not sure whether as the sweeper or the pusher (the Winter Olympics are just starting-they call curling a sport? Sheesh!)

I mentioned golf aways back. Two short golf stories: Sonny Reynolds dog Saucy was lying on his side, asleep on our front porch with his mouth open. Somebody had a golf ball and rolled it, in or unintentionally in Saucy's mouth, and he or she, I don't know how saucy Saucy was, swallowed or partially swallowed it and began coughing and choking. I think it was Frankie who picked him/her up by her/his hind legs and shook her/him and he/she coughed it up. I don't remember but it (I'm tired of this he/she, her/him business) probably went out under a shade tree and resumed its nap. Somewhere Bill and I got a golf ball (It may have been the same one) and it seems like we found an old club somewhere , so we designed a short course. We dug a couple of holes in the backyard and sunk used food cans for the cups. One hole was under a walnut tree back toward the Pooles' and as we prepared to play a

round, Bill noticed the cup under the tree was full of leaves and asked me, the course superintendent to clean it out. I stuck my hand in and grabbed a pile of feline dung covered by the leaves. I've never had anything, before or since on my skin that stunk like that! It was way beyond awful. Of course I wiped it off the best I could and went in and scrubbed with soap and hot water. I could still smell it. I squeezed lemon juice on it. Have you ever smelled citrus scented cat s__t? Well, if not, count yourself lucky! Harry and his stray cats; maybe more about them in a different story; they've tainted this one enough!

But this may be a good place to say a little more about little Harry, which he was, literally. Harry and Kate have Mom's secretary and he was telling me not long ago that they found the Presbyterian Hospital and doctor's bill for his birth there on Jan 13, 1948. He came with complications caused primarily by his early arrival. Mother and her youngest stayed in the hospital for two weeks and I think Harry said the hospital and MD bill together was \$70some. I would have been 1.5 months short of 2 and Bill 3.5 months short of 6. I don't know what Dad was doing for a living then; he may have started working with Curtis Walker, traveling every other week selling Dan River dresses at wholesale. Bill was always mature for his age but going on 6 was a little young to manage a household, particularly one with a 2 year old hellion running amuck! Maybe Bill remembers who looked after us till Mom and Harry came home. Remind me to ask him. Harry remained small and maybe a bit frail during our SA years, which, together with his flat feet kept him on the side lines. Once we, that is, the players, with me thrown in to make the sides even numberswise were engaged in a basketball game at Pooles' Arena when Harry stuck his head out the back door and yelled "Tommy, the Lone Ranger's on". I told them that I had to go home and go to the bathroom and they told me to go pee behind a bush and I said I had to have a BM, which is what Mom taught us to say for what Mac Tweed was taught to call in the Marine Corps, evacuating one's bowels. My teammates and opponents, probably even Bill said "no you don't, you just want to watch the Lone Ranger", but I protested that no, I really had to go, to which their response was that I'd better come right back, and I yelled "OK" over my shoulder as I flew home. I latched the back porch screen door and closed and locked the back door. When Mom asked why I was closing the doors in warm weather and furthermore, locking them, I told her they were going to come to get me to make me play ball but not to let them in, and I joined Harry to watch the Masked Man and Ke-mo sah-bee (that's how Wikipedia spells his Native American sidekick) whip up on the bad guys, a lot more fun than "playing" basketball when my teammates wouldn't even let me take a shot, basketball's version of taking my last strike.

The folks bought a set of World Book Encyclopedias and while Bill and I were raking around (one of Mom's nuggets), Harry read them from cover to cover. Once he came in to show us all pictures of prehistoric man, exclaiming as he pointed to cro-magnon's forehead, sloping as mine does, "Look, there's Tommy". He should be glad I didn't smack him, for which I'm sure I would have gotten either Bolo paddled on the rear or switched on my bare legs as I was the time I slammed the glass half spherical paper weight down on Bill's fingers for something I'm sure he deserved.

I'll come back to Harry after telling about a game as close to fisticuffs as we ever came. On SA, we'd take all the lamps off the tables in the living room and put away all the other brakeables, roll up newspapers as tight as we could, cut the lights out and frail each other. Of course it was always at night so Dad&Mom had to have been home, I guess in the "family" room, figuring it was for better for us to

let off steam and satisfy our male competitiveness and aggression with newspaper clubs than fists. Of course we also rassed, wrestled for picky readers, but that wasn't fightin', that was just funnin'!

Back to Harry: having just turned 74, he told me recently that he's getting ready to reread Will&Ariel Durant's 11 volume The Story of Civilization. Kate has suggested that he get a group of guys to join him in reading and discussing them. Harry, I hope y'all can read and discuss in a hurry-time's moving faster and faster, so you'd better get started soon; as Snuffy Smith says, "times awastin'". Little, now 5'11"-6', no longer little, Bro introduced me to Durant (I've read a little from a couple of volumes, but not as many pages as are in even one) and another of the best non-fiction writers I've ever read, John McPhee. Harry is as well read as anyone I know. He knows something about most everything and much about many. Ask him anything about wooden boats, which he's build, all but a couple from scratch, how many now, Harry, a dozen or more? Harry became a Master Gardener and an apiarist some years ago but he doesn't have nearly the green thumb that Bill has, though Bill's flowers could use a beehive. All I do is peck on the keys of this old Hewlett-Packard and laugh at Frasier and Seinfeld reruns with Janet at night.

I'll mention a couple of more minor venues at or near our house on SA before journeying down SA to Mayer's Field, The House that Hicks, Johnson, Gray, Caldwell, et als Built. The Flatts built their brick house beside ours, separated only by a small field that Dad plowed for a garden with Mr Mac's, as we called him, short for McManus, horse or mule, I'm not sure which, which I rode as he pulled the plow, turning to Dad's gee or haw at the end of a row. Mr Mac lived in an old frame house on a small farm with several outbuildings, including a small barn, at the end of Craig Ave after it crossed SA, with his daughter Jo. Dad and Mom really liked both of them, probably because they had a lot in common since the Caldwells and the Beatys, Mom's maiden name, were raised on farms. Mr Mac grew some sugar cane, which I remember sucking the sweet juice from the stem of after splitting it open. I don't remember whether he had a horse/mule drawn cane mill or not; maybe Bill does.

Mr Tom Flatt came to Charlotte from, I think Tennessee (the reason I say that is because Mom would occasionally comment on Mrs Flatt's flat TN brogue) to become the agriculture teacher at East Meck. He had the flattest nose I'd/I've ever seen. I think their oldest was Peggy, a few years older than Bill, who I thought was the prettiest girl I'd ever seen. She was 14 and I remember thinking that after 14, you were an adult. Tommy I think was 3 years older than me and Ruth, a year older. Mr Flatt build a terrific swing set out of heavy tubular steel, welded together, so heavy that we would swing as high as the top bar of the structure and it wouldn't even move. When we swung as high as we dared, we would "bail out" and compete in how far we could fly. I think later Mr Flatt put up a basketball goal below the swings, towards where the Gully transitioned into the Thicket.

And a little more about our yard: there was some spotty grass, more weeds than actual grass, but weed leaves are green, too, in the front and back yards. The side yard on the Edgerton's side of the house, where the one car frame garage in which Uncle Wilkes Kiser shot himself was located before it was torn down after we moved in, was all just whitish, sandy dirt, no grass or even weeds. While we cut the grass/weeds with a narrow push, of course reel mower, the blades of which would hang up every time we ran it over a sweetgum ball, we just raked the twigs off the side yard. It was the perfect place to shoot marbles. I don't remember much about the side yard toward the Flatts, before reaching the

garden lot, except there were some bushes, including, I think, a damson bush, which produces a very astringent (I got that word when googling damson) plum which Mom loved after she made preserves out of them. She was the only one who would eat it-too bitter for us mere mortals. We built stripped down soapbox-like racers, that is with none of the fancy fuselage stuff, from the scrap lumber and dropped nails, even bent ones we straightened that we salvaged (Dad told us we could pick up all the nails on the floor or ground but to never stick our hands in the nail keg)from the new houses springing up like buttercups all around us, with axles and wheels from old wagons and tricycles which somehow ended up on our junk pile. We would race, pushing each other around the house. One other sporting event at our house before heading to Mayer's Field: Mom made us nets out of fabric with coat hanger handles, which she secured to the nets by sewing a little tunnel around their open end, through which the coat hanger wire was threaded, and the excess twisted together for a handle. We would launch a rubber ball (probably ones that were attached to the big rubber band attached to the Bolo paddles which Mom detached in order to convert them from ball batting paddles into fanny spanking paddles) from the nets as high as we could throw them and try to catch them. A variation was to throw them over the house to each other. There were no gutters to catch the balls on SA as there were on Rama, where we spent a lot of time on ladders retrieving them.

Heading down SA toward Cotswold from our house and passing Craig Ave, Joe Johnson's house, Castleton and then Tanglewood on the right, there were just houses on the left, including the Presson/Hicks abode and on down, the Wrights, where Bill probably began, though DNA from Mom planted the seed, his passion for beautiful and beautifully manicured yards as Mrs Wright's yardman (boy) for several years, and I think just beside the Wrights was the Mayers. I don't remember anything about them. Bill remembers that they had all girls. Behind their house was a field. I have no idea (I'll quiz Bill at Bridges BBQ Lodge in Shelby, both of our favorite pork bbq places, where I'm meeting him for lunch today, 2/5/22) how it came about that the SA players built MAYER'S FIELD on the Mayer's field. I would love to see it now. There are probably houses on it. I think I'll call Bill and ask him to drive by there and check it out this morning on his way, only 3-4 miles out of his way, to Shelby.

Editor's Note: I called Ellison, who now goes by Eli Honeycutt since writing this and he said Benton Threadgill lived between the Wrights and Mayers. Thanks, Eli.

The gang built a small backstop with posts and chicken wire. I think they raked some dirt up to form something of a pitcher's mound, which was probably closer to 48' (Little League distance) than 60' (junior hi-Major League distance) from home plate. (BTW, I just called Bill to confirm lunch and he said he doesn't need to drive by; houses cover Mayer's Field as they do all buildable land anywhere around our old stomping grounds.) And the bases were probably closer to LL 60' than Major 90'. Of course there was no outfield fence but there was a chicken coop in short right. A ball hit in the coop wouldn't get the hitter into Cooperstown but would get him a ground rule double; over was a homer, if not by rule, by virtue of the fact that it couldn't be retrieved in time to throw the slugger out at home. A semi-rural field resulted in semi-rural happenings. Bill was playing left and started yelling, pointing and beckoning all to come see what he almost stepped on; a long black snake. Anything that occurred in the game thereafter, whether a grand slam home run or a no-hitter, was anti-climatical!

If I recall correctly, the SA players actually formed a team and played games at the Field against teams from other neighborhoods, probably comprised of guys they knew from school. I remember Dad, and maybe Mom and other parents, siblings, friends and wannabe players (I fit into every category but parent) bringing a chair out to watch some games, which had to be on Saturday afternoons since Dad worked until noon on Saturdays and for many years, our, actually Mom's Sabbath observation prohibited us from playing ball on the Lord's day. Uncle George Head, who loved baseball, probably more than the Sabbath, helped us, the Joe & Louise Caldwell family, that is, usher in the modern era in which it became almost universally acknowledged, even in the Bible belt and even among Baptists that the Sabbath was made for man, and boys, rather than man, and boys being made for the Sabbath. I love evolution, especially of thought and rationality and more especially when the evolved ideas give me more freedom to do as I please.

Well, I've described the venues and participants in my early sporting life, admittedly with a few detours, or, as my muse, most important critic and my would like to be, if I would let her, editor, wife Janet would call them, irrelevant, extraneous, confusing, overly long and punctuated ramblings, which she says will turn off potential readers. If you've read this far, thanks for not giving up before now. I would be glad to hear your comments about the substance hereof and my style, but I'm not apt to change either, especially my writing style, but I will consider changing any facts that are too inaccurate, or slanderous. Now, to the meat of the story.

As I've said, I was hanging around the SA "players", injecting myself into their games when I wanted to play and being drug into them when I didn't. I must have been able to dribble and shoot a basketball reasonably well by the 5th grade, because I was on an intramural team at Oakhurst (I don't remember if I've told this before and don't want to scroll back to see, but I went to Oakhurst School [it was grades 1-12 when I started 1st grade in 1952-I remember seeing the green and yellow {I don't remember their nickname} high school football team play a game on the field that was down below the Hoosiers' style gym-I think East Meck Hi opened in '53 or 4]). All I remember about that game was that I was sitting on the bench in the gym and some kid, I think he was a 6th grader kept yelling to our teammates on the floor but right in my ear. I asked or probably told him to stop; I don't remember the actual verbal exchange, but he asked or probably just told that he'd see me outside, which was fine with me. I think I was as big as he was and don't remember being scared of him; I'd fought, that is rassed, bigger. We faced off just as soon as we walked out of the gym door and he slugged me with his fist. I don't remember where the punch landed. That's the first time I'd ever been hit with a balled up fist. I tackled him to the ground and was on top when a couple of his buddies jumped on me and started slugging away. I shook them off and lit out like a scalded dog (I know, I know, an overused metaphor, based little, if at all on reality-who's ever seen a scalded dog?), down the steep bank behind the gym and across the football field, headed for my friend, Jimmy Hinkel's house. They gave chase for a while but all they saw was the bottom of my tennis shoes. I don't remember the name of the kid who slugged me or of his sidekicks or anything else about them. I guess I saw him at the next game, or maybe that was the last one, but I guess I saw him and them around school. If so, I didn't have any more trouble from them. I don't know why, but I wish I remember who he was and how he turned out.

I think I've mentioned in some of my earlier stories that any athletic prowess and success I had stemmed from two things that I had nothing to do with, my height and speed: from the 1st through the 12th grades I was always the tallest AND the fastest in my class, sprinter that is, though I've mentioned that Joyce Arant gave me a run for my money in elementary school. Dad, at 6', was the tallest of his 11 siblings. At 6'2", I'm the tallest of all of their progeny except my almost (he probably will be before I finish this story since his birthday is March 7) 50 year old son Tim, who's 6'8" and his almost (he also probably will be before it's finished since his birthday is March 6) 20 year old son and my only grandson, 6'4" Sam. (I've mentioned in other stories that my dad was born Feb 27, 1908, the 4th of 12 children. Aunt Dot and Uncle Don, twins, Dad's 11th and 12th siblings were born Feb 27, 1930. I was born Feb 27, 1946. We jointly celebrated many birthdays at the fish camp over the years, usually eating fried fish, potatoes and hush puppies, surely contributing to Dad's passing at 81 in '89 with congestive heart failure and Don's passing in his early 80's from heart related issues. Dad's oldest sibling Frank, born in 1905, died of a massive heart attack in his 50's, sitting on his living room couch reading Dad, who had stopped by Uncle Frank and Aunt Margaret's after work to eat supper and to sign the final distribution checks from Grandma's estate, which they were administrators of, something from the Charlotte News, Charlotte's afternoon newspaper. See my story KISER MEMORIES for my participation as a pall bearer in Uncle Frank's funeral and burial in Sharon Memorial Park, where as aforementioned, Dad and Mom were later laid to rest, as was Dad's brother, Jack and his wife Virginia and Uncle Don, whose wife Jo is the sole living of the 12 Caldwell children and their spouses. Dot must have gotten hers broiled. She lived into her 90s. Hopefully double heart bypass surgery and a few stents, and a handful of pills morning and night will allow me to reach 76 or to at least finish this story. I'd better speed up!) Son, Tom, Jr is 6'. The tallest Beaty, including Grandpa and Grandma, Mom, at no more than 5'4" and her 6 siblings, was no more than 5'9-10" Uncle William and Mom's twin, Uncle Leighton. In the Tweed family, Mac was 6' but his 2 year younger brother Dan was at least 6'4". I don't know much about the height of the Mullises, Mary's family, but her older twin sisters, Pauline and Aileene were fairly tall, both good basketball players. Mary was a pretty good shot herself!

In addition to my height and speed, I was blessed with pretty good hands for catching, though not large enough for above average dribbling or football passing, an above average arm for throwing and a good leg for punting. I also had pretty good, probably above average hand-eye coordination, though my near-sightedness became a problem. I began wearing glasses to see the blackboard at school about the 8th grade but never wore them fulltime until I was in law school. (A rabbit just jumped up: until my 30's, though I wore glasses all the time, I just needed them for distance vision, but gradually, I needed help reading and thus went to bifocals, which I adjusted to reasonably well. Then it became harder to read the music in the hymnal or sheet music in choir when held out at arms' length, so I graduated to trifocals, which drove me crazy. I had always gone to an optometrist for my eyes but finally went to an ophthalmologist, who adjusted my tri's but just made them worse. Finally, about 25 years ago I just took my glasses off and haven't worn any since. The next ophtha I went to observed that my left eye is almost 20/20 at a distance but doesn't see very well close up, while my right eye is just the opposite and that they complement each other so well that she thought I was just as well off without corrective lenses. I hope they'll stay that way). Sportswise, my eye sight was a problem. I quit shagging fly balls in the outfield my last year of Little League when I held my glove up to catch a 300' high fly hit by our former

minor league player coach (more about him later) and it hit me in the stomach. I returned kick-offs into college but quit returning punts my senior year in high school. An end over end place kick is much easier to judge than a spiraling or even a wobbly punt. Contacts would have been a great aid.

What I could have used a lot more of was confidence and grit, or more accurately, dauntlessness. In my story, LITTLE LEAGUE, I tell about the obese Rev Colon, my first LL coach, pitching batting practice and hitting me in the ribs. Thereafter, I was always a little scared of a baseball thrown at me in the batter's box. As a first baseman, more than one grounder has hopped up and hit me in vulnerable spots, including the face. When carrying the football, I would much rather attempt to side step or stiff-arm a tackler than to put my head down and meet him helmet to helmet. As a tackler, I was more of an arm or shoulder tackler than a face mask to the helmet or in the chest. There's a photo in my senior East Meck annual of me arm tackling an opponent. I'll give some examples of my lack of undaunted courage later. With respect to confidence, I guess it grew with experience and successes, as it does in most of life's challenges.

Bill's first baseball glove was a JC Higgins (SearsRoebuck) first baseman's mitt. I don't know why he picked it out; I don't remember him ever playing first. My first was a JC Higgins infielders' glove. It wasn't big enough to form a good pocket and not worth wasting neatsfoot oil on. I don't remember shagging flies or fielding grounders with it, but I'm sure Bill and I must have played a lot of pitch and catch with those gloves. I think I've mentioned in previous stories about Bill and my occasional Saturday morning Sharon Coach (the corner of SA and Craig was the end of the line) bus trips to downtown Charlotte where our second stop, after Gottlieb's Army-Navy Surplus store on East Trade just across from where the Charlotte Hornets NBA arena now sits, was Faul & Crymes Sporting Goods on South Tryon, where, I feel sure to Mr Faul and Mr Crymes' perturbation, though I also feel sure we were only two of hundreds, we pounded our fists in many a Rawlings glove, but Mr F&C finally got some Caldwell \$ when Bill bought a Rawlings Granny Hamner (Phillies 2nd baseman) autographed glove, which he treasured, formed a pocket in by enclosing a baseball in it just below the webb and rubber banding it shut, neatsfooting it liberally and often, while I watched and drooled. When Dad thought I was old and responsible enough to graduate from my Higgins, he bought me a Granny Hamner just like Bill's, which I kept into adulthood. I wish I still had it.

I don't know whether Duke Snider, the Dodgers' centerfielder and as much my hero in baseball as Hopalong Cassidy was in football autographed a Rawlings glove or not. He must not have because if he had and even if it had cost twice what a Hamner did, I would have done my best to have persuaded Dad, or maybe I would have kicked in some from my paper route (I think I've mentioned Bill and my paper route in other stories, not the typical paper delivery route, but the "already read newspaper and magazines we collected weekly in our Conestoga wagon from neighbors who we asked to save them for us which we sold to the Chesapeake Paper Co" route) money (actually, I may have bought the Granny with my dough rather than Dad's). My story OCTOBER MAGIC is about my love of the Brooklyn Dodger's and my "happiest 9 year old on the planet" moment when Johnny Podres pitched the whole 7th game win over the Yankees for "Dem Bums" first World Series victory, in 1955. I'm not sure how I became a Dodgers' fan. I think Bill was a Yankees' fan, but not as fanatical as I was about the "boys from Flatbush". I guess we did but I don't remember us watching much baseball on TV on SA. We were too busy playing.

I'm typing this the morning of Feb 10, 2022 and just received an email informing me that Martin Brackett died yesterday from lung cancer. Martin Luther Brackett, Jr and I met in the 8th grade and played football and ran track together through high school. In my scrapbook is our photo with an article about us signing to play football at Davidson. We roomed together our freshman year during which Martin hurt his leg, ending his football career. His dad ML ("Luke") was a textile executive and loved football. In 1960 he took us to Duke to see the Blue Devils play Navy, whose star was Heisman Trophy winner, Joe Bellino. Martin, may you RIP.

We moved to our new house on Rama Rd at Christmas, 1955 when I was in the 5th grade. I guess I got to be a pretty good outfielder from shagging fly balls Bill hit me in the front yard while it was just a field, before Mom started landscaping, with our begrudging assistance (it cut into our playing time and encroached on our ball field), planting shrubbery and white pines. When Herbert and Nell Mullis moved into their new house on Idlewild, Ross Goode's family moved into the Mullis house, which was across Rama and a house down from us (the Freeland's, in whose side yard we played badminton, and, am I remembering correctly Bill and Harry, didn't Mr. Freeland later build a tennis court in their backyard, lived directly across from us) and Ross became one of my best friends. He was a terrific baseball player, particularly in the field, with that big (Ross, though a year older, was probably 3-4" shorter than I was) black, well broken-in, left-handed glove of his and his strong throwing left arm. I've written about my first and his last year in Little League in my story entitled ("surprise, surprise" as Gomer Pyle would say), LITTLE LEAGUE. I don't remember how long the Goode's lived there, but I guess a couple of years, at least until after I had finished my second and last year of LL the next year and he had played a year of Pony or Babe Ruth. He and I would walk or bike down to McClintock and play, just the 2 of us, a game on the regulation size (60' pitcher's rubber to home plate, 90' bases) baseball field. I would pitch to him for an inning and his hit balls would be judged an out, single, double, triple or homerun (we, of course, were the judge and jury-I don't remember us ever having an argument over a hit ball or over anything else), and if a hit, resulting in "ghost" runners. After I got 3 outs on him, he would pitch to me. We would play for hours and hours, spending more time retrieving unhit pitches and chasing after hit balls than actually pitching and hitting. If you don't think it's tough pitching strikes to a batter with no catcher's mitt to aim at, try it, and then we'll talk!

I'm not sure if I had just turned 11 or 12 when I played my second and last year of Little League. It was an awful year. I played again for the team sponsored by Amity Presby Church. I don't know if Rev Colon was still the pastor, but a guy named Bud Smith was the coach. He had played some minor league ball, I think as a first baseman with the Charlotte Hornets. I don't remember much about him or his coaching except, as I mentioned earlier, he had a fungo bat which he used to hit towering flies to the outfield and screaming grounders to the infield. I pitched and played first base. Coy Helms, who I mentioned in LITTLE LEAGUE, was the catcher and the only other 12 year old I can remember. (A short rabbit hunt; I don't remember seeing much of Coy after LL. He may have been a grade ahead of me. Sometime after I retired in 2008, I played a few times in a senior men's golf group at Monroe Country Club [despite the name, it's owned and operated by the City of Monroe. The front nine was designed by the famed Scottish golf course architect Donald Ross and built with pick, shovel and mule by the WPA during the Depression. The back nine was added while I was chairman of the Parks and Recreation Advisory

Commission]. I asked who was the best golfer in the group of 30-40 and was told it was a guy named Coy Helms, who hadn't played recently. A week or so later, whoever had told me that Coy Helms was their best player pointed Coy, who was there that morning, out to me when the pairings were being made up. I recognized the Coy who I hadn't seen in over 50 years immediately and we reminisced for a few minutes before one of us had to tee off. I wish I had but I didn't see him again.)

We didn't win a game the whole season. There wasn't another decent player on the team. Routine ground balls rolled between infielders' legs and sometimes between outfielders' as well, often going for homeruns since we played on fields without fences. One game I was pitching and some boneheaded play happened in the field and the other team scored a run or two. Coy took his mask off and walked out to the pitcher's mound, tears rolling down his cheeks and said something like "I can't stand it-they're awful." I don't remember what I said. I wonder what Coach Smith was thinking about this catcher-pitcher conference. He didn't come out of the dugout. I don't blame him. I wouldn't have either.

I guess Coach Smith nominated me to try out for the league All-Stars at the end of the season and I tried out at one of the well-manicured and fenced LL fields on Randolph Rd I don't remember if Coy was nominated, but if I was, he should have been. I just googled to see if there's a standard distance from home plate to the outfield fence in LL; it's 200'. At the try-outs, I hit most every hittable ball over the fence, some clearing it by 20-30' or more and into the woods beyond, but I didn't make the team. Neither Coach Smith nor anyone else told me why not. I was clearly the best slugger that I saw hit that day. That was the biggest disappointment in my sporting life to that point, maybe, if not the biggest, certainly one of the biggest in my entire sporting life. I don't remember who made the team but there was a team from Oakhurst sponsored by 7-Up with sharp looking uniforms who thought THEY were sharp as well, i.e., cocky, and I would have been surprised if their players didn't heavily populate the All-Stars. I don't remember if I went to see them play in their pursuit of a trip to Williamsport, PA. Probably not; I was ticked!

I had never played organized football until the 8th grade. Rev Colon over at Amity Pres tried to field a Pop Warner team. I remember him running us through some plays without uniforms on the front lawn of the church. He probably had us blocking and tackling, but the team never made it off the ground. We played some pickup tackle games on the practice field at East. I remember bringing down Kenny Thornton, a year older and an inch or so taller and at least 20 lbs heavier by jumping on his back and riding him to the ground. Rabbit alert: I called Clyde Luther, who played football a year behind me at East and who keeps up with everybody to tell him about Martin Brackett's passing and he told me that Thornton's younger brother Mike had recently died, which led to a discussion about Kenny, who played, I don't know how much, football at South Carolina. He went to USC law school and married the daughter of a prominent lawyer or businessman in Georgetown. They had a child and then quadruplets and moved to Georgetown and Kenny hung out his shingle. He started running around on her, they separated and Big Daddy ran Big Kenny out of G'town. Clyde wasn't clear on the details but knew that Thornton was accused of and maybe even arrested for soliciting the elimination of Big Daddy. He served time for something, if not that, then maybe for failing to pay child support. I googled Kenny's name and "attorney, SC" and several things popped up. The longest is the long SC Supreme Court opinion in Thornton v Thornton in which Kenny is excoriated for his failure to support his children and pay the

court ordered alimony to their mother, detailing his fraudulent attempts to secrete assets and other unEast Eagle-like machinations. I thought I remembered and just looked at my sophomore year East annual (I don't have my junior and Kenny's senior year East Wind) and verified that he was vice president of his junior class. I've mentioned in other stories about the advantages my height has given me, not just in sports but in my life in general. I guess a lesson to be learned from Thornton's rise and fall is that whatever benefits physical height can bring, it is no guarantee of a virtuous or even a successful life. Maybe Kenny has redeemed himself. I certainly hope so. Googling, I found there is a Kenneth W Thornton, Jr practicing law in Georgetown, SC. No reviews are shown. It sounds like Jr made it without his father's financial support and despite his sordid record. Good luck, Little Kenny!

In addition to needing a physical to play football in the 8th grade, I needed a pair of cleats. When I approached the CFO about buying me some, she reminded me that there was a pair hanging in the garage (the 1 car garage in our new house on Rama deserves its own story). Bill had played football in the 9th grade and had worn the pair of high-top Wilson's hanging in the garage (reckon he hung them there on purpose for me?) so I wore them in my inaugural season, the only back wearing high tops. I had never worn a football uniform and all its protective gear. For those of you who never have either, I'll describe the pads. (Another, this one a major, rabbit alert: It's 7:30 AM on Wednesday, Feb 16, 2022, 11 days before my 76th birthday and Tim just called to tell me that this may be Suzie's, the best dog I/we've [Suzie also deserves a story of her own-she's 20 years old] ever had, last day of earthly life. He's going to school and is coming back home mid-morning to check on her, hoping she's expired on her own. If not, he's going to have her put down. He called to see if I wanted to come over [they live 20 miles from us] and tell her goodbye, which I don't. I'm typing this through very moist eyes.) The pants have foam rubber knee pads which are a pain to insert in the cloth pocket sewn inside the pants, and very hard rubber thigh pads which easily slide into their sewn in pocket. Then there are separate hip and tailbone pads, which consist of 3 just alike hard rubber pads 6-8" long attached to and hanging down from a web belt that you secure in the front. These go on, of course, before the pants are pulled up over them. On the first day, a guy put his hip pads on backwards, such that the tailbone pad was in the front, protecting his family jewels, which, at least theoretically, makes more sense, though it would be tough to run with them so positioned and would require a teammate to buckle the belt in the rear. I don't remember who he was or how long he lasted. I don't guess he'd played Pop Warner either! The remaining protective gear are the shoulder pads, helmet, and, optionally, elbow pads, which I never wore. My best recollection is that my helmet had a single bar to protect my face, and yes, you witticists, our helmets were plastic, not leather!

I don't remember anything about the first couple of days of practice except that I was sore as a boil for a week or more, mainly because I didn't do much, if any pre-practice conditioning. I'm sure we ran wind sprints and I expect I was one of the fastest, but apparently not fast and certainly not beefy enough to make the varsity, thus being relegated to the JV's, along with all the 7th and 8th graders, except Dickie Thomas, a 7-Up LLeaguer whose brother Mike was or would be the quarterback at East and must have been a star at McClintock and John Corne. (My memory's not that good; I looked at the Scotsmen, Mc's annual). We JV's were coached by Joe Coulter and there's a young man in the team photo in the annual who I don't remember and is not shown as a teacher; he must have been a student teacher. Tom Ligon

was the varsity coach and dictated what formations the varsity and JV's ran. He was a big fan of the single-wing run by Clarence Stasovich at Lenoir Rhyne and so the Fighting Scots ran the single-wing offense.

Some of you may be no more familiar with football formations than uniforms, so I'll describe the single-wing. The line is unbalanced, which means that on one side of the center is a tackle, called the weak side tackle with the weak side end beside him. On the other side of the center is a guard, called the inside guard, then the strong side tackle, then the outside guard, then the strong side end. I think that's 7 linemen; count 'em. 3-3.5 yards behind the center is the fullback and to his left and .5 yards deeper is the tailback. The blocking back lines up just behind and between the inside guard and the strong side tackle, and, if I remember correctly, calls the signals, that is, "down, set, hut" (if the ball is to be snapped on 1), "hut" (if the ball is to be snapped on 2), "hut" (if the ball is to be snapped on 3). Usually the only time he huts more than 3 huts is if he's trying to get the defense to jump off sides, which is a dangerous ploy because more than likely not all of his 7 linemen will be disciplined enough not to jump too soon, too, thus costing the offense a 5 yard off-sides penalty rather than the defense, as intended. The only hutting I did was when I was punting. The wingback lines up a yard behind and a yard outside the strong side end. Got it?

I played tailback on the JV's. I don't remember who played fullback. Usually the tailback does the passing. With my relatively small hands, I never was a good passer, but I may have done the passing on JV's. I don't recall. The next year on varsity, I was the tailback and John Corne was the fullback and he did the passing. In some programs the JV's are primarily fodder for the varsity, by which I mean that the first team JV offense would run plays against the first team varsity defense to give them practice and our first team defense would try to stop the varsity offense. I played first string offense and defense so I was double fodder. Of course, before scrimmaging (translation: actually running plays, offense v defense), we would do drills, mostly to improve our blocking and tackling. Coach Ligon was big on the cross body block which is used in the open field, that is, as opposed to the shoulder and head butting blocking in the line. In the cross body block, the blocker throws his body in front of a defender, who's usually running toward and to tackle the ball carrier. If done correctly, the blocker levitates his body, head first, into a position parallel with the ground, much as in the high jump western roll (remember it?) and hopefully his hip or just below makes contact with the defender somewhere from his waist down, all depending on the blockers leaping ability. More often than not, however, the blockee's knees would rip into the side of the blocker's lower back, right into his kidneys. Not only was that painful for the blocker but I thought it was terribly dangerous. It's a wonder that any Scots were left to Fight (have I mentioned that we were the "Fighting Scots"?) with both kidneys!

Other than the above, I don't remember much of anything about my 8th grade JV inaugural football season. I think we played on Thursday afternoon the JV team from the school the varsity was to play on Friday afternoon. The Scotsman doesn't say anything about our record. The one thing I do remember, vividly was Jose (I don't know why we called him that; he wasn't Hispanic. While I'm on the subject of nicknames, John Lagana [I don't think I've mentioned him yet] started calling me "Codfish", I hope because "Cald" sounded like "Cod" rather than because I smelled like one, later shortened into just "Fish", which he, and a few others called me through high school) Coulter yelling at me for not making

or taking, I don't remember which, a big hit. That humiliated me and I never liked Jose after that; still don't. I guess it was an example of my daunted courage, but I like to think of it as using good judgment. Maybe football was designed to be played both by the instinct to survive as well as by rational thought!

As soon as football ended, basketball began, and again, I was relegated to the JV's, also coached by Jose. I don't remember being such, but Corne and my picture is in the Scotsman as the co-captains. I'm sure I played center since I was the tallest, not only player, but 8th grader at Mc. I realized that I needed and tried to develop a jump shot while on SA, but I didn't hone many basketball skills until we moved to Rama Rd. Our house was less than a quarter mile down Rama from McClintock, closer if we walked or biked down the gravel road that turned off Rama between the Freeland's and the Mullis/Goodes and dead-ended at the Woods. It ran within 100' of a large asphalt pad, lined for two basketball and tennis courts, with metal backboards protruding, unlike at the Pooles, from the post that held it so as to permit a layup without risking major injury. The goals held chain nets. I couldn't guess within 100 hours how much time I spent on those courts, usually by myself, working on my game. I developed a pretty good jump shot, inspired by Lennie Rosenbluth's smooth jumper as he led the Tar Heels to the National Championship against Wilt Chamberlain and the Kansas Jayhawks in 1957.

Dad and I (Bill and Harry, did y'all go to any?) went to several UNC games after '57 at the original Charlotte Coliseum, where I remember seeing the Frank McGuire (a short rabbit run: my good friend Ricky Creech's daughter, Melissa [Ricky himself was a magnificent rebounder{Ricky, how high was the rebounding machine on which you set the record at Louisburg College?} was married to McGuire's grandson, Jimmy]) coached and York Larese and Doug Moe led Heels play the 2d game of doubleheaders, the first usually featuring the Al McGuire, who later led Marquette to a National Championship (at one time Al lived across Providence Road outside Charlotte from Providence Presbyterian Church, the church Dad grew up attending, founded in the 1700's, one of the oldest churches in Mecklenburg Co, in the cemetery of which my paternal grandparents are buried) coached the Belmont Abbey Crusaders. Once we went to a night game, I guess the first time Dad had parked in such a big lot, and we didn't pay much attention to where we parked. When the game was over, we had to wait until the huge lot behind the Coliseum and Ovens Auditorium was almost empty before we spotted our car. Dad dropped Nancy Wait and me off at the Coliseum, my first date, to see a Globetrotter game when she and I were in the 9th grade. How's that for a cool (uncool?) first date?

I don't remember much about the season. You can read about our "valuables bag" and more, much more in my story HOOK IT, KIKER. It's a pretty good story if I do, and obviously I just did say so myself. Baseball practice started in the gym just as soon as basketball ended, primarily for pitchers throwing inside while it was too cold and wet to be outside. Coach Ligon coached baseball and I made the varsity (I don't think there was a JV baseball team) as a pitcher and first baseman. The team picture in the Scotsman shows 7-Upper Thomas and Amity Presby me being the only 8th graders on the team, with me standing the tallest on the back row. I'll talk about 3 standouts:

Bobby Threat was one of the best athletes I ever played with. He was fairly thin and probably wasn't over 5'10". He was the point guard on the basketball team, a great ball handler, leaper and jump shooter. He was a very disciplined left-handed hitter, rarely striking out. He had a crouched stance and

quick bat, a little like Stan "The Man" Musial, who, like Stan was a base hitter with power. The gym was down the right field line, probably 300' from home at its closest point. I've seen him bounce dozens of foul balls off its roof. I don't remember whether he played short or in the outfield. Bobby went to the University of Fla and tried to walk on the basketball team without much success but he did play some baseball, but was hampered in both by weak ankles, eventually causing him to hang up his sneakers and cleats. I lost track of him until he began teaching accounting at Wingate University 15-20 years ago and I saw him a few times and had lunch with him and his wife, Sarah, his jr and hi school sweetheart. He had taken up and was an avid bicycler. I didn't see him after he retired and was surprised when I heard he had a stroke and died several years ago. Not only was Bob a great athlete, he was a well-respected leader. I mentioned seeing in my sophomore East Wind that Kenny Thornton was VP of their junior class. Bobby was President and his girlfriend and future wife Sarah Dorton was treasurer. I don't remember ever seeing him mad or hearing him cuss. Bobby Threatt was a class act.

Pete Batte was a hoss, the fullback on the football team and centerfielder on the baseball team. I'll talk about his football prowess later. I played Babe Ruth with him and we were playing Newell on their new field in where fill dirt had been hauled in to build up the outfield, which, fenceless, disappeared down an embankment. A ball which I think I served up was hit over Pete's head and he turned and retreated at full speed, looking back over his shoulder at the ball. He, too, disappeared down the embankment, reappearing minutes later covered with briars, ball in hand. I remember Coach Butch Connell saying that he'd sure like to have Pete as a fullback on a football team and I replied that we did. At McClintock, Pete was on second and a ball was hit to short left and the left fielder charged it and fired it home. The 3rd base coach tried to hold Pete up at 3rd but he rounded the bag, headed home. The throw had him by 20' or more and the catcher, ball in his mitt, started up the line and crouched low for the coming collision. Pete leaped over him, landing safe on home plate.

Bobby Houser was a terrific athlete, fast, quick, as the football team tailback, he could cut on a dime and, unlike me, was a good passer. I'll talk about his football prowess later, along with Batte's. His father Phil was the general manager and I guess owner or part owner of the Washington Senators affiliated Charlotte Hornets minor league team. Bobby was as good a baseball as he was a football player. He could do it all, hit, run, field and throw. I think he played left at McClintock. Like Pete, Bobby was on 2nd and tore around 3rd for home on a short hit with the throw beating him by a mile. This catcher stood up in front of the plate with the ball and Bobby went horizontal, feet first, his cleats slamming into Yogi's chest protector and sending him clear to the backstop, dropping the ball, and Houser, too, scored for the Fighting Scots. If I'd been the ump, I would have called unnecessary roughness, oops, wrong sport. I would have ejected him from the game.

As I mentioned above, I played Babe Ruth baseball that summer as a pitcher and first baseman but I don't remember my won/loss record, batting average or much else about the season. I got Dad to buy me a set of weights to try to put some muscle on my skinny 6' frame. The set was 140 lbs of weights and a barbell with no slip bar. I built a bench in the garage to do bench presses, for which I sat on the bench, lifted the barbell onto the end of the bench, and then, with my feet on the floor, lifted it up onto my thighs just above my knees and rolled it up my thighs and onto and up my trunk as I laid back on the bench, finally pressing it after I got it to my chest and then rolling it off the way I rolled it on, much more

difficult than rolling it on, my arms rubbery after 8-10 hoists of the barbell with enough weights on that the 8th, 9th, or 10th was a struggle to raise. I did pullovers by lying on my back on the bench with the barbell on the floor below my head, and reaching back and down and grabbing the bar and pulling it up over my head. And, of course, I did curls and reverse curls and wrist curls, all to hopefully put some muscle on my skinny arms. I don't think I did any leg work. By the start of football practice my 9th grade year, as I said, I was 6' tall but probably didn't weight over 145, but I've always been wiry strong.

Getting my body ready was one thing but I needed some low cut cleats; the varsity tailback couldn't be seen in those Wilson-high tops. I approached CFO Mom about the matter and her frugal response was that the Wilson's didn't look worn out to her, and they weren't. I took the tin snips and cut the tops down to low cut height and painted a white stripe around the top to make them look like the popular Riddell low cuts. I'm sure I got some "what the h__(you can fill in "eck" or whatever your imagination conjures) ?", but they did the job. I just turned to the football pictures in my 9th grade Scotsman and in addition to the team picture, there's an individual picture of each 9th grader in a pose, me with football in my hands and striding as though I'm starting a sweep, the Wilson hi-to-low cuts with the Riddell white stripe permanently memorialized! They carried me through the best offensive season I ever had. I wore them the next year playing JV's at East, finally replaced with a pair of Spot-Bilt's my junior year. The annual also has a photo of Corne, Thomas and me as Captains, which I don't remember being, flanked by Coach Ligon and his assistant, Dallas (Dal) Cloer, and individual posed photos of MVP back Corne and lineman, John Lagana, twice the size of the individual photos of the rest of us 9th graders.

There was a Saturday morning TV show featuring local school sports on WSOC, channel 9. Before the season started, we got dressed early one Saturday morning in our full uniforms and rode a school bus out to their station, or at least their tower on the Hickory Grove-Newell Rd where we appeared along with Willson (no kin to the Wilson football shoe and sports equipment maker) Junior High, a feeder to West Meck. I can't believe this, but I just pulled the host's name out of my hat, or from somewhere, one Odell Hartis, who was from the Mathews area (a short rabbit hop: Bill and I got some camellia clippings to root from Odell's brother, Raymond, a genius in their propagation, at his home on Pleasant Plains Church Rd, many years later). I don't remember any of the details, except that Odell interviewed Coach Ligon who told about our team, and we appeared as a team on camera. He probably mentioned several players, probably including me. What I do remember, vividly, is that we went first and then Wilson, and their coach singled out his stars, specifically a running back who he said was probably the fastest junior high football player in the county. When the show was over, I went up to Speedy and, in retrospect, rather arrogantly challenged him to a race, which he, Corne and maybe another Indian (which may or may not have been Wilson's nickname as it was West's) or two ran. I came in 1st, John 2nd, and Speedy 3rd. I'm pretty sure we beat Wilson when we played them.

In the single wing, the center snaps the ball back to the tailback, me, or the fullback, Corne. One of the formation's purposes is deception, which begins with the deception that the defense, especially its linemen, doesn't know who the ball is snapped to. In addition, there's interaction between the tailback and fullback. For instance, if the ball is snapped to the fullback, hereinafter John and the tailback, me, John could carry the ball straight to the hole which hopefully his linemen's blocking would have opened up, or, he could hand it off to me going straight toward a hole, or he could spin to his left and hand or

fake handing off to me when I pivoted right and ran directly behind him (remember, in the formation before the play begins, he's a step in front of and to the right of me. If he hands it off to me, I'm probably going to run a sweep to the right, that is, I'm going to try to run outside the defenses' widest guy, their end, who is going to be double-team blocked by our strong side end, who I think was called the "pillar" or the "post", blocking the end straight ahead, while the wingback, the "power", blocked him from the side, pushing the defender toward the center and sealing him off from tackling me. On the power sweep, the strong side guard "pulled", that is, like me he pivots to his right and runs, staying as low as he can, behind the line of scrimmage until he gets beyond the doubled-teamed end and then turns left, up-field, to block whoever is coming up to clean my clock, probably the outside linebacker, unless he's been sealed off by the strong side tackle or the blocking back, or the cornerback. GOT IT? Well, if my blockers GET their man, I should be able to turn up-field and run 95 yards for a TD!

But when John spun, rather than handing the ball off to me, he may just have faked the handoff and kept the ball and continued his spin to the right until he had spun in a full circle and would carry the ball into a hole hopefully our line had created for him in the hopefully confused defense. As I've mentioned earlier, John did our passing. One passing play was for him to take the snap, fake handing off to me pivoting and running behind him, me bending and running with arms crossed over my mid-section as though I'm cradling the pigskin and continuing as though I'm running a sweep, and John then passes the ball to a receiver, either the weak side end or the strong side end or the wingback running a pattern to the left, while hopefully the defense thinks I have the ball sweeping right. We were practicing that play one day, running it repeatedly and I pointed out to Coach Ligon that after John looked left to pass, the defense turned its attention in that direction and away from me, floating out to the right, where I was wide open, and suggested that John throw the ball to me.

We were practicing for the upcoming game against AG(Alexander Graham), Myers Park's primary feeder who we played that Friday afternoon on the beautiful Myers Park field, encircled by its cinder running track. I scored 3 touchdowns, 2 on the pass play I had suggested just a few days before and 1 on a fake reverse, where I carried the ball to the right as in an off-tackle run and the wingback pivoted left and ran left behind me. On a reverse, I would hand the ball off to the wingback who would carry it around our left end, but on the fake reverse, I would fake handing off to him and I would keep it around our right end. I don't remember in what order I caught the 2 passes and ran the fake reverse that resulted in touchdowns, but after the 3rd, when I came over to the sidelines, Coach Ligon was grinning from ear to ear and said, as near as I can remember, "you love" or maybe "you can smell that end zone!" If my sports' life had ended right then, I would have been a happy, no, an ecstatic camper, even if I'd never played another down. Unfortunately, I played many more downs that game on offense and defense, allowing AG's winning touchdown pass to be thrown to a receiver who I let get behind me. Win some, lose some. ABC's Wide World of Sports had it right: "the thrill of victory...and the agony of defeat".

Let me here say a word or two about my punting the football, which you'll hear more of, much, much more of later. I don't remember the first time I kicked a spiral. I probably felt like I did the first time I hit a home run or a jump shot, like, "Man, did that feel good." The location thereof would have been in the front yard on Rama where Harry fielded my punts and actually got where he could kick a spiral, too (left footed, Harry? Like Harry, Dad was right handed but kicked left footed and swung a bat and axe left

handed). I expect most every male who reads this, and maybe a few female readers have punted a football, but I would bet, and I'm not a gambling man that very few have ever kicked a spiral. The spiral's virtue? Distance! Just as a quarterback's pass sails as a spiral as opposed to wobbling like a wounded duck when he gets hit as he's releasing the pass, a spiraled punt sails, while a wobbly or end over end ball, though a strong leg might send it 40 or even 50 yards on occasion, isn't going as far as a spiral. Even if one can kick a spiral, very few can get it to turn over. A spiral that doesn't turn over may look pretty for 30-40 yards but will sink rapidly, tail first. But a spiral that turns over can sail 40, 50, 60 yards and more, descending nose first, and it turns over at its apex, which if kicked high enough, results in the coveted "hang time" which allows the punt to be "covered", that is allowing the punter's teammates time to get down field and tackle the punt receiver before he gets too far.

Coach Ligon liked to come out to practice early and punt. He could kick a spiral, but I never saw him turn one over. I punted for the JV's in the 8th grade and I'm sure I usually kicked spirals, but I don't know if I ever turned one over that year. Pete Batte could kick a spiral but I don't think I ever saw him turn one over. I'm sure my punting had improved by the 9th grade, but I'm not sure whether even then that I could turn it over. Though I said 60+ yards above, of course the distance a spiraled punt that turns over travels is determined by the force applied to the ball and the preciseness of the contact between foot and ball. I probably turned some over which went less than 50, maybe even 40 yards. As I said, more about punting later, but I'll end on the subject here by saying that kicking a good spiral that turns over is primarily a matter of form, i.e. pointing the toe as straight out as possible and hitting the ball at exactly the right spot, slightly to the rear of its center, with exactly the right spot on the foot, slightly on its right side, for a right footed kicker, of course, and timing, much like the golf swing (would that I could swing a club like I could my leg).

Oops, I almost left 9th grade football without telling that Coach Ligon's love of the single wing was inspired by Coach Clarence Stasovich at Lenoir-Rhyne College. I don't know how long Stas had coached the Bears or if he was the one who implemented the single wing there. Coach Ligon took the varsity to Hickory to see them play a game every year. We got there early enough for him to take us over to their practice field and show us, mainly for the benefit of the pulling guards a contraption built out of metal pipes guaranteed to keep the guards as low as possible when turning the corner as the lead blocker in the power sweep. I'm not sure why the emphasis was on keeping the blocker so low, maybe to prevent the linebacker or cornerback they were to block from seeing them coming, but Coach Stas and Coach Ligon wanted them rounding the corner like a car on two wheels. I think my 9th grade year when I went with the varsity, 1959, or the year before, the Bears were the small college national champs. I still remember the names of their All-American tailback Lee Farmer and wingback Marcus Midgette. I didn't know his name then or that he was also an A-A, but Charlie Saunders, an assistant at Monroe High when my two sons played there and later the head coach and athletic director was a tackle on that team. Small world!

The Monday after the last football game on Friday, what I considered my best sport at the time, basketball, practice began, the varsity coached by Coach Cloer. I was the center, and, reminded by a photo of us in my 9th grade Scotsman, John Lagana and I were co-captains, and, also reminded by his photo in the annual, that Big John was the season's MVP. Coach had played at Western Carolina and not

only was one of my favorite coaches throughout my whole career in sports, but he also taught me more about the sport I was playing and he was coaching than any other coach I ever had, which I suppose was one of the reasons I liked him. He showed me a couple of defensive tricks he used: stepping on the toe of the sneaker of the man he was guarding to keep him from driving and poking him in the ribs with a finger when he went up for a jump shot. I never tried either. (Rabbit: Coble Funderburk, a much older lawyer than me when I was practicing in Monroe, and deserving of a story of his own, played bball at Furman. Hanging around in the lawyers' lounge, waiting for traffic tickets we had come to District Court to get reduced to a charge that wouldn't result in as many points against the offender's driver's license to be called, Coble told the story of when the Paladins were playing GA Tech, whose best player was Jewish. The coach put Big Fundy on him and Coble used the Coach Cloer technique of sticking his finger in his ribs when he shot, but added calling him a "Christ killing son-of-a-bitch" each time. East Mecker after I was there and later mayor of Monroe, the young Jewish lawyer Lew Fisher was in Big Fundy's audience. Joe McCollum, who died several months ago from Covid [Joe played church league bball in his olive drab Marine Corps sneakers] and I cringed.) Marine Joe and Big Fundy, RIP!

I had a bad case of jock itch, a remedy for which was putting corn starch in your jock to dry it up. The first home game of the season, I had loaded my jock up pretty good with the white powder and, as co-captain, led the team out of the locker room and onto the court, dribbling a ball out to take the first lay-up in pregame warm ups, leaving behind a trail of the white corn starch. I don't remember if the trail followed me all the way to the basket but I vividly remember a student coming out with one of those wide dust mops used at half time to get the dust off the floor to mop up the trail I'd left. Talk about embarrassing! Of course happening in front of the whole school, it was much more embarrassing than my self-administered "square cut". I've written before about Dad cutting Bill's, Harry's and my hair growing up. (We have photos of Dad giving Tommy and Tim their first haircuts). He didn't shave around our ears or down our neck with a razor as real barbers did. The square cut, wherein the barber shaved the neck of his victim straight across, "squaring" it off, became the fad for teenagers. I held a hand mirror to see my neck in the mirror over the bathroom sink and used Dad's safety razor, without lather, to give myself a square cut. I must have nicked myself 5 or 6 times and applied several band-aids before going to basketball practice during the Christmas holidays and making up some lame-brained explanation, which I'm sure was less than credible, for all the bandages, which may, though I don't remember, have caused me to fess-up. One more jock itch story: in high school the dreaded itch returned and one night, with only Harry and me (is "I" what I should have used, grammatically? "Me" sounds better, so I'm leaving it) at home, I tried, for the first time, Desenex ointment. Boy/Man, whatever, did it LIGHT ME UP, like applying a blow torch. I asked Harry to blow on it, which he loudly and wisely declined to do. Luckily, the weather was warm and the sky moonless, so I streaked bottomless around the house three or four times. I never used the ointment again; the powder was much cooler, in the old-fashion version of the word "cool"! I never powdered again, with baking soda or Desenex, before a game.

The highest I ever jumped on a basketball court and the closest I ever came to dunking, which was prohibited in a game in jr and sr hi and college (don't remember about the pros) and I think if stuffed during warm-ups resulted in a technical foul against the offending team, imposed I guess in lieu of an

opening tip-off (I never saw it imposed) was in the old Piedmont Jr Hi gym where the floor was springy because the subfloor must have been wood underlayment over wood floor joists, as opposed to maple laid directly on concrete. I could have easily have dunked a tennis ball there and maybe a bball if I could have palmed it. Most never or seldom having played observers are wowed, as they should be by Michael Jordan's leaping ability, but the next time you watch him in a video, check out how the ball looks, almost the size of a softball in his mitts.

I peaked as a basketball player in the 9th grade, though once on the ridge I pretty much stayed there through the next year, reaching my summit by jumping and shooting. I jumped center and usually got the tip. At a home game I got the tip but one of their players, got the ball and was streaking for a lay-up. I caught up to him and when he laid it up against the back board, I slapped it as it was climbing, thus avoiding a goal tending call, against the backboard hard enough that it bounced out to one of our guys, probably Corne or Danny Epps, who dribbled down for a lay-up on our end. I remember a loud cheer. My shots were usually launched with my at the peak of my leap, my trademark jump shot. There are several action photos in the Scotsman and I'm in several, one of me just before launching my jump shot from the foul line. There are individual pictures of the 9th grade starters and mine is taking a jump shot, on which Coach Cloer wrote: "Tommy, I have certainly enjoyed having you in class"(civics)"and on the team. You have great ability and I expect great things of you. Mr. Cloer". Quite a nice thing for him to say, but the compliment I remember most from him was in practice when somebody launched a shot from almost dead in the corner. It may even have gone in, but Coach blew his whistle to stop play and said "the only one who's allowed to take that shot is Tommy Caldwell." In this story if I knew how to high-light highs, that, along with Coach Ligon's comment I mentioned earlier about my loving the end zone would definitely be high-lighted!

One of my female teachers, I think it was Mrs Watson in biology complimented me about a game and said that Coach Cloer said that he wished that I would shoot more, but I never was a gunner, even after that. Coach Ligon taught health and PE. He devised a contest to see who could make the most shots in a given time period. I held the record by jumping to bank the ball in like a lay-up and jumping to pull it out of the net so I could repeat the process. We loved Coach Ligon's class, during which he let us watch the World Series in 1960, and we saw Bill Mazeroski's 9th inning walk-off home run in the 7th game for the Pirates to beat the hated, by me, at least, Yankees. BTW, before I leave the bouncing ball, I'm glad Bill didn't play basketball; otherwise, the CFO may have made me wear his shoes, but instead, she let me buy a new pair of Converse each year, which I waited to buy until the season started, so they'd be new and white.

As soon as basketball ended, we pitchers began throwing in the gym, waiting for the weather to once again let us bloom into the "boys of spring." I guess I was the leading pitcher, though I still suffered with control problems when a batter was at the plate. I don't remember much about my, as I'll explain shortly, short season, but 3 things stand out: 1) I picked a runner off first against Piedmont; 2) playing first base with nothing but a jock on under my pants, they ripped right up the rear seam when I stretched for a throw, leaving my derriere exposed to the elements and eyeballs. Coach Ligon substituted for me to go in and change. I don't remember whether the ump let him put me back in; 3)

pitching at home, I couldn't get the ball across the plate, maybe even walking a run in, in just the 1st or 2nd inning, and Coach Ligon rightly and thankfully took me out.

The track was adjacent to the baseball field and a meet was just starting. I went down wearing my baseball cleats and uniform, and won the 100 and 220 yd dashes and the broad jump, won or placed in the high jump, and placed in the shot and discus. I never played in a baseball game again. Dad didn't take off work to see many or any of my football, basketball or baseball games at McClintock, all played in the afternoon, but he did come to see me run in the conference track meet held at Myers Park. Bill ran the high hurdles at McClintock and East and had left his old track spikes in the garage when he went to NC State, where he was also a hurdler, and once again, I stepped into his shoes. It was a cinder track and, running the 220 I leaned too far into the first curve and went down, skinning myself up pretty good, but thankful, very, very th..., no absolutely ecstatic that the runner's in the lane inside me spikes landed just beyond my arm outstretched in his lane. I shudder even now to think what those almost inch long, nail-like spikes would have done to my forearm. My sporting life could have very easily ended then and there!

I sidetracked last week to mention the death of my classmate and teammate Martin Brackett. I'm going to do the same now for Marilyn Lowry, who just passed away, my classmate and also a teammate in a way. Marilyn was the head cheerleader in the 9th grade at McClintock and in the 12th at East, where she was also Homecoming Queen and Carrousel Princess, as well as a member of the National Honor Society and a marshal. She and I were the superlatives "Best All Around" at Mc and East. Spring our junior year I was walking past teacher and senior class, of which my good friend, Bill Carr had just been elected president and me VP, adviser Mrs Carol East's (no kidding) classroom and she was out in the hall waiting for me. She asked if I had a date for the Jr-Sr Prom and when I said no, she said Marilyn didn't either and strongly, very strongly suggested that I ask Marilyn, which I did. It was the only time we ever dated. I just got out my sophomore year East Wind to refresh my memory about sports that year and flipping through it saw that Marilyn's senior brother Bill was also "Best All Around". She went to Salem College and came down to Davidson to date our East classmate and my basketball teammate and my college classmate, Tommy Cox, her steady their senior year, at Homecoming. At the football game (I, as all freshman players, played freshman football) they sat beside me and our East classmate and my senior sort of steady, Dianne Holt, who came down from High Point College as my date. Marilyn's younger brother Rick and her cousin, Robert, our age, were Harry's fraternity brothers at Carolina. Marilyn married a banker from Georgia and they had two daughters, one of whom Marilyn told me at our 50th East reunion was a student at Davidson when son Tim was. Marilyn apparently had been suffering from dementia. Her obituary listed her many activities and accomplishments in the town where she and her family lived in Georgia. Miss and Mrs. Best All Around, may you RIP!

I don't remember much about my sophomore year at East. I played JV football, coached by Baker Hood, a varsity assistant and the varsity basketball coach who taught US history on the side. The JV football write-up in the annual says: "The outstanding offensive backs were Tommy Caldwell, Marshall Stewart, Cam Miller, Dickie Thomas, and Tim Belk. Tommy Caldwell was a good punter, punting an average of 65 yards or better sometimes." I don't think I'll ask whoever wrote that to edit this story. My writing is

better than that, if I do, and I do, say so myself. Now, I might want her (most likely a her) or hm to be my fact checker!

JV basketball was coached by math teacher, Heywood Hamilton. We would overlap practice with the varsity and sometimes scrimmage them to end our practice. On a woeful Friday night, we JV's and the varsity both lost to the despised Myers Park Mustangs at their gym. I think we all knew and dreaded what was coming at practice Monday. JV's and the varsity practiced together from the beginning of practice. I can still hear Coach Hood: "Lock the doors. We're going to turn this place into a racetrack!" And off we went, circling the floor, the East Meck 500, supplemented by drag races, otherwise known as wind sprints and suicides, whose name I couldn't remember till I googled it, and here's the definition I found: "Suicides, where players line up at the baseline, run to the foul line, then back pedal to the baseline, run to half court and back, three-quarter court and back, and finally, full court and back, sprinting all the way." Has me panting just reading it! From the annual: "Having a very good season this year, East's Junior Varsity Basketball Team managed to win first place in the conference near the end of the season. The most outstanding players of the season were Tommy Caldwell, Billy Calvert, Tommy Cox, Danny Epps and John Lagana. Although the team played inconsistently, they were good in rebounding and shooting. It was found this year that the close shots and fast breaks have been the best plays for the team." The same writer must have butchered, writing wise, all the JV write ups, but, again, obviously a she, must not have known much about basketball but, again, she was very accurate with her facts!

I don't remember but I probably did run track as a sophomore. Several months ago Bill saw and sent me the obituary for Wayne Serrett, a senior my soph year. Wayne was a pretty big guy, maybe 6'3", 220 lbs, but he was fast. I feel sure he broke 10.0 in the 100 and was even faster in the 220. He played football but, like me, was a straight ahead runner, not a cutter like Bobby Houser, who I'll talk more about as a footballer shortly. I thought big Wayne had gone to Auburn on a football scholarship but his obit said he was a Virginia Cavalier or Wahoo, whatever that is and whichever they are.

By the end of the 10th grade I was probably 6'1" and certainly not much over 145 or 50, at the most. I tried everything to gain weight, muscle or not. That summer I bought some kind of chocolate drink supplement and ate a peanut butter and jelly sandwich every day in addition to whatever else I packed for lunch that summer to take to my job at a machine shop (that was such a terrible job that a new guy came to work on a Monday morning and at morning break said he was going to his car to get a snack and he never came back). Before I went to bed I ate another PB&J sandwich and drank one of those chocolate drinks. I didn't gain an ounce and insisted that Mom make me a doctor's appointment. I was convinced I had a tape worm but the doc said no, that I had "perfect metabolism". Wish I still had it. Get ready; here I go after another rabbit, about a guy who must have had perfect metabolism right up until he died over 10 years ago, at 70, one of my closest friends, Andy Boggs. Andy was 6'5" and "imperialy thin" (see the poem, Richard Cory; actually there are several phrases from that poem that fit Andy: "He was a gentleman from sole to crown", "And he was always quietly arrayed", "And admirably schooled in every grace: In fine, we thought he was everything, To make us wish we were in his place". But otherwise, Andy was just the opposite of Richard Cory who "one calm summer night, Went home and put a bullet through his head".

Andy died within 6 months of learning he had an inoperable brain tumor, this despite him being in terrific shape, jogging and going to the Monroe Aquatic Center every weekday morning. Six years my senior, a superb athlete, he held the javelin record at Davidson College for many years; may still. He was an Eagle Scout and we were co-Scoutmasters of Troop 109 in which both of our 2 sons were members, his eventually 6'5" older son Drew making Eagle, while his 6'10 or 11" younger son Chris, the same age and a good friend 6' Tom, Jr fell just short of Eagle and my younger, Tim, 6'8" fell way short. "Short" is an ironic word for the Boggs, especially. Andy's wife Sue is at least 5'10", maybe 11", and we Caldwells aren't far behind, Tim's height helping to offset Janet's 5'6" (she says she's shrunk to 5'3"). We have a photo of the Boggs and us, all wearing shorts, when Drew was maybe 16, Chris and Tommy 12 and Tim 8. Andy thought it was hilarious when I said I'd never seen so many bird legs in one picture. That was another thing that made Andy my good friend; he thought my witticisms were witty! Andy grew weak as water, spending the last week or 10 days, maybe longer, in bed in a nursing home where he could be tended to. I visited him several times. He told me that sometimes at night he cried like a baby. Tears are running down my cheeks as I type this. Andy, I miss you every day. RIP, old friend!

Talking about the weight I couldn't gain, there was something else that hindered my athletic performance. I was never in great shape. Oh sure, I was better conditioned than most non-athletes but certainly not as well as distance runners, boxers or wrestlers, or Good (notice I capitalized Good to distinguish me from better) basketball players. I ran some during the summer but I doubt that I've ever run over 1.5-2 miles, then or since. Once I jogged down Monroe Rd, intending to break my distance record and run all the way to Matthews and then walk/jog/thumb back. There was a long stretch below East Meck and before McAlpine Creek with almost no houses or businesses along the road except a drive-in theater on the left, vacant of course in the daylight. A law enforcement vehicle of some kind, I don't remember whether a sheriff, police or highway patrol car pulled up beside me and asked if I had seen two guys walking down the road or the nearby railroad tracks, that they were looking for two bad guys, I think escaped convicts, and when I said no, they took off, leaving me on the road with little traffic, contemplating an encounter with the two bad dudes. I picked up my pace and called Mom from the little store just before the bridge where the railroad crossed the road where it made a sharp curve (Bill, driving toward home from Matthews was side swiped just after coming under the train trestle when a woman driving toward Matthews didn't completely make the curve) to come and get me. Thank goodness she was home!

I mentioned earlier that I don't have my junior year East Wind. If I did, maybe it would help my memory of an unmemorable year. After my sophomore year, athletic director Dick Williams fired head football Coach Dick Williams and hired an assistant coach at Garinger, Don Hipps as head coach. Coach Hipps inherited the best backfield duo in NC, the aforementioned Pete Batte at fullback and Bobby Houser at halfback. Unfortunately, he didn't inherit a quarterback. I think Bob Wilson, president of the student body and the next year a Morehead Scholar and later a Navy fighter pilot was under center. Though Bob couldn't pass worth a hoot, he was adept at handing the ball to Batte, slamming into the line and Houser, turning the corner around it. I'm not sure whether tackling, or more accurately, attempting to tackle those two in practice, where Houser's forte was bobbing and spinning away while Batte's was

running slam over you, made me a better tackler or a flincher, a term that will play a prominent role hereinafter.

We used a couple of blocking dummies (for the uninitiated, big stuffed canvas bags, not the non-Morehead Scholar types) in practice. I was holding a dummy in the defensive end spot and the offense was practicing an off tackle play in which Batte blocked the end out and Houser ran the ball inside his block. Pete was hitting the dummy I was holding at about 75%. After they ran the play a few times, I asked Jimmy Tillotson, a junior like me who was standing around, not paying much attention to what was going on to hold the bag for me. Coach Hipps told them to run the play again, this time full speed. Jimmy was standing behind the dummy, lackadaisically holding it up, and here comes Batte, like Putin invading the Ukraine (which started day before yesterday on 2/23/22), full speed ahead. He hit the dummy high, bowling over Tillotson and maybe even stepping on him as he proceeded on downfield to clobber another would be tackler, like the Russian army heading for Kiev. I don't know if Jimmy ever forgave me for setting him up for the slaughter.

I lost touch with Jimmy after high school but heard when he died a number of years ago. Batte and Houser both made the Shrine Bowl (a high school all-star game between North and South Carolina, played the first Saturday in December at Memorial Stadium in Charlotte, the pinnacle for high school footballers in the Carolinas), most probably the only backfield duo from the same school to ever play in the game. Pete went to Clemson on a football scholarship but continued lifting weights like a body builder and I don't know what else he was doing or taking, but he bulked up and slowed down significantly. I saw him the summer after his freshman year and he told about their spring practice. Frank Howard, the Tiger's head coach and his assistants didn't like the way practice was going. Two players pulled their helmets off (that's the reason they weren't at Harvard or Duke or even Davidson-leave your armaments on when you go into battle, Dummy) and got into a fight. The coaches loved it. Pete said the rest of spring practice was nothing but a fist fight. I don't know how long he lasted at Clemson or whether he ever played a varsity play. I haven't seen him since but someone sent me a FB of him as a salesman or maybe sales director at maybe a copier company, or some such, maybe in Fla, Bobby played in the baseball minors for a season or two and then played football at the U of Chattanooga or some such place. He returned to Charlotte, working in some capacity with Aetna, which had a first division fast pitch softball team, which, of course, he played for, and cynical me suspects is why he was hired. Someone told me some years ago that his face was on billboards at Myrtle Beach where he had become the mobile home king of the Grand Strand. I heard that he died within the last year or two.

I remember just a few things about East Meck football, 1962. I started as a defensive back. If I ran a single play on offense, I don't remember it. Though I was a much better punter (remember, as a JV I "was a good punter, punting an average of 65 yards or better sometimes",) Hipps, like Ligon, let Batte boot the ball. East didn't usually, but for some reason that year we played the Little Wonders, a name I wondered about, of Kannapolis in Kannapolis, an unincorporated town adjacent to Concord, the Cabarrus Co seat, where the whole town was owned by Cannon Mills. The story goes that at graduation, when a Wonder walked across the stage and received his diploma from the principal, Mr. Charlie Cannon, standing beside the principal, shook the grad's hand and told him a job was waiting for him at

the Mill, and Mrs. Cannon, then presented him with a Bible along with a platitude, something about it being life's guide. If I remember correctly, the Little Wonders weren't little and we didn't have to wonder long about their toughness. The other game I remember was playing Myers Park in Memorial Stadium where I broke up a couple of the Mustang quarterback Jeff Beaver's passes in the end zone.

Beaver went on to quarterback Carolina, where he shared duties with Danny Talbott. Myhus Pawk, as we East Meckers pronounced it, was coached by Gus Purcell who developed many a good qb. Jeff was preceded at MP by his brother, Hal (I'm not sure where or even if he qb'ed in college, though South Carolina rings a bell), who was preceded by Ray Farris, who quarterbacked Carolina for a year or more (Ray, 6 or more years my senior, practiced [I assume he's retired] law in Charlotte where, though I'd never met him before and knew of him only as a football legend, he and I worked on some matters together and became good friends. Jeff was succeeded by Rick Arrington, a junior my senior year, who played at Georgia and then for the Eagles and he by Ned Hayden, who played at Alabama. Danny Talbott, mentioned above was the NC high school player of the year his senior year, '62-'63 at Rocky Mount in football, basketball and baseball. My friend Ricky Creech (Ricky, haven't I mentioned you before?) was a year ahead of Danny at Rocky Mount and says he was a great guy as well as athlete. I just googled him (Danny, not Ricky) and learned that he led RM to the state 4A (NC's highest classification) championship in all three sports. I saw him pitch against East Meck in the pay-offs in Crockett Park in Charlotte and, if I remember correctly, he was wearing a forearm cast on his glove hand. In addition to playing qb at Carolina, he also played baseball and freshman basketball and a few years of pro baseball and in the NFL. He died 2 years ago. The Danny Talbott Cancer Center at the hospital in RM bares, of course his name. Mr. Football, Basketball, and Baseball, may you RIP!

I don't remember a thing about basketball my junior year at East, and as I said earlier, I don't have the East Wind from that year to refresh my memory. The star would have been point guard Bobby Threatt. I may have started, but if not was one of the first off the bench. Now track, I do remember. I was the fastest sprinter and therefore ran the 100 and 220, and anchored the 440 and 880 yard relays. We ran in the Davidson Relays, my first time on the Davidson College campus and the Duke-Durham Relays, my second trip to Wallace Wade Stadium, where I ran the 100 and 220, both won by Dave Dunaway, a senior from Jacksonville, NC and the fastest white high schooler in NC who held the white NC high school 100 record of 9.9 or maybe 9.8. I say "white" because since the schools weren't integrated, we never competed with blacks. I'm sure the fastest "black" times were faster than Dunaway's, who played wide receiver at Duke.

Have I mentioned Greg Cox heretofore, a year behind me, a footballer and track sprinter and broad jumper at East and Davidson where he jumped over 24'? I called Greg a day or two ago (I'm typing this 2/28/22, the day after my 76th birthday) and we reminisced for 2 hours and he remembered Dunaway at Duke receiving negative publicity for turning toward his pursuers at the 10 yd line and holding out the ball and taunting them before scoring on a long reception. I just googled him, Dunaway that is and learned that he was All-ACC, was drafted 41st in the 2nd round by the Packers, was on their taxi squad his rookie year, traded after the 3rd game his 2nd year to the Falcons, cut by them early in the next preseason, picked up briefly by the Redskins and then by the Giants. "While he only was on the active roster with the Giants for the final three games of the 1969 season, his only marks in NFL statistics came

there. He punted 13 times for a 38.2 yard average, caught two passes for a total of 37 yards (both in a 49-6 blowout win over the St. Louis Cardinals). His lone carry was for 4 yards for the Giants, but it was an important play. It came on a successful fake punt that helped lead the Giants to a 4th quarter game-winning drive against the Steelers.” I didn’t know he was a punter. Dave died at 51 in 2001.

While I’m talking about the Duke-Durham Relays, I should go ahead and tell what happened there a year later, my senior year; otherwise I might forget it. I was slated to run the 100 and 220 and anchor the 440 and 880 relays. I ran the first three. The 880 relay was the last of the four events. I’m not sure what my motivation was (take your pick: 1)weary from the first 3 events; 2)showboating; 3)a senior prank;4)other?), but I bribed somebody, I think it was Steve Hobbs with a Coke or something in that price range to run anchor for me in the 880 relay. I don’t know when Coach Dick Williams, still the AD but also the track coach first noticed the switcheroo (I hid till it was over) but, if I remember correctly, he was, of course surprised, then incredulous, and I don’t know what next, but he ended up flashing one of his great grins, perhaps acknowledging that this 3 sport, 3 year player, just a month or so from graduation, had earned, maybe even deserved the right to pull a senior prank. Coach Williams was one of my favorite coaches and persons. Many year later, when I was lawyering in Monroe, I was on the board of American Commercial Bank, whose president and chairman of the board were, if not fanatical, at minimum, very avid golfers (after every monthly board meeting, which began at 10:00 AM,, the board lunched at Rolling Hills Country Club [Janet and I never joined] and most of them then played golf while I returned to the office to make a living). Twice a year, the Bank sponsored out of town golf outings, inviting customers and friends. Coach Williams was a friend of a friend and attended a two day outing at Waynesville Country Club and its 36 holes and mountain chic facilities. I played a round with Coach, and thoroughly enjoyed the last time I ever saw him. Coach, I feel sure you are and may you continue to RIP!

Let’s see, where am I on my sporting journey? I think I’m starting my last year as an East Eagle. I probably didn’t work any harder to get in shape before my senior season than during any other summer. One thing I remember is that some of us seniors, in a display of senior leadership, decided to get a buzz cut before pre-season practice began. Apparently some took this more seriously than others. The East Wind has an individual picture of the senior lettermen and I’m buzzed more than anyone. Dad loved cutting a buzzer, just one pass with his electric clippers, no comb, no scissors, just hair falling to the breezeway floor. I didn’t know that annual photos were going to be made at the beginning of the year. In mine, my headed is cocked a little differently than in the football picture, but the buzz cut is just as buzzed.

I started at defensive cornerback, alternated as one of the sometimes one and sometimes two halfbacks on offense, punted and received and covered kickoffs. I think I mentioned earlier that by then my nearsightedness kept me from returning punts. His vision kept junior offensive tackle, Rick Sloss from seeing the scoreboard. I stood beside him in the huddle and he was always asking me how much time was left on the clock. I don’t know why he wanted to know; he wasn’t calling the plays. Maybe he was pacing himself, wondered how long before he could go to the locker room and pee, or worse, or maybe he just liked being in the know. I don’t think he ever asked me what the score was.

The East Wind write-up of our 1963 football season:

“With an impenetrable line which surrendered a measly average of seven points a game, the East Eagles compiled a winning record for the second straight year. The team was not scored on for four straight games, which included Kannapolis, Asheville, Morganton and North. Defensive workhorses were seniors John Lagana, Richard Gaddis, Martin Brackett and Howard Carriker. Leading the offensive flight were Marshall Stewart and Tommy Caldwell, both seniors. This offensive unit scored an average of seventeen points per game, which is outstanding considering that a three-game losing streak produced only twelve points.

At the end of the season came honors. John Lagana and Richard Gaddis were named to the Charlotte Observer All Mecklenburg team, while Martin Brackett and Howard Carriker joined them on the Charlotte News All Mecklenburg team. Lagana also made All-State, All-American mention, East-West team and the Shrine Bowl team. Georgia Tech made a big catch when they landed him as a Yellow Jacket. Brackett and Caldwell will play together again next year, as they both signed grant-in-aids with the Davidson Wildcats.”

Though Marshall Stewart and I may have led “the offensive flight” my leading led to the end zone only once the whole season, and that on defense as I picked off a pass and returned it for a TD In Asheville, which Charlie “Choo-Choo” Justice may have seen as we were told he would probably be at the game. Coach Hipps ran a very conservative offense, little passing, “3 yards and a cloud of dust.” Marshall was a 215-20 lb fullback and ran neck and neck with junior, Jan Griffin who was as or bigger than him. The running backs were John Corne, me and a shorter, stockier, wrestler-type, which he was, Robert Williams. I carried the ball and caught passes (at least one that I know of, against West, because I have a copy of that game film which Greg Cox made me a copy of [I think he told me Coach Williams in later years gave him all the game film] and against whom I made a 30 yard run [and should have scored]), but my carries were usually outside the opponents 10 yard line, inside of which it was usually Stewart or Griffin up the gut or Mike Madigan on a qb sneak. Marshall told me on the phone last week that he ran for 7 TD’s. Jan probably had as many, and John, who didn’t play defense as I did and therefore carried the ball on offense more than I did had quite a few.

We ran variations of the I formation on offense. According to the “Scoreboard” of wins and losses in the annual, we lost 3 straight, to Gastonia, 6 to 7, to Myers Park, 6 to 28 and to Harding, 0 to 6 before playing South in the last game. Coach Hipps was frustrated with our offensive output in those games and decided to rectify that against the Sabres, so we ran a straight I formation: qb Madigan under center, Griffin or Stewart behind him and the other behind him and Corne, Williams or me behind him; we tailbacks were probably 10 yards deep. I don’t think I’ve ever seen an offense at any level of the game lined up in a straight I. When we ran wide, Jan and/or Marshall, which ever was right behind Madigan blocked their defensive end and the other finished him off if necessary, or if unnecessary picked up the next defender, John, Robert, or I, usually John or I, carried the ball. If we ran off tackle, one or more of the backs would kick out their end and one would help seal off their tackle or pick up the first defender, probably a linebacker, filling the whole. The tailback or either of the fullbacks or even Madigan would carry the ball. Before the game was over, their defensive ends, beat to a pulp, were simply falling to the ground before our blockers arrived. The Sabres were rarely unsheathed as our straight I-formation ran them through, 26 to 9.

Backing up to the week before the Gastonia game, I had the flu and didn't come to school until Thursday. After classes, I went down to the Quonset hut locker room to let Coach Hipps know I was there but didn't feel well enough to but he insisted that I dress out, against my continuing protests. During jumping jacks, as I felt sure it would, diarrhea struck and after displaying the results to Coach Hipps, I went in and showered and came back out to watch practice from the sidelines. Friday morning Coach came by my first period physics class to be sure I was at school. We played in Gastonia and got beat, 7 to 6. When we drug back to the locker room after our whupping, the door was locked and the already ticked off Hipps cussed everyone and thing in sight and kicked the door a couple of times.

Dad had planned on listening to the game on the radio but couldn't pick it up well enough to hear, so he got in the car and headed toward Gastonia and was finally able to hear through the static about the time he got to the Catawba River, the dividing line with Gaston Co, but by then the game was about over. I would have gotten home late and Dad worked till noon on Saturdays and we usually messed around in the yard or garden in the afternoon, so it must have been Saturday night that I was telling him about the locker room door incident and laughing about Coach Hipps cussing and kicking the door. Monday morning when I got out of Bill's '31 Ford A-model, which I drove my junior and senior year (its picture is in the East Wind, with the cheerleaders standing on the running board and bumpers and sitting on the fenders and it sits in Bill & Sylvia's 1 car garage, from which it hasn't move in probably 50 years [Bill's slowed down since his hurdling days]) and joined a couple of players, Lagana and Corne if remember, walking across the parking lot, Coach Hipps was waiting on us at the top of the steps. He told us that some parent had called principal DK Pittman and complained that he was cussing after the game Friday, and he asked us if we'd ever heard him curse. Of course, we said no, so he marched us to DK's office where we all lied that we had never heard Coach cuss. Many years later, Mom told Janet (she, Mom, that is, never told me) that she was the one who had called Mr Pittman, apparently having over heard my conversation with Dad that Saturday night. I told that story at a 50th anniversary party we had for Mom and Dad in Matthews Baptist Church's fellowship hall in 1988 as an example of a Dad who was supportive of but not a fanatic about his son's athletic endeavors and a Mom who was always concerned about the morality lessons we were learning. Thank-you, Mom & Dad for guiding Bill, Harry and me primarily by setting good examples in the lives you lived, rather than by lecturing us. What's the old saying: "I'd rather see a sermon than hear one." Not to mislead though, there were occasional lectures, mostly from Mom. I still appreciate and still benefit from her wise rhetorical question: "How are you going to learn anything if you don't ask questions?"

A couple of other senior football stories before the season ends. One of the stupidest things I've ever done was while riding back on the Trailways bus from the Morganton game, on which we were jubilantly eating sandwiches and drinking milk from cardboard containers after our victory. I don't know who started it, but as we drove down newly built I-40, someone started throwing stuff out the windows at passing vehicles. I guess not wanting to be left out, I filled a half-pint milk container with water and let fly. Miles down the Interstate, a blue light came on and a Highway Patrolman pulled the bus over and stepped in to tell the coaches that a milk container had hit the windshield of a car and almost caused a wreck. Of course we players were all wondering what was going on, but our wonder was abruptly ended when Coach Hipps asked who had thrown a milk carton out the window. Well, I'm sure my sphincter

drew up when all eyes looked and maybe some fingers pointed my way and maybe even some lips said “Caldwell”, or maybe “Tommy”, or if from Lagana, “Fish”. I’m not sure Coach pinned it right down to me, but I was the most relieved Eagle on the bus when the Highway Patrolman didn’t pursue it any further, exiting the bus as he said to be sure it didn’t happen again. You can bet your bottom dollar that it didn’t! DUMB, DUMB, DUMB!!!

I got along pretty well with Coach Hipps and all the coaches. The worst think he ever said or did to embarrass me was once during practice I was carrying the ball and being pursued toward the sideline and rather than trying to make another yard and getting clobbered thereby, I went out of bounds. Hipps comes running down the sidelines singing “tiptoe, through the tulips”. I was a pretty good tiptoer! Dave “Tater” Jones, the head baseball coach, coached the offensive and defensive backs. Apparently most of us caught the thrown football in the bend of our elbows.. Preseason, Madigan was throwing the ball to some of us and I was catching it just with my hands, and Tater, in a positive and complimentary tone commented about my catching skills reaching a new level. Funny what you remember, the most and least complimentary words usually. Somebody had a Playboy magazine and coming late to practice, after all the players and coaches were on the field, placed it, open to the centerfold in Coach Jones locker (the coaches dressing room was adjacent to the players’, sounds easily heard in both directions) and the culprit, having alerted us to his mischief, thus putting all our ears on high alert, we were rewarded with Tater’s “good gosh, look at that”, or something similar, followed by a chorus of “oohs and aahs” from the others.

The only other football coach I haven’t mentioned was Jim Oddo, who played center and linebacker at NC State, and this may have been his first coaching job. I just looked in the annual and saw that he taught biology and senior science, whatever that was (gerontology, maybe-Ha!). He was a players’ coach. He would get down in a three point stance, wearing nothing but shorts, T-shirt and a cap, and go head to head with a lineman, or maybe two. They’d never been hit so hard! Coach Oddo went on to coach Charlotte Catholic. From a Charlotte Observer article on April 1, 2021: “Jim Oddo, the man who built the Charlotte Catholic football dynasty, died Wednesday morning....He was 85. Oddo started at Catholic in 1973 and won 358 games. He retired in 2014 after 14 consecutive winning seasons and four trips in a row to the N.C. Western Regional championship game. In his final four seasons, Oddo’s teams were 52-7. For his 41-year career, Catholic made 30 state playoff appearances and reached the state championship game six times, winning the title in 1977, 2004, 2005.” Quoting Charlotte Latin, his rival’s coach: ‘I really respected the way he coached his kids. And I respected the toughness his teams always displayed. His kids were always very physical and that’s who we wanted to pattern ourselves after. We had some great games, and I always enjoyed him. He was a lot of fun. Win, lose or draw, he was a gentleman after every game. We got along great.’...”Oddo’s parents, Giuseppe and Josephine, emigrated to the U.S. from Italy and settled in Wilmington, Delaware, where Oddo became an all-state center in the 1950s....(the current coach) said the team will add a helmet sticker to honor Oddo. (Catholic AD director) said the school would plan some type of memorial to honor Oddo, perhaps during next week’s home game, which will be played on the field named for Oddo nine years ago. ‘We all owe him so much (the AD said). Seeing the interactions he had with coaches and families and players, that just molded me. It has made me the coach that I am. And he was the most humble man that I’ve ever been around.

If you ever listened to his press conferences, it was never about him, it was always about the team, and how everybody else did it. He was special. He was one of a kind.’”

Charlotte Catholic was in the same conference with Monroe High, where Tommy played '84-86 and Tim, '86-89. I would go down and speak to Coach after every Monroe Rebels (now Redhawks) game with Catholic. The last time I saw him was in Costco in Matthews. He always recognized me and we had a nice conversation. He was special and a one of a kind. Coach, I wish there were more like you. You richly deserved any honors you received and you certainly deserve to RIP!

I've written a little about my being recruited to play in college in a story entitled WAKE FOREST FOOTBALL, 1963 in which I told about Coach Hipps, who played blocking back in the Demon Deacon's single wing possibly calling my attention to them and being invited up to Winston Salem to see their opening game against Virginia Tech and their homecoming win, thus ending their losing streak, then the longest among major college teams against South Carolina. I don't remember when I started thinking I might could play college football. Earlier I dreamed about playing at West Point, where Pete Dawkins had won the Heisman in 1958 and the Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford, or the Naval Academy, where Joe Bellino, who I mentioned earlier my having seen play against Duke, won the Heisman in '60 and Roger Staubach, more about Roger later, in '63. I probably lost interest several years before graduation because of the 5 year military commitment, but my decision was solidified when big (6'4", 230 lb) John Clower, who was a year ahead of me playing football and basketball at East, went to the Air Force Academy (I think his and his younger brother, Lea's, a year behind me and at 6'3", a good round baller, father was an airline pilot) and, probably over Christmas told about having his nose broken in required boxing early in the year and it still hurting. (I just wanted a football face guard to keep my nose from breaking, which it, along with my penchant for not tackling face first accomplished very satisfactorily.) John dropped out after his plebe year. I never saw Big John, who was one of the nicest, never said an ill word about anybody and wouldn't harm a flea guys that I've ever known, again. I don't know where he finished college, where he lived or what he did for a living. All I know is that Lea, a retired Presbyterian minister living in Chattanooga, who I connected with on FB several years ago, told me that John had died several years before, if I recall correctly, during or following heart surgery. Big John, may you RIP! While proofing this, another Jimmy Tillotson story came to me. We were running a drill in which defensive linemen hit an oncoming would be tackler with a forearm shiver. The coaches thought Clower wasn't delivering his shiver with adequate persuasive force and kept guys running at him until he'd had enough or had gotten the picture. I didn't have anything to do with it this time, but poor ole Jimmy Tillotson was the last pretend tackler to run into Big John, whose shiver almost took Jimmy's head off. The coaches were satisfied; Tillotson was shiver/shell shocked!

Back to college recruitment, I was semi-recruited by Carolina, but their coach Jim Hickey was really after Big John Lagana, as was most every major college program. I think fairly early in the recruiting game John had verbally committed to playing for Bobby Dodd at Georgia Tech, an engineering school, right up excellent math student John's alley. Hickey invited John, John Corne, Martin Brackett and me to Chapel Hill to see the Tar Heels play NC State. I drove. The reason I remember driving is because none of us knowing the exact route, and coming to a fork in the road, one or two suggesting right and one or two left, and I came close to splitting the difference and running out into a field. We finally got there and ate

BBQ at the Tin Can, a WWII metal building where they ran indoor track (Bill, didn't you tell me that you ran in meets in the Can?) with meal tickets they had sent us and then took our seats at midfield, but only a few rows from the very top of Kenan Stadium. There were some Native Americans, probably Lumbees from Lumberton sitting behind us and they popped their corks way before kick-off. After they had taken flight and were flying pretty high, Lagana asked if they would pass the firewater, and I think, though this may just be me thinking I was cleverer than I really was told him that he was going to get is scalped. Carolina won, beating the Tony Kozarski (sp?) and Joe Scarpati (sp?) (can't believe I remember those names) led Wolfpack. We went down on the field and got up with Brackett's 4 year older brother, Doug, 6'4", 240 or so, a tackle for the Pack but in street clothes because he was hurt, which he was during much of his career. We looked up in the stands, mostly cleared of fans by then and there sat, or laid the Lumbees. They may still be there!

The assistant coach assigned to us took us in the locker room where I saw, and may even have been introduced to a few of the largest gathering of huge dudes, dressed or undressed, that I'd ever seen. All-American tailback Ken Willard, 230, fullback Eddie Kessler, 235-40, Chris Hanburger, a lean, mean fighting machine (Bud Phillips was a sprinter and wide receiver, a year ahead of me, at Myers Park and accompanied Jeff Beaver to Carolina. I saw him a few years later and he told me about walking into the football shower room for the first time his freshman year and getting under a shower head, when all of a sudden a hand grabbed him by the skin on his chest, lifted him a few inches off the floor, and Hanburger said "nobody showers beside me".) The Burger played for the Redskins and I remember seeing him covering a punt on TV. A blocker was a yard or two in front of the punt returner and crouched a little to block for him. Chris went airborne, caught the blocker with a knee to his face as he sailed over him and speared the ball carrier in the face with his helmet. The refs called an injured player time-out so the blocker and punt returner could be helped off the field. Hanburger walked off on his own. And there was All-American end, Bob Lacey, quarterback Junior Edge, and, Ricky Creech reminded me, scatback Ronnie Jackson from Rocky Mount. Talk about being dazzled, and intimidated!

Bill just called and verified that he ran in the Tin Can. He remembered it being cool to run on its wooden track with banked curves. Since he ran the high hurdles, which I think was 110 yards outdoors, I should have asked him how long the indoor highs were, because if also 110, it would have involved some curves, which would have been strange, hurdling hurdles on a slant.

The assistant squiring us around took us out into the hall and Jim Hickey appeared, shaking each of our hands with a "good to see" you, and then took Lagana in a room and closed the door behind them, leaving Brackett, Corne and me standing in the hall. In a few minutes, Lagana and Hickey emerged and after another "good to see you", Hickey took off, landing several years later as the head of sales for an upscale golfing community near Pinehurst. I hope he had more success in pine needles country than he did in Kenan Stadium.

While I'm on the subject of Carolina and Lagana, the East Wind shows 7 of us as Morehead Scholarship nominees, adding that "Tommy Cox and John Lagana were selected as semi-finalists from the Charlotte area and thus advanced to regional competition for the scholarship." I was knocked out in the first round but I think John made it all the way to the finals. I don't mean to toot my horn louder than John's,

who was, as I mentioned above, an excellent math student, but I don't remember him being in the advanced English curriculum I was in and he wasn't in nearly as many extracurriculars (other than sports, and even there, he played football but quit basketball before the season was over, whereas I played both and ran track, was also president of the Beta Club and treasurer of the National Honor Society, and vice-president of the senior class [someone told me a lot of extras would look good on my college applications], as well as being "Best All Around", about which I've previously tooted) as I was. (On awards day my junior year I received the University of the South [Sewanee] award, given to the "outstanding male in the junior class" of probably every high school in the southeast. Sewanee send me some propaganda and when I saw pictures of students wearing required ties, and maybe coats to class and top seniors donning robes, that crap went in the trash can. Of course, it's an excellent college, where 3 excellent lawyers I know, 1) East classmate and National Honor Society president, George Evans, 2) Myers Parker and baseball catcher Tom Moon, or knew, 3) Jim Hewson, a brilliant Harvard law litigator is deceased, in Charlotte graduated, along with historian and author Jon Meachum, and where my Davidson frat bro with his PhD in history from Harvard, Charlie Perry taught for many years. At awards day my senior year, I received the Bible award for the highest grade in a Bible class (hard to believe now, but the school system allowed the Gideons to sponsor a Bible class in each high school), taken mostly by bus drivers who arrived back at school just as the 9:00 class was starting, and which I took as an elective since I had to take something. Thereafter, Dianne Holt, the girl I was dating started calling me Moses, though the only burning bush that I know anything about was at 1105 Martha Dr in Monroe when Tim set some shrubbery on fire when playing with matches, and the only voice heard wasn't from the bush but from Janet.

Back to the Morehead: I feel sure the reason Lagana stayed in contention for the scholarship so long was that Hickey thought his winning it might lure him to put on the Tar Heel jersey rather than becoming a Rambling Wreck at GA Tech. It didn't work. John went to Tech and did well until, if I remember correctly, tearing up his knee on national TV in one of the big New Year's Day bowls, maybe the Orange. If I'd gotten the Morehead, of course I would have accepted it and gone to Carolina. Would I have tried to walk on the football team, even as just a punter? Probably. Would my life have taken a different path from what it has? Of course! Better? Of course not! I wouldn't have met Janet or sired Tommy and Tim. I can't imagine my life without the first and then the next two loves of my life. Jim Hyder, a West Meck Indian (wonder who they are now?) was Mr Basketball in Mecklenburg County his senior year, my sophomore year at East and was a fraternity brother of mine at Davidson. He was awarded the Morehead but turned it down to go to Davidson where he may have thought he could make the basketball team as a walk-on. When I asked him about that when I played golf with him at Statesville CC (Jim retired to the town of Davidson several years ago after retiring from a very successful management career in the printing business, his last job as CEO of a company here in Louisville), he said that he felt like Carolina was just too big a school for him. I don't remember if Jim was a manager for the Wildcat bballers, but (and I may not have this exactly right-Jim can correct me) Lefty (Davidson coach Lefty Driesell) let him dress out for and put him in near the last of the last game his senior year, played at the old Charlotte Coliseum, and Jim hit a buzzer beater from way out past the 3 point line (which didn't exist then), against whom I don't remember. Who won, Jim?

Barclay Cafeteria in the Amity Gardens Shopping Center was East Meck's eating establishment of choice for school functions. I don't remember if we ate a pregame meal together as a team before every football game but I remember eating more than one at Barclays. I also remember eating at several school functions there; in fact, there's a picture in the East Wind of me, in suit and tie, eating at a long table at Barclays beside Mrs Thelma Laws, my senior English teacher, who sat beside Jackie Stack (who married Dickie Thomas, each of their first times), who sat beside cheerleader, Barbara Huitt (who attended and married a South Carolina basketball player), with the caption "Seniors and senior home room teachers enjoy a delicious meal at the Senior Banquet before the entertainment begins". I don't remember the entertainment but I'm sure it wasn't Bill Carr, Bob Cook, brother Harry and me singing as a barbershop quartet, as we did at the school talent show, "The prettiest girl, I ever saw, was sipping cider through a straw" or "Said the bullfrog on the bank, to the bullfrog in the pool", thank goodness!

Slug Claiborne ran Barclays and somehow got to know me and something about whatever football talents he thought I had. (Come to think of it, we Key Club members took turns having lunch with the Kiwanians and we Junior Rotarians with the Rotarians, both of which met at Barclays.) Slug was a Central High grad and, along with his classmate and star running back Larry Parker went to Carolina, Larry as the hoped for next "Choo Choo" (I mentioned Charlie "Choo Choo" Justice seeing me "pick 6" against Asheville. For you youngsters, Choo Choo went to Carolina and was a national run, pass and punt phenomenon, at probably no more than I weighed, but shorter. He may have been there with Andy Griffith. If you've never heard it, you should find and listen to Andy's corn pone "What it was, was football." Justice played for the Navy after graduating and then for the Redskins for a couple of seasons, but he was too small to make it big in the pros. I think he became successful in the insurance business in Asheville. Who wouldn't want to get their insurance from the Choo Choo). Parker was a bust at Carolina but remained friends with Slug. The two of them took me to a Tar Heel night game at Kenan Stadium. I don't remember who they played but I do remember seeing bball All-American, Billy Cunningham, surrounded by admirers. I don't think he was but maybe 6'6", but you could see why he played much taller; his hands hung almost to his knees. I don't know but I assume Slug and/or Larry had Hickey's ear and put in a good word for me, but it must have gone out his other ear. Maybe recommendations from a restaurateur and a "has been" running back didn't hold much sway with the Hick. Slug went on to own and operate some of the top eateries in Charlotte, i.e. Slug's Rib and Top of the Tower and the last time I saw Larry was when I was in college and played golf with Greg Cox, Mike Sizemore (more about him later) and frat "Big Brother" and former South Meck running back, Ray Ledford at Larkhaven, where he was the assistant or the pro. I can't imagine what Slug, Larry and I talked about for the 9-10 hours to, at and returning to Charlotte after the game. I probably slept on the ride home. They had plenty to talk about without me.

I've mentioned Davison hereinabove (I've mentioned in other stories how handy these frequently "used by lawyers" phrases are to reduce the number of words that would otherwise be necessary to advance a story, orient the reader or just to sound lawyerlike) a few times, first, as the college of my 11th grade English teacher Charles Davis, he of J Alfred Prufrock fascination, explanation, examination and thus, proliferation fame, introduced on the first page hereof. I don't think I mentioned that Charlie was a big Davidson basketball fan, maybe the reason I was at the Coliseum in '63, my junior year at East to see

Fred Hetzel, Barry Teague, Don Davidson and Charlie Marcon, Lefty's star recruiting class, then sophomores, join Bill Jarman, a senior from Gastonia who went on to practice orthopedic surgery in his home town for 32 years before expiring in 2016 (I googled to learn about his career and death) to upset #1 ranked Duke, Driesell's alma mater, led by senior All-American and later national player of the year Art Heyman and junior All-American, Jeff Mullins, Lefty and Davidson's first big win. And then I mentioned running in the Davidson relays my junior year.

I don't know when I began thinking about attending, and playing football for the Wildcats. I'd never seen a game at Richardson Field. I don't remember Martin Brackett and me talking about playing together there or with basketball teammate, Tommy Cox about going there. And I really don't remember much about being recruited by Davidson. I've mentioned before my story entitled WAKE FOREST FOOTBALL, 1963 about my half-hearted recruitment by the Deacons and just above about my fourth, more like tenth-hearted recruitment by Carolina. I don't remember what other teams put out feelers my way, probably some Catawba, Guilford, Newberry and Presbyterian types. I specifically remember hearing from East Carolina.

Davidson was coached by Bill Dole, a graying into white headed, I would think over 60 year old who had been there quite a while. A short rabbit run here: I just called Coach Dave Fagg (more about him soon-I told a little about him in one of my stories, I think it was WESTWARD, HO) who Dole recruited from a textile mill working family in High Point in 1954 and Coach (I seldom, if ever call any coach I've ever had by any name other than "Coach") said Coach Dole had been at Davidson for some time before he came in '54. Whether Coach Hipps alerted Davidson about me (I may have told him I was interested), whether any of their coaches came to see me play, whether they saw any game film, I have no idea. I remember Dole coming to our house and meeting Dad and Mom at least once. In my scrapbook is a letter from him to me dated May 18, 1964 enclosing 3 copies of a "National Grant -In-Aid Letter of Intent" signed by athletic director Tom Scott and asking Mom, Dad and me to sign them and return two signed copies, which we did on May 20 at (the form asked for the time) 9:35 PM, according to the copy I still have. It reads in part: "Subject to acceptance for admission and enrollment in the above named institution, THOMAS JAMES CALDWELL" (typed in the space provided on the form) "will be given financial aid in accordance with" (List Date and Substance or Form of Agreement or Award) (and there is typed in, "\$875.00 for four years", with a penned in 'per year' after the amount..... \$875 constituted a half scholarship, whether just tuition or including room and board, I don't remember. I also don't remember discussing with Dad and Mom whether they could afford to pay the rest; I guess I just assumed they could. Dad was raised in Providence Presbyterian Church, which may have had a Davidson grad as pastor during his time there, thus possibly making him aware of Davidson when he was growing up. Dad never told me but Mom did after he died that he had always wanted to go to Davidson and was proud when I did. He would have made an excellent student, much better than I was.

Though my Letter of Intent was not signed until May, I must have verbally committed months earlier; maybe the NCAA rules didn't permit actual signing until later. Coach Dole invited me to come up to a Saturday night basketball game at Johnson Gym on campus and I asked Dad if he wanted to go and he was delighted to. All I remember about the game was that the gym was crowded and loud and Coach Dole had arranged for Big Jim Rollins, a 6'5" sophomore defensive end from Mississippi to meet us at

the door with tickets and to sit with us. At half-time, Jim led us upstairs where all the coaches' offices were and ushered us in to Coach Dole's office. At some point he said (this isn't verbatim, of course, but close): "Well, Mr. Caldwell, you know the boys work hard studying and practicing during the week and they like to relax a little on the weekends, so they'll take a keg of beer and their girlfriends out to the lake on Saturdays and Sundays for a good time." I thought, you old fool, if you keep talking this way I'm going to end up at Bob Jones! I learned later, much, much later that Dad wasn't the Victorian I thought he was.

The Shrine Bowl game, the premiere high school football all-star game in North and South Carolina was played the first Saturday in December in Memorial Stadium in Charlotte and was always a sellout. Somehow, a classmate named Carl Helms got two tickets and invited me to go see Lagana play. If I recall correctly, he got out of school all week to practice at Garinger High, but he dropped by basketball practice a time or two to tell us about Shrine Bowl practice and the talent on the team. Big John started at defensive tackle. On the Sunday morning following the game, the Charlotte Observer always ran a large color photo from the game on, I think, the very front page of the paper. That Sunday, John dominated the picture which showed him tackling the SC ball carrier near the NC goalline, preventing a touchdown.

The second biggest all-star game was the East-West game for seniors, played in the summer after graduation. Lagana played in it, too. A year or so before our senior year, a third all-star game was inaugurated called the North-South Lake Waccamaw Boys' Home game and I was picked to play in it. Several of us from Charlotte (Hank Hankins from Harding; Dickie Thurston from Garinger; Flake Campbell and Herb Goines from Myers Park, and the South Meck quarterback, whose name I can't recall) rode the bus together to East Carolina in Greenville to practice for four days before playing on Friday night. This was in August and we stayed in an un-air-conditioned dorm. That was the hottest week I ever remember. I was sure glad I'd decided to become a Davidson Wildcat rather than a sweltering ECU Pirate!

We practiced twice a day. I was starting at cornerback and was going to do the punting. I don't remember anything unusual about the practices or the coaches, that is, until Friday night. I guess we were the South and our head coach was Tonney or Tunny or some such Brooks from Lumberton. When we came back into the locker room after pregame warm-ups, Brooks asked one of the assistant coaches to give us the game plan. I remember thinking, what's he talking about, we'd been practicing what I assumed was the game plan all week. So the assistant says that if we kicked off, on the first play from scrimmage, all of our linemen were to fire out before the ball was snapped and try to take out the knee of the offensive lineman across from them. WHAT THE H__K/L (you choose-I know what I probably chose)! Of course I'd never heard anything like that. He followed that with "anytime you see an arm or leg sticking out from a pileup, break it off!" DG (Dad Gum) or GD (Gosh Darn) (again, you choose-again, I know what I probably chose)! I don't remember exchanging glances with any of my teammates but I'm sure they were all as astounded as I was. Truthfully, in addition to being astounded, I was scared. What if the North coaches were the same type bloodthirsty idiots that ours were? I had only been coached by our coaches at McClintock and East, none of whom would have condoned, much less encouraged what these goons did. Had my coaches been the exception? Were most football coaches gorillas?

As it turned out we received the opening kickoff so the first mentioned opportunity for illegal violence was averted, and as the first half progressed, I don't remember any injuries but mine. I strained my knee making a tackle near the end of the half, no tear in cartilage or anything like that, but enough to hurt. I don't remember how badly my knee continued to hurt, but to be real honest, it may not have been as bad as I let on. I guess I got to thinking about the cult of violence that I had just been exposed to, the insignificance of victory or defeat in this game, and that I would be starting my college career in just a few weeks, and asked myself, why take a chance on further injury? I didn't go back in the game to play defense after that, though I may have told the coach that I could still punt. The next week I went over to East and told Coach Hipps about Tunafish Brooks and his sordid gang of coaches. I don't remember his exact reaction, surprised somewhat, I'm sure, but not as ticked as I was. I may have said that I thought they should be reported to someone with authority at the state level but if I remember correctly, he sort of pooh-poohed that, which ticked me even more. I should have made the call myself, or at least told Mom about the incident. She wouldn't have hesitated to have called.

Speaking of Mom, she sewed or wrote my laundry number (I think my # was 42. Can you believe Davidson had a laundry and washed and ironed all of our clothes, towels and linens? We even had a guy who kept the halls and bathrooms in the dorms clean and swept out our rooms, emptied our trash baskets and, if you left your sheets, clean from the laundry on your bed, he would change them. The black man who cleaned up after us privileged white kids in Duke dorm was as nice a guy as I'd ever met, named Furman. I think the typical Christmas present he got from students was a bottle of liquor. I'm not sure what I gave him, it wasn't a bottle of booze, but cash, probably, though it wouldn't have been much) into each piece of my clothing and drove me up to Davidson and dropped me and my stuff off at Johnson gym to begin my four years of college. The dorms hadn't opened yet so we freshman footballers roomed for a week or more in a crowded room or two in the basement, sleeping on bunk beds. The only player I knew was Martin Brackett. It didn't take long for the fact that we had 3 Shrine Bowlers to make the rounds; combo qb and running back, Billy Taylor from Kinston and qb/fullback Pete Glidewell from Reidsville and wide receiver, Kim Johnson from Rockingham. We didn't have but 20 or so players. I bet I can name them all but I won't waste your time showing off my memory. Some of their names will show up later. I just counted our number from Quips and Cranks, the cleverly named annual. There were 22 of us Wildkittens, all just itching to strut our stuff!

And what did we have to strut in? High-tops! Dole had decided that everyone on the varsity and freshman squad had to wear high-tops. I thought I'd left them behind after the 8th grade. Everybody complained, but to no avail, except for a few. In Q&C, I can only see the feet of the front row, everyone wearing high-tops but Brackett, who was a guard, and if anybody traditionally wore highs, it was linemen. I don't know how he got his exemption, but Martin always had a silver tongue, so I guess he talked his way into low cuts some way. On the varsity, again I can only see the shoes of the first row, all high boys except end-converted-to-qb for his senior season, Steve Heckard, who was a wide receiver on the LA Rams taxi squad for a couple of seasons, star running back, Steve Smith, and the place kickers. I'll bet that some of us frosh would have gone somewhere else if we had known we'd be wearing high-tops for four years.

We were coached by Tom Stephens, the varsity baseball coach, assisted by one of the ROTC staff Army officers. Our main function was to be fodder for the varsity and for our protection (Ha), some genius decided to provide us defenders with what we euphemistically called “dum-dum” suits, pads that you strapped around each leg and a bigger one for our torso. We couldn’t move in them and the blockers would just tee off on us. And of course our offense would run the week’s opponent’s plays against the varsity defense, and since they knew what was coming, the ball carrier got pummeled. I was the fastest player on the team, freshman or varsity and played every play on defense and punted. I think I may have been Billy Taylor’s back-up at running back. He was a good runner, a cutter like Bobby Houser, and could throw a halfback pass, having played qb in high school, but I doubt that he would have been much of a defender, as he sought to avoid rather than make contact, which may make you wonder why I played defense!

There was a required physical fitness test for all freshman held at the very beginning of school, maybe during orientation, which, in retrospect wasn’t fair to the non-athletic guys; there wasn’t an intelligence fitness test or a musical fitness test, luckily for me. The test consisted of the 100 yd dash (Bob Pryor may have beat me but if so, I was second), the football punt (which I won by far [I don’t know how score was kept, that is, if the larger the margin of victory in an event, the higher the cumulative score]), the softball throw, which I was probably in the top ten I, some sort of short obstacle course run, some kind of swimming event (not sure whether it tested for speed or endurance), and, if I remember, some swinging on monkey bars (again, I’m not sure how it was scored). I scored the highest in the class, breaking All-American to become the coming basketball season and the next, Dick Snyder’s record in the punt and maybe the overall scoring record which he may have held. Dick was 6’5-6” and (I think I’m correct about this) had been the high school football, basketball and baseball player of the year in Ohio his senior year. After hearing of my record breaking performance, he came to my dorm room to meet and congratulate me, probably the only time I ever talked with him except to maybe say “hi” or “great game” after a bball game in the Chambers (the main classroom building) hallway or auditorium, where we had mandatory chapel three days/week. In baseball, Dick played centerfield and may also have pitched. One Saturday after a game, I saw him come over to the track, where I was running in a meet, and win the broad jump in his baseball uniform and cleats, just as I had done at McClintock.

There was also a “cake” race around the time of the physical fitness test which all freshmen had to run in except we football players, thank goodness, to win cakes baked by faculty wives. I don’t know how long the race was, probably several miles at least, over part of the cross-country trail, ending with a lap around the track around the football field in Richardson Field. Monroe Gilmour and Jim McLaughlin, distance runners from Myers Park had agreed that if either was leading near the finish and the other was in second behind him, that the leader would let the other catch up with him and they would finish together, which they did! What a story, which Monroe told me just a few years ago, when he also told me that he and Jim and a few others one Saturday ran from Davidson to Queens College in Charlotte, probably a marathon distance. After graduation, Monroe spent several years in India in the Peace Corps, served with another non-profit in Africa where he met his Mennonite wife from PA, now living in Black Mtn, NC, where he founded and has been the chief cook and bottle washer for over 25 years, WNCCEIB (Western North Carolina Citizens to End Institutional Bigotry). Prior to our classes’ 50th reunion a few

years ago, I nominated Monroe for and he won and was presented the John Kuykendall (former Davidson College president) Outstanding Alumni Award, by Dr. Kuykendall himself, and, in accepting, Monroe mentioned that John had dated his sister in high school. Hard to keep up with those MP Mustangs!

As 95% of the freshman did, I joined one of the 12 national fraternities, each of which had identical brick, college owned houses and each located on the street which encircled them, after rush week near the beginning of school. Members ate meals, held meetings, played cards and watched TV there but didn't party in the houses because the possession of alcohol on campus would get you kicked out of school. Looking back, it was a horrible system, bids determined by the members, in which one black ball would keep a kid out. In recent years I've become close friends with several GDI's, "___Independents", as they were called who have told me that their rejection by 95% of the student body was the most traumatic thing that ever happened to them. The first blacks to be admitted to Davidson, Wayne Crumwell and Les Brown, were in our class. When Monroe learned that neither was going to get a fraternity bid, he decided not to join one, despite being confronted about his decision by Dr. Chalmers Davidson, the racist history professor from Chester, SC, who was a classmate of Monroe's father who was runner-up to Dean Rusk for the Rhodes Scholarship and moved to Charlotte to practice medicine after graduating from Harvard Medical School, the same path followed by Monroe's brother, a retired cardiologist. Well, I chased this rabbit without prior warning, but though I'll never catch him, Monroe is a hare worth chasing!

Five of my freshman teammates and I joined Phi Gamma Delta, the FIJI's; Ken Kendall, a tight and defensive end from South Meck; Walter Greene, a center from Fayetteville; Kim Johnson, the Shrine Bowl wide receiver from Rockingham; Ross Dorneman, a lineman from Hampton, Va; and Ken Vogel, a lineman from Darien, Conn. Dorneman and Vogel didn't come back after our freshman year; Kendall and Johnson exited after our sophomore year. Walt was co-captain and maybe All-Southern Conference (I'll have to check) our senior year. We were the only frat with guys from all 4 of the "county" (the Charlotte and Mecklenburg school systems may have merged by then but we still thought of the schools as city or county) high schools, North, South, East and West and one from a "city" school, Garinger. In addition to us footballers, our pledge class had some other good athletes; Doug Rhymes, an all-around good athlete from Hickory; Rusty Brannon, who quarterbacked his Camden, SC high school team; David King, also an all-around good athlete who played baseball, and appropriately, a good friend then and now of Rhymes; Dan Sweet, another good athlete, I think also qb of his high school team in Wilmington, DE and an excellent tennis player; Richard Martin, from somewhere in VA who wrestled and I think played football briefly; and Jimmy McMillan, who wrestled and played football at Garinger and wrestled some at Davidson (I have Q&C open to the freshman sports teams and Jimmy is on the wrestling team, along with Richard). Oops, I almost overlooked shot putting Tom Newberry from Fla and golfer Mike Westall from Asheville, and, double oops, Eddie Beach from Morganton who I just saw in the photo of the freshmen swimmers (I probably overlooked Eddie because I don't think he remained a Gam even through our freshman year). Apparently freshmen could play intramurals with the upper classmen; Q&C has a photo of Brannon, Newberry, Sweet and Martin joining junior, Greg Reineck and senior, Jack Althoff on the winning wrestling team.

We FIJI's had a nickname, the Phi Ganimals because of our jocks, well, not our personal jocks but "the" jocks, especially football players. Given enough time, I think I could have remembered most, but I checked Q&C and counted the following varsity team members: 1 sr soccer; 1 sr basketball player who also played baseball; 2 other sr baseball players and the team's sr manager; 1 sr track and cross-country runner; 5 jr football players, 1 who also played baseball; 9 soph football players, 2 of whom also played baseball. So I felt right at home as a Ganimal.

Interruption for this news bulletin: I've often said how much I hate to go back and change things already written, sort of like Gen Patton saying he didn't like to retreat and have to pay for the same real estate twice, so I'm lazily inserting this here. Yesterday, seeking clarification in my mind about the Boys' Home Game, I reached out to Hank Hankins, a lawyer with the now over 200 lawyer (12 when he started around '74) ParkerPoe firm headquartered in Charlotte, sending him an email to the address on the firm's website with my phone #. He just called me and though we may have seen each other in passing a couple of times in the last 58 years, we picked up like we had had lunch together yesterday. Regarding the players from Charlotte, he didn't remember Herb Goins playing (I could have been wrong), remembered that the Garinger Wildcats were Howard Thaxton, not Dickie Thurston (I know a Dickie Thurston from somewhere) and Eddie Geisler and that our qb was Tommy Landis, who, he remembered, broke his collarbone on the first play of the game, thus significantly hamstringing our offense. The final score was them 21, us 0, the same score it was at the half. Sounds like it was a real snoozer. He didn't remember the story I told about Coach Tunafish Brooks and his blood thirsty assistants. As attested to by his 3-4 years as a Naval officer, required by his Navy ROTC Scholarship at Carolina, Hank was and probably still is as tough a Ram as he was at Harding. Rams don't notice stuff that scares the crap out of Eagles, worried only about whether we have enough run way for take-off. One other thing I learned from Hank. He was a Morehead nominee from Harding, making it to the regional level, and remembering that the only nominees from Charlotte were John Lagana and a guy from Myers Park, who also turned it down and went to Duke.

As pledges, we had to build and pulled a manned chariot in a race against our 11 competitors around fraternity row during Hell Week. I was one of the horses. We had other competitions, including a tug of war which I fairly vividly remember me pulling in for the championship, almost a stalemate, dragging each other back and forth to and from the edge of the creek running through the middle of the fraternity court which served as the victory line, against the Phi Delts, with as many and as big football pledges as we had. There's a photo from the weekly Davidsonian, the college newspaper in my scrapbook of me sitting on the ground, wearing my Block E East letter jacket, with my face in as bad a grimace as I've ever seen on anyone, evidence that I had run completely out of gas, with Dan Sweet trying to help me up. One competition we footballers escaped was the yacht race at Lake Norman, held on a Friday afternoon that we played. Another thing we escaped, thankfully, was the other pledges kidnapping Joe Clyde Gamble, our pledge trainer, and taking him in the back of a rented truck to somewhere in Georgia, where they were supposed to meet and swap pledge trainers with a Phi Gam chapter down there, but which went astray when Clyde somehow got the truck keys and locked himself in the cab, threatening to drive off and leave them all standing there in various stages of starvation and

inebriation, but he took pity on them and relented, giving them back the keys and, if I recall, thumbing back to school. Sure glad I missed that fun!

Our first freshmen football game was against then junior college, Lees-McCrae, in Banner Elk. The bus wound up the mountain in the rain, which didn't let up much during the game. We were winning toward the end of the end of the 4th quarter but were backed up deep in our territory. I punted with my wet high-top and kicked a surprisingly good (I know, I know, you English majors that "well" is the proper word here, but "good" sounds, well, maybe not best but at least better here than "well", so I'm leaving it in) one under the conditions, backing them up pretty deep in their own territory. Then they marched right down the field for a touchdown as the clock was winding down, winning the game. In the locker room, Coach Stephens did something I'd never seen one of my coaches do. He broke down in tears, saying through them something like the following: "I can't stand it. Just like we've always done. We had the game won when Tommy Caldwell kicked the greatest punt I've ever seen, BAR NONE (my emphasis) and we let them march right down the field and win. Just like Davidson always does!" I, and I'm sure all of us were disappointed that we'd lost, but I for one didn't, and I feel sure none of the other players took the loss as hard as Coach. I guess he'd seen too many. To my good friend, Kim Johnson and some others, I was "Bar None Caldwell" for a while.

I'm not going to single out many of my teammates for special treatment but I've got to make an exception for Luke Kimball Johnson, the wide receiver from Rockingham, who somebody nick-named the Rockingham Rocket, though his speed wouldn't have rocketed him beyond the stratosphere, who'd played in the Shrine Bowl, the NC team being coached by his Rockingham head coach. Football was then and probably still is a religion in Richmond Co, where Richmond Co High and its small college rivaling football stadium sits on US 1, going north out of Rockingham. If you get to the former NASCAR race track, you've gone too far. During our first week on campus when we were living in the basement of the gym, I noticed a couple of things about Kim: he was quiet, but friendly; he had multiple scars on both forearms; and he carried his Bible around with him, which made Mr East Meck Bible Award winner think, here's somebody I can relate to. The first night or so, several of us, including Kim walked across campus to the Soda Shop on Main St to get a burger. Kim carried his Bible. I'm wondering if he's going to want to lead us in Bible study. He laid it on the table but didn't touch it until it was time to pay. He opened it and pulled out a 5\$ bill and paid for his fare and put the 1\$ bills in change back in his Bible. Kim didn't have a wallet and figured the Bible was the last place a thief would look for his money. The scars were from a game of chicken played in Rockingham in which a lit cigarette was placed between two players' forearms and the first to pull away was the cackler. I asked about the biggest scar. It was a cigar! Johnson must have been the least chicken in Richmond Co.

About the only other game in our 6 or so game schedule that I remember was when we went down to play the Citadel early in the season in Charleston, which replaced Greeneville as the hottest place I'd ever been. The varsity opened against Mississippi College at home and I witnessed something I'd never and have never seen since. We were receiving a punt and set up a return, in which all of the players except the punt returner, immediately after the ball's snapped to the opposing team's punter, peel off from the line of scrimmage and form a wall near and parallel to the sideline, with each facing in to block the potential tacklers of the return man, who, after receiving the punt is supposed run behind the wall.

The Cats ran it to perfection, forming the wall before the punter got his kick off. Seeing the entire Davidson team except the return man lined up as a wall, looking not at him but toward the middle of the field, the punter, instead of punting takes off behind OUR wall, and nobody except the entire student body sitting in the stands sees him stealthily slipping behind the enemy line. The entire student body, those in the stands and the players on the sidelines and, in addition, I would assume, the coaches roared our warning in unison but it went unheard by the wall. I don't remember if the punter ran all the way for a touchdown or whether our intended punt returner or someone finally caught on and caught him. SHEESH! Talk about an embarrassing play! It, along with their 3-6 record brought Coach Dole's long tenure as head coach to an end at season's end. And it didn't help that football was going head to head with Lefty's basketball team for fandom. Basketball practice started sometime in October and when it was announced at the halftime of a home football game that the round ballers were going to scrimmage in Johnson Gym, which was located at the end of Richardson Field after the football game, half of the stands emptied, seeking court side seats in the Gym. Talk about a football team's morale disappearing; like the air out of a blown-up balloon when a kid turns loose of it!

Of course always wanting to keep you up to date on our comings and goings, as I'm sure you're waiting with bated breath to hear about, I've resumed typing at 7:00 AM on Saturday, March 12, 2022, back at the Litchfield Inn, where we arrived late Thursday afternoon from Spruce Pine, where we spent the night after leaving Louisville Wednesday, coming here so Janet can partially redecorate Room 433 in the Tower at the Litchfield Inn, which we purchased just a few weeks ago, room 433, that is, not the whole Litchfield Inn, which I had only recently discovered is a condotel, each room being a condo in private ownership. I brought my computer down to the lobby/breakfast area about 6:30 and am set up typing on a table just inside the Cabana, a terrific restaurant adjacent to the lobby, with windows out onto the two swimming pools, one to the north and one to the south, both of course empty now but which will be brimming over in just a few months, and out onto an eating veranda to the east, and beyond, the Atlantic. I love this place. I've met several of the owners, one of whom, a haberdasher from Hendersonville, inherited his room from his parents, its original owners, and I haven't met a jerk patron yet. Yesterday at breakfast I remet, though she didn't remember and I only remembered our original meeting here last summer after we departed breakfast, Judy, a retired professor of kinesiology from Longwood College in Farmville, VA where many of Janet's Cox High School in Virginia Beach friends went and where she almost went, in which case I wouldn't be writing this story here and now. Judy, 80, is originally from Columbia and is a long-time Litchfield Inn owner. She's reconnecting with Susan, a friend who's retired from being a victim's advocate in the solicitor's (NC used to call its district attorneys solicitors) office in Greenville, SC.

Janet met Judy the next morning as we were eating breakfast and I asked if she had been athletic in her younger years, and sure enough, she said yes. She's relatively short but has fairly large hands, so I asked if she was a basketball point guard, not thinking that girls' basketball didn't have point guards back in the day, only defenders and forwards, of which she was one. I can often spot an athlete. I asked the same question (actually I think I said "I'll bet you were a good athlete in school") of a short, chunky lady walking beside the pool in her bathing suit at the Y in Louisville a few weeks ago and it turns out that not only did she play basketball and something else, maybe soccer in school, she taught PE until she retired.

And I asked it of Michelle at the Owl's Nest Furniture in Garden City Beach, SC who helped Janet pick out some new furniture for our motel room condo and, again, the answer was that she had played basketball and softball in high school in GA where she grew up on a farm. How to spot an athlete? First, how they walk-I've never seen a slew-footer who was worth a hoot in sports. And they usually have a little spring in their step, almost as if they're walking on the balls of their feet. And sometimes they're hunched over a little, with their arms bent slightly, like they're getting ready to guard or tackle you.

Get ready, a flock(hutch?) of rabbits just jumped up and, you know me, I'll have to chase at least two or three. The above paragraph is all I wrote yesterday. In Spruce Pine we stayed at the Richmond Inn, a terrific B&B owned by a delightful and majorly energetic, at least septuagenarian, Maggie. At the delicious breakfast she fixed, I sat beside a guy who ate in a hurry as he had to rush to catch a plane that would be his first leg to his native Chile. He spoke good but heavily accented English, politely answering my cross examination: why Spruce Pine? (he just took a job with the mining company, Sibelco[sp?]); where was he headed? (flying to Chile to move his family to Belgium, company headquarters); then?(his job will require him to travel to many of the company's 100 sites around the world). Then my attention to...no, no, I'll never catch all those speedy bunnies, so I'll try to get back to My SPORTING Life.

If I remember correctly, shortly after AD Dr. Tom Scott fired Coach Dole, he hired Homer Smith as our new head coach, and, if I remember correctly, he came to school and we met him before Christmas. I don't remember whether he put us on a conditioning and muscle building regime over the winter before spring practice, but I think I hit the weight room pretty regularly. I played intra-fraternity basketball for the Gams and, thinking I was a pretty decent handball player, volunteered to play freshman basketball player, Pinky Hatcher, a KA from GA. I think he skunked me, what 21-0? His shots came off the front wall at supersonic speed, about 6" above the floor. Pinky turned my, working overtime to suck in air, cheeks from pink to red with humiliation. Bill Carr and I had started playing handball at the Y in Charlotte in high school. Pinky could have beat Bill and me playing together against him. While I'm on handball, when I got to law school at Carolina, I took Harry down to the gym to teach him to play. After a few minutes Harry complained that his hand was killing him and took off his glove and his hand was about the color and consistency of raw hamburger. Rather than holding his wrist firm when he hit the ball, he was just letting his hand flap freely and the ball was winning, easily. The color of his hand reminds me of when Harry and some buddies decided to go down to Raeford and learn to sky dive. He said some guy landed on his butt, and he pulled his pants down (why I don't know) and his behind was the color of Harry's hand after his first foray into handball. I wasn't on the frat wrestling team but learned that whoever was supposed to wrestle Kappa Sig pretty boy Ben King couldn't wrestle that night. When I learned that he and I were in the same weight division, I enthusiastically volunteered to take him on. Nobody bothered to tell me that Ben had been a high school wrestling champ in Alabama. He twisted me into a pretzel in less than 2 minutes! So much for intramurals!

One other FIJI story: the pledges played the brothers in flickerball, Davidson's version of touch football. There was something worth winning at stake; I don't remember what. As I said earlier, Rusty Brannon was his high school in Camden's quarterback and he qb'd us in the big game. A touchdown on the last play of the game would have won it for us. Brannon comes up with a razzle-dazzle where he passes to me in the flat and I'm supposed to hit the Rockingham Rocket going deep.. Rusty's throw to me was

perfect, I had plenty of time, the Rocket was wide open, my adrenalin kicked in and I threw it over his head by a mile. I was the super GOAT, and I don't mean as in "Tom Brady is the G.O.A.T.", I mean in the billy sense!

Coach Smith was probably 32 or 33, a cum laude graduate of Princeton where he was fullback in the same backfield as tailback Dick Kazmaier, who won the Heisman in '51. Since I'll be using his name frequently hereafter, I'm going to deviate from my normal rule of using "Coach" before all of my coaches' names and just call him Homer. He was an Army officer and got an MBA from Stanford, I don't know in which order. He co-wrote a book with Jack Curtice (no, not a misspelling), Stanford's coach, about the passing game in college football and was hired away from the Air Force Academy where he had been an assistant for 4 years. By spring practice he had hired Dave Fagg, Davidson '58, (I don't remember if I've discussed Coach Fagg hereinabove, but if so, please forgive any repetitions. Coach was a Phi Gam and won the Tommy Peters Award his senior year as the outstanding student/athlete [football and wrestling] at Davidson) to coach the defensive line; Ken Brown, an All-American at Colorado to coach the offensive line; and Dick Tomey, a baseball catcher at DePauw to coach the defensive backs. Homer coached the money players, the offensive backs and receivers.

Obviously, Homer was very bright, maybe even approaching genius. He took a sabbatical from coaching, I think after being fired from the head coaching job at West Point, which followed his head coaching job at the University of the Pacific (where he coached the Seattle Seahawks coach Pete Carroll) which he took after leaving Davidson in '71, and obtained a theology degree from Harvard (at his funeral which I attended in Tuscaloosa in 2011, the minister at the largest Methodist church in town said that Homer had come to him some time before and said that he wanted to join the church. The minister told him about the new members classes that he should attend, to which Homer replied that he wanted to join right away, thus removing a burden from his wife Kathy's shoulders, and he did.)

Homer relabeled the defensive positions. In his nomenclature, the interior linemen were "Anchors"; the ends, "Containers"; linebackers, "Tacklers"; cornerbacks, "Interceptors". I think the safety was still the "Safety". I don't remember much about spring practice except that it was highly organized, with players moving from one practice area to another at the blast of an air horn. I was an Interceptor hopeful. I'm sure we ran plenty of sprints and he saw that I had good speed. I don't remember a lot about spring practice. Homer gave us workout assignments for the summer and arranged for us to have preseason practice that fall at Camp Carolina, a boys' camp in Brevard which I think was owned by a wealthy Davidson alum. To ensure that we report in shape, he assigned each of us a time we would be expected to run the quarter mile in the day before practice could start under NCAA rules. I was assigned the fastest time on the team, 60.0 seconds, I think it was.

I drove a dump truck for the NCDOT that summer and worked out about like I had during high school summers, mostly 100 yards or less sprints, usually less. I guess I jogged a mile or two each workout. I'm sure I ran some quarters faster than a jog, but I doubt that I ran any in a minute flat. We had to get to Camp Carolina on our own. I rode up with Renn Gruber, who after spring practice was probably a lock at safety. The day we arrived, all the players went over to the track at Brevard College to be timed by the managers. We ran individually. Back then the conventional way to run the 440 was kick-glide-kick. You

started in the middle of the straight-a-way and sprinted to and around the curve, then slowed down and glided down the back stretch to conserve energy, and began sprinting again when you came into the curve, putting the pedal to the metal all the way to the finish. I took off like one of Putin's missiles being fired at Kiyv, Ukraine as I type this, sprinting around the turn, down shifting on the back stretch. So far, so good...I kicked into high gear when I hit the curve and about mid-way around, the monkey jumped on my back, with a vengeance. I'm not sure how many cylinders I was hitting on at the finish, but I immediately bent over and puked in the grass. Can't remember what my time was, but it was north of 60 flat.

If you talk with any players on the 1965 Davidson football team about Camp Carolina that August and you've ever heard or read American troops accounts of the Bataan Death March, it will be difficult for you to distinguish between the two. We stayed in campers screen sided cabins and were roused by the air horn at 5:30 for a two mile run through the wet grass. After breakfast, either the offense or the defense got their ankles taped and got dressed and took to the still wet field. About 30 minutes later the other unit went through the process and after calisthenics, took the field and practiced against the first unit. After an hour of offense against defense, in small groups, such as offensive backs and receivers against us defensive backs and the linemen pounding each other, and 11 against 11, the first unit to take the field would run wind sprints and hit the showers while the later unit would go for another hour, the defense doing a lot of tackling drills, which deserve a paragraph of their own.

In junior and high school I had been taught to hit an oncoming ball carrier with my shoulder, wrap my arms around him and try to drive him into the dirt. Homer wanted us to stick our face mask into his chest and proceed to lock and drive him. Since you were probably crouched somewhat to deliver the blow, this meant that your head had to be bent slightly back in order to zero your eyes in on his sternum so as not to miss your target and so as to make contact with your face rather than spearing with the top of your helmet. It also meant you could break your neck. Consequently, we did neck bridges for what seemed like hours and also took turns on our hands and knees with a teammate pushing down on our helmet and using his knee to allow us to push against it to the right and left. There were straight on tackling drills and open field drills in which the tackler tried to force the ball carrier to commit right or left before hitting him, thus avoiding getting faked out. Drills consisted of two lines, one for the ball carrier and the other for the tackler, and after their performance, each would go to the end of the other line.

The wild card in this game was Tommy Dews, feared by all. Tom is a quiet red headed, or he was then, guy from Georgia, a Presbyterian preacher's son and the fiercest football player I've ever played with or against. He's probably 5'10-11" and then no more than 175 lbs, not real muscular, but he delivered a crushing blow as a tackler. Tom didn't lead with his face mask, he led with his chin, which was raw, then scabbed then raw again the whole season. Half of his chin was a little lower than the other half; I don't know which half he led with. And you could hear him coming: "Choo, choo, choo"(actually, that's not exactly the sound, it was more like "chuo" but I thought I'd stick with the "choo choo" name/sound introduced hereinbefore) with every step, before his chin, like a heat seeking missile, buried itself, followed by his face mask and helmet in your solar plexus and the rest of his 175 lbs rocked you like you'd been run over by a bull. The game the rest of us played, as surreptitiously as possible so as not to

be noticed, was trying to avoid getting paired up with Tommy when he was the tackler. Tommy was a year ahead of me, a junior and me a sophomore in '65, and though quiet, even the seniors respected his leadership by example. I'll try to remember to come back to Tom at the end of his senior year.

After lunch and a nap, we would repeat the morning practice schedule, sometimes flipping which unit went out first. There was a beautiful (after all, this was a fairly exclusive boys' camp) lake to cool off in after practice. We always ate well, maybe not exquisitely but plentifully as Homer didn't want us scrawny guys losing weight. After supper Homer would give a talk of some kind, sometimes designed to be inspirational. One night an older gentleman, who I think was named McConnell, who may have owned the camp, a Davidson and football alum, former CEO of Reynolds Aluminum or some such (all of these designations should have been preceded by "I think", or "if I remember correctly") gave a talk on "holding on", regardless of how dire the situation (even behind 40-0?), just keep holding on and (at least theoretically [my word, not his] something good will (may [my word, not his] possibly [my word, not his], or conceivably could [my words, not his]) happen. After inspiration, we would usually divide up for nuts and bolts chalk talk. Before bed, filling bedtime snacks, usually bologna and cheese sandwiches and milk were available, which we were encouraged to eat.

The first time we went on the morning run, as the sun was just coming up good, with mist rising from the lake and even the grass, Jerry Blackstock, a senior offensive guard from GA and one of, if not the team morale leader let out with "whethufucawe", which he later claimed was the name of an Indian tribe which was always lost. I used that term years later with some members of the First Baptist, Monroe choir, taking a hike while on a retreat at Camp Carraway near Asheboro. I had to say it several times, slower each time until they finally caught on, hysterically, including pastor Scott Walker who was along. On the only Sunday we were at Camp Carolina, we went en masse to the 11:00 AM service at the First Presbyterian Church in Brevard. I wonder what provision, if any, Homer would have made for a Catholic, Jewish or Muslim player. We didn't practice that day but after lunch had a track meet, with every player running in every event. Fun, fun, fun!

Jim Phipps, a junior frat bro about my size, tougher, but not as fast had one interceptor position pretty well sewn up and I was vying, primarily with senior, Dave Sprinkle for the other. We must have worked on the punting game in spring practice and I had cemented my job as punter, having had no real competition. For the team's sake, it was a good thing I could boot it. At Camp, we were practicing covering punts and I was turning over long high spirals on every snap, and after one, Homer suddenly stopped practice and with the whole team listening, he said something like the following: "Men, I hope you realize that we have one of the top punters in college football." If he said more, I didn't hear it! SHAZAM! GEE WHIZ! HOLY MOSES! I probably shanked the next one.

I guess we were at camp 10 days to 2 weeks, ending with a light workout in T-shirts and helmets on Saturday before driving the 2.5 hours back to Davidson for a scrimmage with Newberry College that afternoon. Coach Tomey had the receivers and defensive backs and decided to, I'm not sure what; see what kind of shape we were in, see how tough we were or show us how tough he was. We ended the skeleton passing drills with 20-30 yard wind sprints. I don't want to exaggerate and may even contact defensive backs Gruber, Sprinkle or Dick Lindsay (I can't Jim Phipps; he died a year or so ago), or William

Rikard or some of the other receivers (I can't Kim Johnson; he died a number of years ago) to see what they remember, but at least 30+ wind sprints. The last few we were barely moving. Most of us dropped to the ground when they ended and started crawling back toward the dressing room. I don't remember anything about the drive to campus or the scrimmage.

We were to open against Presbyterian College at home the following Saturday, after our classmates returned to campus that Monday. Dave and I were still competing for the open interceptor spot. The first of that week, Homer put me and him in a circle to fight it out by throwing shoulders, forearms, blocks, tackles, I guess even fists to determine the starter. I remember it being basically a draw, made unnecessary when Phipps tore up his knee later that day in practice, ending not only his season but his career. I guess he had surgery. He dropped out of school and became a pilot in the Marine Corps. I didn't see Jim again until October, 2015 when we gathered in Charleston to celebrate the 50th anniversary of our victory over the Citadel, and though he didn't play in that game because of his injury, he was there for the reunion. I don't know what took his life. His brother, Bill is my age and played for Duke. It seems like they were from the Raleigh area.

When we returned to campus, we were surprised to see that the stadium had undergone a facelift. A new enclosed, heated and air conditioned press box had been built. The seating area had all been sandblasted and painted; new metal bench seating had been installed and red folding individual wooden bottomed seats had been installed under the elevated press box in the reserved section, out of the elements. And we had brand new uniforms, black home jerseys with white numerals outlined in red that you could button under your crotch to keep them from pulling out (I still have my #28 given to me after my senior year), light silver-gray pants and helmets, and best of all, low-cut Riddell speed shoes.

After practice we ate at a training table in the basement of the student union, just across from the stadium. Homer always addressed us after supper, usually housekeeping stuff followed by motivational stuff, and maybe some chalkboard x's and o's. He oversaw every aspect of everything, asking us once if the condiments were satisfactory, the first time I and I'm sure many others had ever heard that term. (Some may have thought he was talking about a common method of birth control as Dale Whitman, my real property professor my first year in law school kidded us about when he first mentioned condominiums.) As I mentioned above, we were to open at home on September 18 against the Blue Hose of Presbyterian. Sometime during the week, in his after dinner speech Homer said that Presbyterian, in Clinton, SC was, of course, a Presbyterian men's college like Davidson but that it wasn't nearly as prestigious, that their players were Davidson wannabees and as such would want to stick it to us rich/smart guys. He made it sound like we'd better get ready for class warfare. We thought it was just a football game. The Cats and Blue Hose had been like cat and mouse over the years, the cat winning some and the mouse some. In '64, the mouse, PC, won 13-0. In '65, we Cats won, 35-0.

The press brochure, printed before Jim Phipps injured knee elevated me to starting Interceptor on the right side (Dave Sprinkle was on the left), with each players' previous year's annual's photo and a snippet about each, said of me: "HB, 19, 6-2, 180, sophomore. Named outstanding freshman athlete at Davidson by lettermen's club. Progressed steadily in spring practice, climaxing with an outstanding

performance in the spring game. A leading candidate for a defensive halfback post. Fastest back on the squad and best punter. Charlotte, NC. Political science major.”

I failed to mention that on awards day held during one of our required 3/week 10:45-11:00 AM chapel periods in the spring, I was given, as stated above, the outstanding freshman athlete award. I didn’t even know there was one. My scoring the highest on the physical fitness test at the beginning of the year plus football probably clinched it for me. If I’d have been voting, I’d have cast my ballot for Scott Sinnock, a recruited basketball player who also pole vaulted. If I recall, he played bball his freshman and sophomore years but left Davidson. I’m typing this at 3:30 PM on the balcony of our one room condo at the Litchfield Inn and, curious about Scott, called my good friend and classmate Cecil Clifton, who played on the bball team his freshman and sophomore years, catching him dog-sitting for his son’s family in Charlotte and watching, I forgot who he said, maybe Minnesota playing on TV. He’s headed to Greenville, SC tomorrow morning to see the Cats play Michigan State in the first round of March Madness tomorrow night. Cecil agreed that Scott was a good athlete, the best athlete of the basketballers in our class. Scott quit the team early in his sophomore season but came back his junior year, quitting during the season again and leaving school, never to return. Cecil never saw him after he left and doesn’t know what happened to him. I didn’t know Scott except to say hi. I sure hope he didn’t let that athleticism go to waste and is still playing pick-up ball with his grandsons, or at least HORSE. I also hope he’s given up pole vaulting.

Since I was a speedy punter, Homer put in the fake punt, which consisted of me taking a step forward like I was going to kick and then taking off around the end to the wide side of the field. I don’t remember punting in the PC game; we probably didn’t have to as we must have moved the ball pretty well, scoring 5 touchdowns, but we must have gotten into at least one punting situation because I went in and ran the fake punt. Teams usually only run razzle-dazzle plays when the game’s close, but I guess Homer wanted to see what I could do. I took off around right end and ran, I think it was 45 yards before a guy who had an angle on me brought me down. I went down way too easy; should have scored. It was the longest run from scrimmage. Dad was at the game and I rode with him into Charlotte to attend (I may have been but don’t remember if I was an usher in) my cousin, Jackie Caldwell’s wedding to Eddie Ford. Mom wasn’t at the game because she was setting up Jackie’s wedding reception, having made her wedding cake, and probably much of what was served along with it. YUM, I can taste her cheese straws and mints now! Eddie and Jackie’s son, Steve, now 50+ , was an outstanding athlete at East Meck, very fast and I think tried out as a walk-on to the football team at NC State.

The next Saturday we went down to Furman where we beat the Paladins 24-0. I intercepted their quarterback Sam Wyche, who played briefly in the NFL and was the head coach of the Cincinnati Bengals for several years, twice, returning one for over 30 yards. I’m looking at a photo from my scrapbook torn from the Charlotte Observer, 6x8”, a close-up of me making the long interception return, with the caption: **“Wildcat on the Loose”**, and under that, “Davidson’s Thomas Caldwell Breaks Loose for Yardage in 24-0 Win Over Furman.” I also ran a fake punt, again our longest run from scrimmage. In the article accompanying the photo, above the “Davidson’s No. 1 Asset: Enthusiasm” title, **“INTERCEPTIONS HELP, TOO”**, Homer said “Tommy Caldwell also did a tremendous job, punting beautifully and intercepting two passes. It was only his second game, too.” I remember both interceptions like they were yesterday. The

first, the one I made the long return with, their receiver did an out and up, wherein he sprinted straight at me for 6-8 yards, me back pedaling as fast as I could, then he made a 90 degree cut toward the sideline, forcing me to follow him, and then, when he was 5-6 yards from the sideline, cut 90 degrees, straight up field, intending to get behind me for a bomb. I stayed right with him and when the pass came, I stepped in front of him and picked it off; then, off to the races. The second one was toward the end of the game and Sam threw a Hail Mary in desperation. We were dropping back in a prevent defense and I had to leap as high as I could to pick it off. I think the intended receiver pulled me down almost immediately.

Two games: Davidson 59, Opponents 0! Next, the Citadel in a night game in Charleston. We flew Eastern Airlines from Charlotte, the 2nd time I had flown, the 1st coming home from St. Petersburg, Fla after spending spring break with my mother's youngest sister Jeanette and my cousins, Mike, my age, and Pat, 6 years younger (is that right, Patrick?), having driven down with East (how's that for coincidence, Dormitory mate Frank Hall in his Corvette. I don't remember this from the first time I flew, but on our flight to Charleston, when the plane taxied down to the end of the runway to take-off, the pilot revved up the engines as they always do. From my seat, I could see the wings flapping as they always do, that scaring me worse than lining up against Dews in a tackling drill. The Cats usually lost to the Keydets, 28-0 in '64, but not this time; we stole their Key, 14-0. Undefeated and unscored on in our first three games! I guess someone looked in the archives to see if this was a first, which it probably was, but if so, I don't remember reading or hearing about it.

I don't know whether the victory gained us a couple of hours of celebration of sorts when Coach Smith let us go out on the town until midnight or maybe later, or whether he would have let us go out even if we'd lost. 6-8 of us took cabs down to a bar where we sat around a round table. The orders: "rum and coke"; "bourbon and coke"; "something and sprite"; "scotch on the rocks" (tough guy). "Coke. With what? Just Coke. Listen, sonny, this ain't no GD five and dime!" For a while thereafter, among the imbibers, I was "Five & Dime Caldwell."

As customary, after supper on Monday we watched the game film. When it got to a play where the ball carrier went out of bounds just before I was ready to hit him and knock him out of bounds, Coach Smith stopped the film, ran it back, then as the play rolled again, said in front of everybody, "Caldwell, you're flinching!" If any words followed, I didn't hear them. Of course, I didn't respond. The play was close. I probably could have given him a lick a fraction or so before he crossed the sideline, but he was clearly going out of bounds. I probably didn't consider that if I hit him that it could have been flagged as a late hit, but it could have been. It was all instantaneous. My instinct was never to punish a runner, just to stop his forward progress. But talk about being humiliated!

We had a drill in which one defender at a time took turns hitting players lined up in two lines in front of and coming at him, one at a time, with a forearm shiver, first with the right arm and then the left, they coming at you as fast as you could shed your previous visitor. I don't remember when this was, maybe after the Citadel game. Coach Fagg was running the drill and when it was over, Homer came over and

asked who was the best hitter that day. "Tommy Caldwell", Fagg replied. Homer didn't say a word of congrats or anything else, just turned and walked away. One forearm shiver drill in practice apparently didn't erase a flinch in combat.

Next up, William and Mary (I've always loved former Oklahoma basketball coach Billy Tubbs comment about Dean Smith scheduling walk-over non-conference opponents like "Bill&Mary") at home. The largest crowd I'd seen for a football game on Richardson Field in my 1.1 years at Davidson, probably the largest ever, showed up to see if we were for real. Both stands were packed. Bleachers were set up behind both end zones, and fans were standing in between. I didn't remember until reading an article from the Charlotte Observer that we had an open date between Citadel and W&M (does sound better than B&M). From the article: "Since this is the only intra-conference game on tap tomorrow Davidson can tie West Virginia for the Southern Conference lead with a victory. That would be a plateau the Wildcats haven't reached in too many years to count....William & Mary's chief threat will probably come through the air. There is a receiver running loose on the reservation named George Pearce who has already caught 30 passes, including 12 last week against Navy. In Southern Conference statistics he is 16 ahead of his closest pursuer. The man throwing for the invaders is Dan Darragh, one of the last of the triple threat men. At quarterback he passes (2nd in conference) and runs (sixth in total offense). He is also the conference's leading punter with a 41.2 mark. Davidson men among the statistical leaders include: Steve Smith, eight in rushing; Jim Poole, sixth in passing; Pete Glidewell, eighth in receiving; and Tommy Caldwell, fourth in punting."

W&M was coached by Marv Levy, still living at 96 (I just googled him), having coached Buffalo from '86-'97, leading the Bills to 4 consecutive Super Bowls, the loser in each. I just googled Darragh, who played for the Bills '68-'70 and George Pearce, who played in '66 for the Norfolk Neptunes of the COFL (the Continental Football League I just learned from Wikipedia). The Tribe scalped us, 41-7. I had never covered anyone with the speed and moves of Pearce or who was being thrown to with the rifle accuracy of Darragh. He caught 3 touchdown passes with me covering him, at least theoretically. He faked me out of my jock a couple of times.

Larry Harris in the Charlotte News: "Marv Levy, the William and Mary coach, tried not to look astonished at his easy victory, but he had to admit things came much easier than he expected. 'If we played Davidson again I don't think it would be possible to beat them by this much. We didn't expect a score like that at all. It seems like we just got the momentum and things started snowballing'....There was little Davidson could take credit for in Saturday's game. William and Mary was the whole show. But two players had to draw the raves of everyone who saw the massacre. They were Davidson's terrific defensive end, Pack Hindsley, and sophomore punter, Tommy Caldwell....Caldwell...is a slim sophomore who has what appears to be at first glance an awkward kicking style. He seems to hold the ball much higher than necessary and sometimes seems slow getting it off. Yet without him the score could have been twice as bad. Five times he punted in the first half and each time the ball averaged spiraling 50 yards from the line of scrimmage. 'If we had known about it, we would have tried to use him as an offensive weapon to put them back in a whole.'" Say what, Homer? And Larry Harris, what makes you an expert in punting. The higher you hold the ball, the higher it sails, and I've never come close to having a punt blocked. Awkward! Sheesh!

We didn't have long to lick our wounds because VMI was coming to town the next Saturday to be our Homecoming opponent. Earlier I called Citadelites the Keydets, but I guess they were the Cadets; VMIs were the Keydets. Bob Moore's Sunday article in the Charlotte Observer was titled "VMI Throttles Davidson Comeback Attempt 16-10", featuring a photo of frat bro linebacker Julian Fite from Muskogee, OK (Julian died some time ago after practicing law in Oklahoma for many years. Someone sent me his obituary and an article honoring him for his work for Native Americans. Julian and frat bro and qb Jimmy Poole roomed across the hall from me and place kicker Jim Terry [Jim died several years ago from ALS after retiring as CFO of the Boy Scouts of America. I was in his wedding to Ann just after his graduation in '66], Jim's senior and my sophomore year and my junior year, with also a junior frat bro, Dan Sweet [no frat bro has heard from or knows anything about Sweet since we graduated], on 2nd floor Duke, the dorm closest to Johnson Gym and Richardson Field, where Julian and I had many a friendly but heated debate [he once called me an "idealistic fool" {actually, pretty fitting, I suppose}]) tackling a Keydet ball carrier and causing a fumble, also showing Tommy Dews throwing off a blocker to recover it. (I will readily admit that the foregoing sentence is a grammatical nightmare but I'm too sleepy to rescue it. Dock me a point, or two, or three.) The article includes: "After a 71-yard punt by Tom Caldwell, a Davidson record, had put VMI in the hole on their own 10-yard line"...we scored our only touchdown.

When we kicked off, I lined up on one end (I don't remember who was on the other end) and my job was to sprint directly at the guy returning the kick-off. On a kick-off against VMI, I was the first to arrive and tackled the ball carrier with a pretty good lick. When we got to that play while watching the game film on Monday, Homer stopped it and ran the play back several times saying something like: "Two weeks ago I stopped the film to show Caldwell flinching. I'm stopping it now to show him making the biggest hit in the game!" Redemption sure is sweet!

I forgot to mention that we spent the night in a motel in Charlotte on Friday night before the game to keep us from slipping out to a fraternity party or otherwise getting distracted before battle the next day. We watched the movie "Shane". I can still hear Blackstock, as Brandon De Wilde's, Joey, yelling to Alan Ladd's Shane, as he rides off into the sunset: "Shane, come back. Come back, Shane." We had cheeseburgers and chocolate milkshakes before hitting the sack and riding the bus back to Davidson for the pregame meal, a class or two, ankle taping and maybe another class before the 2:00 kick-off. I wondered whether any other college football players in America had Saturday morning classes on game day!

Next stop, the nation's capital to play George Washington. A short article in the Observer had Jim Terry's photo, saying he had hit 26 consecutive PATs (extra points), a new Southern Conference record as well as his only 2 field goal attempts. The last paragraph: "If the Wildcats hope to spring a secret weapon, it would most likely be in the person of Tom Caldwell. The tough little punter is second in the conference with an average of 42.0 per kick." Little? I was one of the tallest players on the team. Skinny, yes! Tough, not too! Little, NO!!! In the Washington Post by George Minot, "Washington Post Staff Writer", underlined in bold, "**Has 42.4-Yard Average**" above the title, also in bold, "**Unorthodox Style Works Well for Davidson Punter**": "Davidson's Tom Caldwell is not what you'd call a picture punter. He drops the ball from chest height, which is too high if you're going by the book. 'I seem to get better height on my kicks with the longer drop,' explained Caldwell, who'll be dropping them from way up Saturday

against George Washington University in D.C. Stadium. I just keep my eye on the ball, try not to worry about rushing linemen and kick it naturally,' he continued. Caldwell's method resulted in successive punts of 71 yards (a Davidson record) and 70 yards against Virginia Military Institute last week. Davidson Coach Homer Smith credited Caldwell's punting with setting up both Wildcat scores in the loss to VMI. Caldwell's 49-yard average for 8 punts vaulted him into second place among Southern Conference booters with a 42.3 seasonal mark. Caldwell's talents don't stop at punting. As a defensive halfback, the sophomore has intercepted two passes. As an offensive halfback, he is averaging 11 yards on three carries and his 28-yard run is the longest by a Wildcat this season." George obviously didn't know much about my performance in the first 5 games. My 11 yard rushing average wasn't as an "offensive halfback", it was as a punter running fake punts!

We were looking forward to playing on the Redskins' field but were surprised to see the shape it was in. It was chewed up pretty badly, looking more like a cow pasture than the home of the nation's capital's team. Dean Rusk, a Davidson alum and Rhodes Scholar was LBJ's secretary of state and we were told he would be in attendance and might have time to come down to the locker room after the game to meet us. If he was among the few thousand scattered around the stands, I didn't see him and he didn't come in the locker room. He was a no-show. I like to think it was because an international crisis had arisen during the game and needed his attention rather than the Colonials putting it to us southern interlopers, 23-7. Dick Slay's Sunday, Oct 31 "Special to the Observer" from Washington, DC describing our loss is accompanied by 2 6x8" photos, one of their star receiver, Mike Holloran, crossing our goal line with a pass as I'm coming up from covering a receiver who'd driven me to the back of the end zone, too late to stop him. The article concludes, "At the finish, a tired and satisfied football player named Mike Holloran, bidding adieu to his fans, was handed the game ball. It was more than appropriate." The other photo shows a GW receiver catching a pass near the sidelines in front of Dave Sprinkle, showing my back as I pursued from my side of the field.

At some point, Homer sent me in to run the fake punt to the right. They'd seen our films and as we broke the huddle and I dropped back into punt formation, they were yelling "watch for the fake punt" and moved some defenders to my right, making ready to slay the faker. I called time-out, after which, I punted!

In looking through my scrap books, I noticed that I overlooked some earlier articles. I'm sure that a good writer, one out to please his audience, to attract new readers, to sell more books, would handle this discovery much differently than I'm getting ready to. He would no doubt go back and rewrite earlier writing, incorporating the newly discovered material seamlessly into the previous parts of the story, but for those who know the George Patton me, who hates paying for the same real estate twice, or former gardener Tom (me), who would rather plant a new patch of corn than trying to sew seeds between the few that sprouted, you can probably guess what I'm fixing to do; yep, insert it right here, without dropping a stitch (did you notice my use of a cliché related to the earlier useage of "sew"?). Bob Reid, "Davidsonian Sports Writer", beginning his "'Cats To Seek Comeback Over Underrated Keydets" with "Tomorrow afternoon Coach Homer Smith sends his 'Cats against one of the toughest teams in the conference, the Keydets of VMI." He ends the story "Leading the Cat defense will be senior captain Pack Hindsley. Backing up Hindsley will be sophomores George Solley and Tommy Caldwell."

And by Mike Mooty (at our 50th class reunion, Mike, a retired minister and his high school classmate and good friend from Nashville and my teammate, defensive tackle, Tupper Morehead [Morehead is the only Tupper I know and Hindsley is the only Pack] took turns reading the names of our departed classmates in a chapel service), “Davidsonian Sports Writer”, an article entitled in bold **“Caldwell Shines in Defeat”**, above which in bold but smaller print, was **“46 YARDS PER PUNT”**, with my photo, under which “TOMMY CALDWELL”, under which, “Sophomore Punter”. I’ll only quote what hasn’t been said before. Since it has been said before, I won’t quote it but Mike also mentioned that my style had been described as awkward since I dropped the ball from chest high. (Actually, I never “dropped” the ball-I kicked it out of my hands, and I never released it from “chest high”-I think my foot hit the ball about waist high, maybe a little higher if I wanted to kick it high.) “He went on to say that Coaches Homer Smith and Ken Blair, both of whom punted for their college teams, have been working with him to get more height on his kicks.” He mentioned that I’d been punting since the 8th grade, that as a “former East Mecklenburg ace”, I played offense and defense in high school and that as a sophomore, I started on defense as the “interceptor” on the right side, where I had picked off two passes. “...Caldwell intends to major in history.” (Wish I had, but took what I perceived to be an easier route, psychology.) “Although not absolutely certain about his plans for the future, he indicated that he probably would attend seminary after leaving Davidson.” And I may have if I hadn’t discovered alcohol and the joys of close female companionship that spring!

I don’t have any articles about our next game in which we beat Lehigh 37-23 at home on Nov 6. There is an article dated Nov 3 “By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS” about Southern Conference statistics with a small photo of just my head, helmet off, wearing blackener under my eyes, with as determined a look as I’ve ever seen on my face, with the caption “Tommy Caldwell, Southern’s Punting Runner-Up”, and “Dan Darragh of William and Mary, one of four conference punters with an average of better than 40 yards, still leads that department with an average of 42.5. Runner-up at 42.1 is Tom Caldwell of Davidson.”

The next week we flew up to play Lafayette in Easton, PA. We flew a Piedmont charter and were looking forward to being served by beautiful stewardesses but were extremely disappointed when all the flight attendants turned out to be stewards. I’m not sure where we landed but we spent the night in Phillipsburg, NJ, like Washington, crossing the Delaware, but unlike George, in a bus, to go to Easton for the game. I don’t know if they’d had an early snow which was scraped off to the side of the road or if it was slag or some coal product, but it was mostly black and ugly, and I remember that part of PA as being one of the ugliest places I’d ever been. It had rained and the field was sloppy, and I think it rained lightly off and on during the game. We won 14-10. A short article ends; “Punter Tom Caldwell continued his valuable work with a 39.9 average for 7 boots.” I played a good defensive game, breaking up several passes, one in which I came over the receivers back to deflect the ball. I also came all the way across the field to tackle a runner who was about to break into the clear.

My 1st cousin, Douglas Caldwell, one of Uncle Frank and Aunt Margaret’s twin sons, Mary Lynn’s younger brother, was going to either college or seminary at Moravian College in nearby Bethlehem and attended the game, holding umbrellas in the rain with, I’m not sure whether it was Barbara, maybe then, but if not then, then not much later, his wife. I doubt that I would have come to see him play, or preach, in the rain. Douglas became an ordained minister and the much beloved president of Moravian College,

dropping dead from a heart attack before he was 70, just after getting off his bike. Uncle Frank dropped dead from a heart attack when he was in his mid-50s, sitting on the couch in his and Margaret's living room on East Blvd in Charlotte, reading something in the paper to my Dad, sitting nearby, waiting for Aunt Margaret to finish preparing supper, after which he and Dad, as co-administrators of their mother and my grandmother, Ellie Shannon Caldwell's estate, were going to sign the final estate distribution checks to themselves and their 10 siblings. I was 14-15 and was a pall bear at his funeral, after which he was buried in Sharon Memorial Park, just up Sharon Amity Rd from where we lived and which I wrote about hereinabove. Dad died in '89 at 81 and Mom in '06 at 96. Both are buried in Sharon Memorial. Sorry about not warning you of this slight detour from the story of my sporting life in advance, but it's not far off track. As I said earlier, DNA gave me my two main athletic qualities of height and foot speed; it also gave me my heart condition which so far as led to a heart attack in 2002, later stents, double bypass heart surgery in 2010 and probably fried chicken induced heart attack like indigestion 2-3 years ago. I'm hoping and should be eating and exercising so as to emulate Mom's longevity.

On the flight home, Homer came back to where I was sitting, took a nearby seat and told me that I had made some NFL quality plays on defense. For a while, I had a new nickname from the guys who heard Homer: "NFL Caldwell"!

Earlier I talked about my friend, Kim Johnson, the wide receiver from Rockingham. Kim wasn't playing much and his football future didn't look too bright. Before either the GW or the Lafayette game, he didn't make the traveling squad. I went to Homer's office and told him that Johnson was on the fence, likely to quit football which would probably result in his leaving school. Through moist eyes I pleaded with Homer to let Kim travel with the team, but he didn't relent. I don't remember if Kim went to spring practice, but he attended class less and less and was a sure bet not to return to school in the fall.

Up until about April '66, the only alcohol that had ever passed my lips was a sip of champagne at an after party following the prom my senior year at East. Dad and Mom were teetotalers and it was drilled into us Southern Baptists, particularly us youth, that we would never become an alcoholic if we didn't take the first drink, and I didn't want to become a drunk, so through my freshman and until April of my sophomore year, attending fraternity parties where demon rum was the social lubricant for probably every Phi Gam but me, I was a teetotaler. (I've told my recently turned 20 year-old grandson, Sam about my non-alcohol adolescence so much that he can tell it himself, verbatim.) Johnson was always after me to let my hair down and take a drink. As I said, he was cutting most all his classes, so I made a deal with him that if he would go to every one of his classes for a week, then I'd have a drink with him on the weekend. I was sure to come out on top in the deal. Friday at lunch at the fraternity house, Johnson comes up to me and asks if I want to go out that night or Saturday for my introductory swig, saying that he'd been to every class that week. I told him I didn't believe him and asked what his classes were and who taught them. After lunch, I went to his professors' offices, each verifying his attendance all week. Saturday night, some frat bro drove Johnson and me and a couple others around, them pouring liberal amounts of Wild Turkey in my cup of Coke. They dropped me off at the Phi Gam house about midnight and I staggered up the hill to Duke dorm. I may, to use my sons' phrase, be putting a little meat in the story, but I think Cop Linker picked me up in his old pickup and dropped me off at Duke's door. I definitely do remember climbing in bed (roommate Jim Terry, as he was most every weekend, was off

practicing pre-nuptials), the room spinning, and me on my knees with my head in the toilet; worst I've ever been inebriated in my life. Sure enough, the Rocket dropped out of school in a few more months and joined the Marines. He came by the frat house a time or two to recount his Gyrine experiences. It was the last time I ever saw him. Years later, someone saw a newspaper article about Luke Kimball Johnson, one of my best friends and certainly one of my most unforgettable characters; he was a hermit living in a shack somewhere on the coast, where he died over 30 years ago. RIP, Kimball!

We beat the Wofford Terriers at home, 13-6. Two things I remember about that game: 1) a quick jump pass to an end cutting across the middle, and 2) a power sweep led by half the team. Tiny Tim could have picked up yardage behind that bevy of blockers.

Our last game was against Bucknell in Charlotte's Memorial Stadium, it seems like on Thanksgiving night. Their star was Tom Mitchell, a senior tight end who (I just googled him) caught 239 passes for 3,181 yards between '66 and '77 for the Raiders, Colts and 49ers. He was a hoss. I intercepted 2 passes, but the Bisons stampeded us 22-14. From Charlotte News Sports Writer, Fred Seely's article: "Mitchell and his pass catching buddies put on an incredible show for the 7,000 fans who braved a rain threat. The All-American grabbed nine...". After telling of our losing our 14-7 halftime lead, "Only a late interception by Tommy Caldwell, who carried 34 yards to the Bison 31, gave a ray of hope, but the drive fizzled...". Larry Tarleton, in the Friday, Nov26 Observer: "Instead of winning seven games for the first time since 1926, the Wildcats went down to their fourth defeat. But, with a 6-4 record in Homer Smith's first year as coach, Davidson still has its best record since 1954." 2nd cousin (is that right, Caldwell family historians, 1st cousins, Mary Lynn Caldwell Morrill and Benjamin [no kidding] Franklin?) Shannon ("Shank") Forbis and maybe his wife Lamarr, but I'm sure oldest son Jimmy (three or four years younger than me, who played football at Duke) and probably his three younger brothers, Tommy, Ronnie and Kelly, were at the game and came down on the field to see me afterwards. I should have my fanny kicked for not going over to Durham to see Jimmy play for the Blue Devils when I was in law school at UNC, only 10-15 miles away. Tommy was as or taller than Jimmy, skinnier, but wiry strong and was a good football player at East. Several colleges were after Tom to play football and Shank drove him to visit (I don't remember which) one, but stubborn Tommy, who had told Shank that he wasn't going to college and didn't want to visit any, including his one, refused to get out of the car. Shank, LaMarr and Tommy are all gone now; may the Forbises RIP.

Coach Tomey told interceptor, Dave Sprinkle, safety, Renn Gruber and me before the season that if we intercepted a certain number of passes (I don't remember the number) that he would take us out for a steak dinner. My two against Bucknell put us over the top, and he treated us to one of the best steaks I'd ever eaten at one of Charlotte's best steakhouses, on or near West Morehead, the name of which I don't remember and which I don't think still exists. Maybe brother, Bill or cousin, Mary Lynn or her historical properties preservationist husband, Dr Dan Morrill will remember it. YUM, my mouth's watering just writing about it!

I don't remember much about spring practice in '66. In my scrap book is a photo in the Davidsonian, under which reads, **"JUST BEFORE THE KILL"**, and below that: "Defensive back Tommy Caldwell stalks teammate Bill Rikard during an intrasquad scrimmage. The gridmen climaxed spring drills with a

controlled scrimmage on Richardson Field..." The photo shows my torso, with a clear picture of my face, just before I unload on William, who has never gone by "Bill." Homer told me privately that I "owned" Rikard in spring practice. There is also a Davidsonian photo with Mom's pencil written "April '66" at the top, showing 4 sprinters just coming out of the starting blocks, under which, in bold caps: **"10.25 SECONDS BEFORE THE FINISH"**, and under which reads: "'Cats Evins (Third From Left) And Caldwell (L.) Take Second and Third". I guess I ran in a track meet or two after spring practice ended.

There's another article in my scrapbook (actually all of the articles referred to herein are in my scrapbook), cut out from the Thursday, Sept 8, 1966 Charlotte Observer by Emil Parker, Observer Sports Writer:

"BREVARD—Davidson football coach Homer Smith pulled on a brown sweater to ward off the night chill. Someone mentioned punter-defensive back Tommy Caldwell, and Smith completely forgot the chilly air.

'Tommy Caldwell is a fine college punter and a tremendously improved defensive player' Smith said. 'His defensive position will be one of the strongest for us, and we couldn't ask for better punting.' Caldwell, a 6-1 (me: 6-2), 179 (me: not 178 or 180?) pound junior, was one of the Wildcats' leading defensive backs last season, with four interceptions, tying him with Renn Gruber for team high in that department.

The former East Mecklenburg star was kicker on 67 of 68 (me: Jake, did you kick one when I wasn't looking?) Davidson punts. He averaged 39.8 yards per kick.

'We're not so worried that he get an exceptionally long kick,' Smith added. 'We want a high one so our tacklers can get down the field. We don't even coach Tom on his punting. We just tell him to keep getting them higher and get them away faster.'

Caldwell, mostly because of his punting has attracted the attention of professional football scouts. 'They are also interested in his defensive play,' noted Smith.

'He can go in reverse much better this year and understands his position better. Just the kind of things you expect from the veteran he is.'

Caldwell had never considered himself a good punter until he came to Davidson. 'I punted some in high school, but I was less than outstanding,' Caldwell said with a grin. 'It was probably because we didn't work much on it.'

Caldwell now spends about 20 minutes a day punting, working on height first, distance second. 'Last year I got a lot of line drive kicks,' he said. 'A 75 yard kick that doesn't get 10 feet off the ground isn't helping us at all.'

'And it's really simple to get the ball higher. All you've got to do is hold it higher before the kick.'

The slender psychology major is particularly proud of his improvement as a defensive back. 'Being able to concentrate on one position all the time has helped me,' he added.

'That's all I do outside of punting now. When I was in high school I played all the time on defense and about 25 per cent on offense. I guess I'm the third string tailback here, but that's just in case of a real emergency.

I don't really know the plays well. You can do your job better if you only have one job to really worry about.'"

The article is entitled, in bold, **"Caldwell Kicking For Height"** and is accompanied by 2 photos, one a small picture of my unhelmeted head, underneath, "Tommy Caldwell...Had 4 Steals." The other, 3-3.5x8" is me in full uniform except helmet, right foot above me head as though, but I'm sure it was a fake since

my face is looking at the camera, I just punted, and underneath : “Tommy Caldwell Returns to ‘Cats (me: Emil, where’s your grammar. Since ‘Cats is possessive, there should have been an apostrophe after it. I’m sure you, a reader of my writing, can tell how grammar and punctuation conscious I am-Ha!) Secondary”, under which, “Defensive Back Also Will Do the Punting”.

As Homer said in Emil’s (I think Emil joined the college’s sports information dept, eventually as director, at some point. He may have been working for the college when he wrote the above) article, I had received letters from some NFL teams; I remember the Giants and the Falcons, maybe a few others.

So, Homer and I and maybe the NFL were expecting good things from me in our ’66 season. I don’t remember anything about Camp Carolina that year except that we had lost a lot of seniors to graduation, and some fraternity brothers in my class, i.e., Kim Johnson, who joined the Marines and Ken Kendall, who joined the Air Force, and senior, Julian Fite, who had been elected the Grand Poohba of the Phi Ganimals and wanted to concentrate on his Poohbanship, dropping our numbers to around 30 and resulting in our nickname, the “Dirty Thirty.” One addition was Mike Sizemore, a moose at about 6-4, 240, a weight lifter with sculpted arms and legs, who was three years ahead of me at East Meck (he graduated the year before I entered, so I didn’t know him except by name), played two years at Lees-McCrae and transferred to Davidson as a junior, and into the Phi Gams as the frat strongman (I would like to have seen an arm, and probably more exciting, a leg wrestling contest between him and William “Randy” [but Otis to us Gams] Randolph) and stand-up comic. I’m not sure whether Big Mike played defensive end or linebacker. Mike was (he died 25-30 years ago with a brain tumor. Hereinabove, I think I mentioned East Meck qb in Sizemore’s class, Mike Thomas, the older brother of my East classmate, Dickie. Mike Thomas gave the eulogy at Big Mike’s funeral, which I attended. Big Mike, I hope you have been and will continue to forever RIP!) the biggest ‘Cat, but wasn’t very agile and couldn’t have caught a beach ball thrown to him underhanded.

We opened with and upset George Washington at home, 13-9, in which linebacker and place kicker, as well as par golfer Johnny Giles kicked two field goals. John played a couple of years for the Packers, maybe on their taxi squad, I’m not sure whether as a linebacker, kicker, or both. While I’m thinking about it, remember Steve Heckard, who was converted from end to qb by Bill Dole for the ’64 season? He came to watch spring practice in ’66 and had bruises on his biceps, evidence of his recent pass and catch work-outs with Rams qb Roman Gabriel (visiting Bill at NC State, I saw Gabe play at rickety old Riddick Stadium, right in the middle of the State campus, and when a train went by on the nearby RR track, the stands would shake and you couldn’t hear the PA system when its horn blew) whose bullet passes would have bruised a bronze statue. Steve also showed me how NFL receivers get by the defender on a fly pattern; they run right at him, forcing him to turn his body one way or the other in order to stay with the receiver; then the receiver veers to the defender’s opposite side, forcing him to awkwardly turn to that side while running at full speed or to do a 180, which he can’t do at full speed, thus allowing the receiver to get behind him. A 180 will also cause the defender to lose sight of the receiver, putting the receiver in the driver’s seat, allowing him to change directions or even curl back toward the qb to receive the pass. The only way for the defender to win the battle is for him to always keep the receiver in front of him, which requires some high speed back-pedaling or the ability to shift

the way you are turned while running full speed. It's a good thing cornerbacks don't beep in reverse like trucks; play would stop every time, players thinking the beep was the ref's whistle.

We lost to Furman 26-28 in a night game at Memorial Stadium in Charlotte and then 7-40 to East Carolina in Greeneville. We rode the bus down on Friday for the Saturday game, stopping at Duke to do our normal "Friday before a Saturday game" workout in shorts, tee-shirts and helmets. Harry can correct me if I misstate this: I think that he and a freshman buddy or two rode the bus down from Chapel Hill to see the game, but, whether from not knowing the game time or because they had bus trouble or made unscheduled stops, arriving at Ficklen Stadium near or after the game was over. When I saw the score in my archives, I was surprised that it wasn't closer. I had remembered a shootout between Jimmy Poole and the Pirate qb. Clarence Stasovich was their coach, but he had left his single wing behind in Hickory when he departed the cool, foothill air of Lenoir-Rhyne for the stifling heat of eastern NC. I have a 6x8" photo, probably from the Charlotte Observer of their fullback crossing our goal line for his third touchdown as "Davidson's Tom Caldwell (28) and Renn Gruber (84) are among Wildcats too late to stop the score."

Mom and Dad drove down to Clinton, SC to see us pull down the Blue Hose of the Presbyterians, 49-13. I had been suffering from shin splints and before the game asked Coach (Trainer) Tom Couch for some relief and took a pill he gave me. I guess it was some kind of amphetamine. We went out and did our pregame warm-ups and came back in the locker room for Homer's pep talk, then out to play the game. Walking toward the field and seeing the referees standing there, I asked Coach Fagg if we weren't going to do warm-ups. He looked at me quizzically and said that we'd already done them. I DIDN'T REMEMBER DOING THEM! And I don't remember anything about the game. I rode home with the folks, stopping by Chester to see Mom's twin, Uncle Leighton and Aunt Eva Dell at their dairy farm, which couldn't have been long before they sold it and moved to Apopka, Fla. I crawled in my bed at home about 11:00 PM and stared at the ceiling until 3:00 AM, finally getting dressed, easing down the hall and out to drive Mom's car around town, probably stopping for breakfast at Shoney's until the sun came up. I feel sure I told Dad and Mom about being high on Dr. Crotch's (our nickname, used only out of his hearing, for him) pain pill and most likely went to Sunday School and church with them. I don't know what I said to those who inquired about the game since I didn't remember it. I never took a pill from Dr. Crotch again.

Then we flew to Richmond to play the Spiders, whose punter was league leading Mike Bragg. I was standing on our goal line to punt and Gary Waldron snapped it so high that jumping as high as I could, I never touched the ball as it sailed out of the end zone, us taking the only safety I remember any team I ever played on taking. Homer yelled for me to punt after our 2 point penalty. I kicked from behind our 20, of course and the ball went into the Richmond end zone. 80 YARDS! SHEEZAM! I'm sure I saw the game film but I'm not sure it showed, or I don't remember it showing where the ball landed before rolling into the end zone. It must have traveled 65-70 yards in the air because it wouldn't likely have rolled more than 10, much less 15 yards. We lost 23-17, ending the Spiders' major college losing streak at 19. The Statistic block accompanying the article, with just the byline "RICHMOND (AP)", shows that I punted 4 time for a 52 yd average and Bragg 5 times for 48. The last paragraph in the article: "The punting by rival kickers Tom Caldwell of Davidson and Mike Bragg of Richmond was nothing short of phenomenal." I just googled Mike. He was drafted in the 5th round by and punted for the Redskins

1968-79 and for the Colts in '80. "Bragg was the last active NFL player to play for Vince Lombardi, who coached the Redskins in 1969 before succumbing to colon cancer on September 3, 1970."

A diminutive, graying haired older sports journalist name Mary Gerber or Garber came down and interviewed me and her article appeared in the October 24th edition of the Twin City Sentinel in Winston Salem under the headline: "Davidson Punter Breaks Own Mark". The article in its entirety:

"When Tom Caldwell was an eighth-grader in Charlotte, his football team needed a punter. So the coach had a kicking contest.

'I kicked the ball farther than anyone else, so I became the team's punter,' said Caldwell. 'I guess that's how it got started.' Caldwell is a junior at Davidson College and does the team's punting. Saturday at Richmond he broke the Davidson College single-game punting record when he kicked four times for a 52-yard average. The record was 46.6 yards, set by Caldwell last season against William and Mary. Caldwell's average up until last week was 38.4 yards which is below his 39.8 yards last year, but Caldwell has just started to hit his stride in punting.

Caldwell was scheduled to be Davidson's long ball kicker and Jake Jacobsen was to do the short kicking. But Jacobsen was stricken with mononucleosis before the season began and was out of action. 'I was supposed to do all the kicking outside the 50-yard line and Jake was to do all the kicking inside the 50, but now I'm doing it all,' said Caldwell.

Concentration is the big thing in kicking, according to Caldwell. It's not easy but the kicker has to forget the charge of the on-rushing linemen and think only about getting the kick away.

'The snap is real important,' said Caldwell. I like it waist high and Gary Waldron does a real good job on it.'

Caldwell confines his kicking to punting. He doesn't do any place kicking. 'Place-kicking involves more timing and you have to have a stronger leg,' said Caldwell.

Caldwell doubles as a defensive back or interceptor as the men are called in the Davidson defense. "Concentration is the big thing for a defensive back, too," said Caldwell. 'Only a small percentage of the plays come to you but you have to be ready when they do come.'

'What's the toughest play? I hate to see the power sweep. They pull the linemen and have all those guys coming at you.'

Caldwell is a tremendous competitor and the coaches say he takes losses hard. When the Wildcats were walloped by East Carolina, Caldwell, pacing the side lines, borrowed a chaw of tobacco from assistant coach Dave Fagg to show his disgust.

He's a good tackler and quick at diagnosing plays but he doesn't have the good hands that make a football receiver. Sometimes he'll get his hands on a ball and drop it.

Caldwell played his high school football at East Mecklenburg. And there was no question in his mind about where he wanted to go to school.

'I was headed for Davidson all along,' he said. 'They didn't really have to come after me.' After graduation he'll have two years of Army service. Then he'd like to teach and coach. But the pro scouts are impressed with his punting. He might end up in the pro ranks."

The article is accompanied by a photo with the caption: HUNGRY—Davidson's Tom Caldwell helps himself to the salad bowl during lunch. He is the team's punter." Mary must have mailed me the Twin City Sentinel with the article in it along with an 8x10" glossy of the photo, which I have in my scrap book. In the picture I'm wearing the dark maroon and black checked wool Pendelton shirt/jacket I still have and which Janet won't let me wear out of the yard because of the big holes in both elbows. Sam (my grandson who turned 20 a couple of weeks ago) I hate to tell you, but I see a lot of you in that picture of

me at 19. You're such a handsome young man! I hope you're able to attract as good looking a wife as your Dad and I did!

We recovered from our loss at Richmond with a 21-17 home win over the Citadel Bulldogs. My scrapbook has an undated, unnewspaper identified article, at the top in bold, all caps but smaller type than the article's title below it, **"IF INJURIES AREN'T CURBED"**, and then the title "Davidson's Dirty Thirty May Become Gimp Twenty":

"Trainer Tom Couch should be presented the game ball if Davidson's football team defeats Lehigh at Bethlehem, Pa., Saturday. Coach Homer Smith's Wildcats are down to 31 players. And most of them look like they've spent the week fighting the Viet Cong. 'We have only 31 men who are able to play,' Smith says, 'and at least half of them have injuries that would keep most young men from playing football.'

Consider the plight of the dirty thirty: Safetyman Renn Gruber has two bad knees and an injured back. He hurts so much he can't take part in pre-game warmups...defensive back Tommy Dews plays with reckless abandon-and with an injured knee and bruised shoulder...defensive end Buddy Newsome plays with one shoulder wired together. His other shoulder was dislocated four weeks ago, but he is back in action.

Also, quarterback Jimmy Poole has played all season on a knee that could go out on him at any minute...offensive guard Bill Webb has a pinched nerve in his neck.

Also, Lewis Homer, Joe Gaddy, John Slaughter, Kerry Keith, Bill Rikard and Jeff Pflugner have painful knee injuries. But they play. Offensive center Walter Greene has played the entire season with a foot injury.

Also, defensive back and punter Tom Caldwell has bruised ribs...middle guard Tupper Morehead went out with a leg injury in the third game of the year.

'My tape bill is going to be something this year,' Couch says. I've never seen so many boys hurt on one athletic team. But they won't quit. If they can walk, they'll play.'

Coach Smith, whose team is now 3-3 for the season, says he's in love with his dirty thirty. "These kids have all the courage in the world," he says. "They're not big boys but they go out on Saturdays and hit and fight and never back away from anyone. Their play this year is the most courageous thing I've been around in athletics."

'We're going to go out as winners,' says senior and captain Dews. We're going after these last three games like our lives depend on them.'

Coach Smith just shakes his head and smiles. 'If I coach football for 50 years,' he said, 'I'll never forget this Davidson team. They have never quit battling, not even for a minute. I love 'em.'"

I don't remember anything about our trip to PA or our 37-24 win there over Lehigh.

The next Saturday we went down to Spartanburg and took on the Wofford Terriers (I wonder who named them-why not Bassets?). It was a terrible game for us, losing 40-28. From the Observer's write-up of the game:

In the first half "The Wildcats couldn't move the ball in three plays and Tommy Caldwell punted to Ellis (Billy). The former East (an error-Ellis went to West Meck) Mecklenburg star paused for a moment and then streaked by five Wildcats and burst into the clear. With two blockers in front of him and only one Wildcat--Caldwell--standing between him and the TD, Ellis played his cards as any good poker player would and waited for a right moment and then raced into the end zone untouched. Four plays

later, Ellis came within an eyelash of a repeat performance, taking another Caldwell punt on his own 34. He again broke into the clear after eluding four 'Cats but was caught from behind on the Davidson nine."

All of that was bad enough but even worse was a pass they kept completing in the flat on my side after driving me deep to cover a receiver running a fly pattern. Coach Tomey kept crawling me about it and I tried to explain that a linebacker needed to cover the flat since I had to take the deep guy. I don't know what he expected, but he didn't let up. At the half, he was in my face all the way to the locker room, keeping me in the hallway after all the other players had gone in. His face was red as a beet, right in mine as he berated me. He grabbed my jersey with his left hand and drew back his right in a fist, apparently getting ready to slug me. My helmet was off and I was holding it by the face mask. As he drew his fist back, I drew my helmet back, fully intending to hit him with it if he slugged me. Just as we drew our weapons, Homer turned the corner. I have no idea what he said then, during his halftime speech, during or after the game or on the bus ride home. I don't remember the 2nd half of the game or what, if anything, I ever said to or heard from Tomey afterwards.

How I prepared for our last game of the season, which was at home against Wittenberg, a team Davidson had never played before and I don't think has since, is beyond me. I must have interacted with Tomey but I don't remember it if I did. We lost 16-14. From the Observer article on the game:

"Wittenberg moved to Davidson's eight on its first possession, but Caldwell" (I don't know why Observer Sports Writer, Harry Morrow didn't use my first name since that was the first time I was mentioned in his story-you know me, a stickler for writing protocol) "broke up a pass to Miller in the end zone and moments later, the Charlotte junior intercepted on his 37 and streaked to the Tigers' 20."

Two black and white photos, one just above the other, accompany the article. In heavy bold at the top **"43-Yard Pass Steal"** over the first, with caption underneath "Wildcats' Tom Caldwell Intercepts Wittenberg Pass", the picture made inches before the ball is safely in my hands, as I step in front of the intended receiver. The second photo shows my body fully extended, slightly past parallel with the ground, my feet above parallel, just before I nose dive into the turf after having my legs cut out from under me by one tackler while another rides my back, with the caption below: "Caldwell's 43-Yard Run Ends Abruptly". Another 6x8" color photo, which must have been on the 1st page of the Sunday sports section shows me, my arms wrapped around him, driving a Wittenberg ball carrier out of bounds with 5 teammates behind me in pursuit, captioned "A Congo Line of Davidson Players Chase Lonely Foe".

Homer fired Tomey after the season ended. He went on to join Pepper Rogers' staff at Ga Tech, then on to become head coach at the UofHawaii, and finally head coach at the UofArizona, where he met with great success and was very highly respected as a coach and person, as attested to by the many tributes following his death from cancer several years ago. In 2015, the team that beat the Citadel 14-0 in 1965 celebrated the victory's 50th anniversary in Charleston with a dinner on Friday night before watching the Bulldogs get their revenge on Saturday night. Tomey was there for the dinner, but left afterwards, as he, having retired from Arizona and doing some consulting for a new college program in Fla had to be there on Saturday. I saw him in the crowd at the pre-dinner cocktail hour but hadn't spoken to him before Jake Jacobsen dragged me over to him. We greeted each other and shook hands as Jake is telling the story of my kicking booming punts before practice with Jake hitting some chip shots and reminding

Tomey that he said to Jake, “nice little poots, Jake.” I talked with Tomey briefly, asking him about Heath Bray, the qb at Monroe High School between Tommy and Tim and a great athlete who played for him as a safety at Arizona. That was the first time I had seen him since November, 1966 and the last time I saw him.

I didn’t realize how close Tomey and Coach Fagg were until after Charleston. Tomey hired him as an assistant at Hawaii where the Faggs stayed for over 10 years, maybe going with him to Arizona before Fagg came back to Davidson as director of the sports fund raising, Wildcat Club. I was sitting beside Mike Kelly at the luncheon where Coach Fagg was inducted into the DC Athletic Hall of Fame 6-8 years ago, and he didn’t believe it when I told him Homer fired Tomey over the incident at Wofford. I took Big Mike over to Coach Fagg who said that that was the sole reason. A year or two later we sold our place in Monroe and moved permanently into the log cabin we’d owned for 8-10 years near Bakersville, 20 or so miles from Mars Hill College. I had recently bought a 3 wheel recumbent tricycle, which, with motor assist I’d gotten up to 32 mph, and Janet convinced me I should be wearing a helmet. I thought it would be cool to wear a football helmet, so went over and met the head coach at Mars Hill and told him I would like to buy an old Mars Hill helmet. We got to talking and I learned that he and Coach Fagg were good friends, Coach being his primary reference when he applied for the head coaching job. After I learned Tomey had cancer, I got a wild hair and asked Coach Fagg if he was up for a road trip with me and the Mars Hill coach out to see Tomey, which he excitedly was. We waited too long. Tomey’s cancer was fast acting and got him before we could go.

A few weeks later the Mars Hill coach called and said he had me a helmet. It looked brand new, gleaming Mars Hill blue with a yellow stripe down the middle. It had a cage face mask. When I put it on it was so heavy I could hardly hold my head up. Players don’t need to do neck bridges now; if you can hold your head up in that sucker, you can neck bridge all day. I thanked the coach and made a \$100 donation to MH Lions football. I tried wearing it, briefly, finally giving it to someone who was out to the cabin to make some repairs of some kind who said his son would love it.

Homer of course wanted all his players at spring practice but got some criticism, written up in the Davidsonian, when some footballers wanted to play spring sports, so he relented in the spring of ’67. I’ve been whittling away on this story for far too long, so long that I can’t remember all I’ve bored you with so far, so I’m working overtime to bring it to a conclusion. And it’s a pain to scroll back to see what I’ve said, scrolling much more flummoxing than flipping paper pages, and besides, I think I’ve mentioned my laziness. Have I admitted heretofore that I never liked practicing? (I “practiced” law for 37 years, retiring because I got tired of all that practice!) I hope you won’t share this with aspiring athletes or with kids who aspire to achieve anything that requires practice, which most things do, particularly in sports. Don’t hold Tom Caldwell up as an example of practice making perfect.

So, I decided to avail myself of the opportunity to skip spring football practice by, what to me was much less taxing, running track. As a sprinter, I figured I could go out on a nice warm spring afternoon, jog a few laps to warm up, work on a few starts, run a few 100s, maybe a 220 or two, practice a few relay baton exchanges and head to the dorm for a nap, while those other suckers were on the lower practice fields, knocking heads to the tune of an air horn. Older than the track, track Coach Heath Whittle’s sing-

singing “31, 32, 33, 34...” as he called out the times of runners circling the cinder track was much more soothing, and he didn’t run too tight a ship. I was playing so fast and loose with my new found freedom, taking such advantage of Coach Whittle’s leniency, that on one occasion he came up to my 2nd floor Duke room, less than 250’ from the track around Richardson Field at its closest point, to roust me from my nap and get my lazy butt to practice.

I’m sure Homer didn’t relish the idea of me or anyone else missing spring practice. He got word to me that an NFL scout was going to be at practice one Saturday, specifically to see me, and for me to dress out for practice, which I did. He had me run some plays as the tailback. Heck, I didn’t even know the plays. He had to tell me where to run in the huddle. I don’t remember how I did. I didn’t punt the first punt, which is what I’m sure the scout was interested in, or even play one down on defense, which a scout may have been peripherally interested in. He sure wasn’t there to see if I was the next OJ. No scout came up to me before, during or after practice. I wondered if one was even there, or if maybe Homer just wanted to stick a poker up my rear.

I think I remember mentioning earlier that Janet and I were pinned, in fact pinned very tightly together by then. She came down from UNC-G most every weekend with her friend and roommate Judy Davis and stayed at Judy’s house in Charlotte and her boyfriend Jimmy McMillan and I would date her and Janet, usually Friday and Saturday nights and I would drive in and bring Janet up to school if I was running in a track meet at home. One Saturday, or maybe it was a Friday-Saturday relay affair out of town somewhere, maybe Greenville or Charleston, SC, I didn’t want to miss my weekend smooches with my soon wife to be and I either told Coach Whittle I was sick or (I told you I was playing fast and loose) I just didn’t get on the bus. Coach Whittle was, and I don’t blame him for being steamed. He advised Homer that I was AWOL and Monday I was at spring practice. STUPID, DUMB, IDIOTIC!!! Thankfully there were only a few more days of practice left.

Janet and I eloped in April and soon thereafter I resigned as the newly elected president of the Phi Ganimals for the coming year and told Homer of my new social status. I could be wrong but I think he increased my scholarship a little, but I detected his attitude changing either as the school year ended or Camp Carolina began. Speaking of CC, I don’t remember if we were still running a 440 to kick things off, and speaking of the 440 2 years before, after which I threw up, I’ll slip in a couple of tossing up my pregame meal stories.

My sophomore year, I got pretty jittery before my first few games and a couple of times I threw up in the john in the locker room after Homer’s post pregame warm-ups pep talk but before we exited the locker room for the kick-off. I don’t think I barfed before our opening game with Presbyterian that year and the next two games were away (I only regurgitated at home) so my first upchuck must have been before Bill & Mary (I really felt like puking after it). I must have done a repeat performance at home against VMI, skipped away at GW, and back at home against Lehigh, after Homer’s pep talk and before we took the field, he asked “has Caldwell thrown up yet?” My other losing my lunch story was when, I’m not sure what year or game, I either intercepted a pass or recovered a fumble on the sidelines near our bench and I landed with the ball right in my belly, just as Homer ran up to congratulate me and I puked on his brown, scotch-grain, plain toed lace up shoe.

I always admired those shoes and after I was practicing law in Monroe, bought a pair just like them from the discount shoe store beside my main haberdashery, Ledfords, at the corner of Central Ave and the Plaza in Charlotte. They were Allen-Edmonds and there's no telling how long I wore them and how many times they were resoled and heeled. For years I only wore some shade of brown suits or slacks, in order to go with my favorite pair of shoes. After I completely wore them out, I bought a pair of A-E black tassel loafers which I've had for over 25, probably over 35 years and still wear when the occasion calls for it, which isn't often anymore. I just went upstairs to look in them because I couldn't remember the name Allen-Edmonds. I don't intend to ever buy another pair of dress shoes (full disclosure: I have a pair of black Weejuns I've had over 25 years, a pair of oxblood Rockport lace-ups that I inherited from Janet's Dad and which I wore at niece Meredith's wedding in Annapolis, MD this past November, and a pair of more casual brown slip-ons I bought at TOPS in Asheville a year or more ago).

But before I talk about the upcoming '67 season, I've got to mention how Tommy Dews' football career ended. I have somewhere but haven't been able to find the '66 season press guide, but if I remember correctly, Captain Tom's photo is on the cover, with the caption, "Nobody Covers Pass Receivers Like Dews". As I've said before, he was a players' and coaches' player, and thus Homer's fair-haired son, and rightfully so. The Vietnam war was raging. He must not have taken advanced ROTC his junior and senior years because before he graduated, Tommy declared that he was a conscientious objector and wasn't going into the military. Homer, unlike Biblical Abraham, who, acting on (what he thought was) God's command was prepared to sacrifice his son, but didn't, threw his theretofore favorite son under the moving bus, disavowing Tommy because of his refusal to fight in what turned out to be a stupid, senseless, very bloody and costly war. Muhammad Ali (may you RIP in Cave Hill Cemetery, less than a mile from where we live in Louisville), you had very good company in Tom Dews. You're both my heroes, but you weren't Homer's. Tom joined the Peace Corps, taught school and I'm not sure what else, but he continues to write, play his guitar and harmonica to and sing his songs which remind me of, though not by his voice, John Prine. I last saw Cap'n Tommy in Charleston in 2015.

In "I Remember Mac", the first set of memories that I wrote, soon after he died in 2015, I tell about my first meeting my father-in-law at dinner in Greensboro with my mother-in-law Mary and Janet, either shortly before or after we were married, and shortly after the Colonel had returned from Vietnam where, as a helicopter squadron commander, Mac personally flew over 600 helicopter missions. He and Mary had driven from Virginia Beach down to see Janet for his first time back in the states, before he was sent to the Naval War College in Newport, RI. Mac agreed, more and more over the years what a mistake and disaster our involvement in Nam was, but he went because it was his duty as a Marine. I remember him telling me about being asked, before he went, by one of his Lt Col friend's wives at a gathering of his peers what he would do if he got orders to Vietnam and he said that he would start packing because that was what he had been trained to do since he joined the Navy on the 4th of July, 1942.

Now, Camp Carolina, August, 1967. We had been practicing a day or two when Homer came up to me at the end of morning practice and said, and I think this is an exact quote, "Caldwell, I don't think you have it anymore." I was completely dumbfounded and don't think I said a word but just turned away and headed to the showers. Looking back, I think my not going to spring practice and then getting married

was evidence to him that I was not fully committed to football, which was an absolute miscomprehension on his part since I was planning on at least punting, if not playing defense in the NFL. Renn Gruber, who had just graduated got a try-out as a safety with the St Louis Cardinals and stuck until the last cut. I thought I was as good, I know I was faster, in the defensive secondary as Renn.

Homer's first recruits were sophomores, none more highly recruited than the aforementioned Mike Kelly from North Meck, a 6'4", 200+ lb receiver, who caught 2, maybe 3 TD passes his senior year in the Shrine Bowl (gotta chase a rabbit here: Jimmy Poole and a couple of us wanted to see that Shrine Bowl game. Coach Fagg told us to meet him at the gate where the players entered at the Grady Cole Center end of Charlotte's Memorial Stadium a few minutes before kick-off. We were standing there when Coach walked up, wearing his college coaches' credentials around his neck, talking a mile a minute to the gate keeper and pushing us toward and through the opening in the gate while the gatekeeper stood there with his mouth hanging open. A classic Coach Fagg performance! With no tickets and therefore no seats, we sat on the rock wall that separated the stands from the field, near the goal line where we saw Kelly catch one of his touchdown passes. What a day!). Mike was recruited by most every major college in the country. In the afternoon practice, I covered him like glue in the passing drills, coming over him to break up passes just like Homer had complimented me for 2 years earlier flying back from Lafayette when I got the moniker, "NFL Caldwell". If Big Mike caught any passes during practice with me covering him, it wasn't many,

After practice, I stupidly, stupidly and arrogantly walked up to Homer and said "well, Coach, do you still think I don't have it?" I knew as soon as I said it that I shouldn't have. He said "no, I don't think you have it any more". The next words out of my mouth were for him to get someone to take me to the bus station and buy me a ticket to Charlotte. I was on the bus before dark. I don't remember what was going through my head. I guess I got Dad to pick me up at the bus station and either that night or the next morning to drive me to the little brick house just a mile or two north of Davidson where pregnant Janet was setting up housekeeping, or maybe I spent the night on Rama Rd and Janet drove the '65 Volvo, my first car, which Dad had bought me the previous summer, down to pick me up. I don't remember Dad or Mom or Janet fussing at me, but the question of the status of my scholarship, which was all that was on my mind, was, rightfully, brought up. I didn't have an answer.

A short article with a shot of my face appeared in the Observer on Wed, Sept 6, 1967, with "DAVIDSON GETS JOLT AS CALDWELL LEAVES" as the heading, the byline, "BREVARD" said that I was the second Wildcat to leave the squad, as fellow East Mecker Greg Cox had left earlier, quoting Homer: "I have no idea exactly what the reasons are for either boy leaving. I talked with them for hours, but I'm as in the dark as anyone." If he talked with us for hours, he must have talked to Greg for 1 hour, 59 minutes, and 30 seconds because my conversation with him couldn't have lasted over 30 seconds. (Short rabbit run: Ironically, Greg and I rode with Homer to the East Meck athletic banquet, where he was the speaker, a year or more before. I remember asking him why, with his academic credentials, he chose to coach football. His answer was that it was one of the only professions where there was a direct correlation between your efforts and their results, and which could be seen rather quickly and very tangibly.) With Greg and my photos, a different one than the one announcing my leaving, a story by Bill Ballenger, Charlotte News Sports Writer appeared the next Wed, Sept 13, with the headline "'Cat Prodigals

Return" and thereunder, bold but smaller "**Cox, Caldwell Back; Jacobsen Is Due In**", Homer is quoted thusly: "We don't deny a young man a chance to play college football unless he refuses to give his very best effort. Greg and Tommy have played at practice with enthusiasm in the past, and there's no reason to believe they won't do the same in the future." The article said that Jake had told Homer during the summer that he planned to complete his college education in California but that he'd called a day or so before and asked to return.

Between Sept 6 and 13, I realized what another STUPID, DUMB and IDIOTIC mistake I had made. On the team's first day back on campus, I was standing by the path which the players had all jogged down on their way to the practice field when Homer came walking down the path toward practice, eyes straight ahead. I didn't say anything. When he was a few yards passed me, he did an about face, came back to me and asked if I wanted to play, and when I said yes, he told me to go get dressed for practice. I did and I don't remember another word between him and me about the episode. At Camp, sophomore guard Terry Esterkamp did the punting and he continued into the season. Terry was a pretty good punter; if I recall, he kicked a low spiral. Homer never even hinted about me resuming as punter. I never punted for Davidson College again. (*See Footnote at the end hereof*) Maybe he considered that my penance. I considered it a slap in my face and an obstacle to my potential NFL career, but at least I kept my scholarship.

I have one somewhere but haven't found it, either, but if I remember correctly, the '67 press guide was all Jimmy Poole. In the annual, just below the team photo, in which I sit cross-legged on the front row beside Jim, is a photo of him and Walt Greene, Co-Captains. We opened in Lexington, VA against VMI. I started in my old slot of interceptor on the right side. We were run over, 46-22, primarily, if I recall correctly, by a horse of a running back by the name of, if I recall correctly, Bob Havasavich, if I recall the spelling correctly.

Then we beat Furman in a night game, 45-22 in Sarrine Stadium in Greenville, SC. The only reason I know it was a night game and where we played is because my scrapbook has a photo headlined "Hanging On By A Shirttail", picturing me going to my knees with one hand grasping the pass receiver's jersey from his rear, with the following underneath: "Furman end Robbie Hahn (87) has the ball and a sizeable gain while a Davidson defensive back cling's to his jersey during last night's game at Sarrine Stadium. Hahn took a pass from Clyde Hewell in this first half action." I wonder how long that "sizeable gain" was!

Next, we played East Carolina in our home opener, the first and only time Mac and Mary, visiting Janet, me and Tommy, *in utero* (he was born December 24th, 1967) saw me play. Mac, I'm not sure about Mary, got to see Tommy play a game or two of high school football and baseball. They both saw Tim play his senior year at Monroe Hi against Farmville for the NC 2-A basketball championship in the "Dean Dome", home of the NC Tar Heels in Chapel Hill, and Mac drove up to Annapolis from their home in VA Beach to see Tim's post-high school grad team at Fork Union Military Academy, located in Fork Union, in the sticks of VA, 40 or so miles southeast of Charlottesville, play the Navy frosh. Brother, Harry, who, with his wife Kate still live in nearby Severna Park also came over to see that game. And Mac drove over to Fork Union to join Janet and me to watch a game or two at FUMA.

Whit Morrow, a slight but speedy sophomore from Albemarle returned the opening kick-off 85 yards (I got that from the Statistics contained in the game story) to give us a 7-0 lead. It was a thrilling play and everyone in the stands were on their feet and the coaches and my teammates were all whooping and hollering, which the occasion certainly called for, but I remember thinking that we might have just ticked the Pirates off, and I was right, as they looted our treasure 42-17. Just before the half, I ran all the way across the field and tackled a ball carrier who had broken into the clear, twisting my knee in the process and thus ending my football career. I hobbled to the sidelines. I don't remember whether I was helped immediately into the locker room or waited and went in with the team. All I remember was that it hurt like the devil and began to swell. Pain is all that I recall. Don't know whether I watched the 2nd half or even showered.

I went home on crutches and stayed off my feet until going into Charlotte Monday afternoon with other gimpy Cats still licking their Saturday wounds to see our team doc, Richard Wrenn at the Miller Orthopedic Clinic, who used a giant needle (when I said something about the size of the needle, he quipped that when one got to that size, they stopped calling it a needle and called it a pipe!). OUCH!! He drained what seemed like a quart of fluid off my knee and said that he didn't think I'd torn anything, (he may have x-rayed it, I don't recall) which would have required surgery, but just severely strained it, and wrapped it tightly and told me to stay off it, which I did, hobbling around on crutches, even to classes and around campus. I guess I hobbled down to watch practice on the practice field for a while but probably stopped going every day because of the long hobble and the hill to negotiate going and coming and stopped altogether when it became apparent my knee wasn't going to heal in time for me to play anymore. I went in to the Miller Clinic to have it drained several more times.

The remainder of the season, we lost to Richmond, 17-24; beat PC, 38-0; lost to Citadel, 7-28; beat U of Connecticut in Storrs, Conn, 38-18; beat Wofford, 30-7, and lost to the U of West Va, the first and last time the Cats tangled with the Mountaineers on the gridiron, thank goodness, 0-35. Lineman and frat bro Lindsay Davis broke his leg and I think he and another player or two spent a night or two in the University hospital in Morgantown. Glad I wasn't one of them; I didn't make that trip or any others after my knee injury.

In civil litigation, the discovery process allows each side to make the other side provide it the evidence it intends to produce at trial, through depositions, interrogatories and the production of documents, the latter two requiring "newly discovered" evidence or documents to be disclosed or produced. Last night Janet found some documents in a box, and as newly discovered, I'm obligated to, if not produce them, to at least to disclose their relevant contents, and so, in accordance with the rules of civil procedure and in the interest of compiling a comprehensive historical record, not to mention my aversion to re-plowing already plowed ground, I'm going to produce the evidence here and now rather than going back and blending it into the previously disclosed material. The "newly discovered" docs: 1) the **Davidson vs Furman-Memorial Stadium-September 24, 1966-Official Program** 50 cents (actually the cents sign but my Hewlett-Packard laptop doesn't have it), with a cartoonish drawing of a pile-up with the referee's arms sticking up from its middle signaling a touchdown; 2) the **"DAVIDSON FOOTBALL"** at the top, with an aerial view of the Davidson campus, and at the bottom, **"E. CAROLINA Game, September 30, 1967/Official Program/(inflation had not set in-same price as last years)";** 3) the **"Davidson-Wofford,**

November 11, 1967-Official Program-(same price as 1&2)" at the bottom, a photo of Jimmy Poole smiling broadly, chin resting on his folded arms, in street clothes, covering ¾ of the page, and across the top, in cursive, "**Goodbye, Jimmy!**".

Inside #1, opposite a full page ad for Northwestern Mutual Life, Robert T. Stone/Special Agent/Davidson (I guess frat bro, Ray Ledford was working for Stone when he sold me a \$10,000 whole life policy shortly after I graduated, maybe enough to get Janet and Tommy resettled and through their first year after my demise), is a photo of Norman Pease, "Business Manager" and Martin Brackett, "Asst. Business Manager" of "The Wildcat-Davidson College Official (my emphasis added to contrast this official document with any unofficial ones) Football Program". A few pages in, an article by John Kilgo, sports information director and brother of Jimmy, host of teen TV music and dance, "Kilgo's C(or was it 'K')?)" anteen in Charlotte, on either Channel 3 (WBTV, CBS) or 9 (WSOC, NBC), or maybe even 18 (I don't know when it came along and I don't remember its call letters, ABC), entitled "The Fighting Wildcats", the article the same size as an accompanying photo of Renn Gruber in uniform but helmetless in a three-point stance, which he was never in, left hand on the ground, right balled into a fist, his forearm resting on his right thigh, beside his name in all caps, "He played almost perfect football for us last year at his defensive safety position."-HOMER SMITH. From the article: "...there are players on this squad who could play for any college team in the land. Tommy Dews, a defensive back, is a courageous player, a leader, a candidate for all-star honors (me: the following June, I guess Homer didn't think those accolades justified Tommy being a different kind of patriot, one who opposed war, than he)...Renn Gruber is being courted by several pro teams...Walter Greene is one of the best offensive centers in the South...Tommy Caldwell has the potential to become a great punter..."

The program contained a small version of each player's Quips & Cranks's photo and a blurb on each of us. "**TOM CALDWELL, HB, 20, 6-1** (once the publicity office lost my 1", I never regained it), **19, Jr., Charlotte, N.C.** ...A brilliant punter...plays offense and defense. Will work at spread end and tailback on offense, halfback on defense...A top sprinter on the track team, seems destined for all-star honors as a footballer...Majoring in psychology."

Also therein: **ALL-TIME FOOTBALL RECORDS-SINGLE GAME, TEAM...**(among others)...Best Punting Average—46.6 vs William & Mary, 1965

And the last ad was for Mutual Savings and Loan Association, 330 South Tryon St, Charlotte, N.C., where I may have still had a little left in the savings account Dad helped me open almost a decade before.

The contents of #2 & 3 are the same, only the covers differing. A story about Jimmy Poole concludes with Homer saying "I'd like to have him for my quarterback for as long as I coach." WOW, quite the compliment! Head and shoulder shots of each of us in practice gear, sans helmets is accompanied by a blurb, mine: "**TOM CALDWELL 21 6-1 180 Sr. Charlotte, N.C.** Came on strong at the end of 1966 season...is expected to start this fall...Punted a ball 80 yards against Richmond last fall...Will share punting duties with Esterkamp...Blinding speed...Psychology major"

OK, back to my timeline; where was I before Janet found this newly discovered evidence, some of which I'll put in the record a little later. Oh yeah, I left Lindsay Bishop in Morgantown with a broken leg at

season's end. A short article in the Raleigh Times on Friday, November 24, 1967, the day after Thanksgiving entitled "A 'Special' All-Star Game", tells about the first Sudan Temple game at State's Carter Stadium the next day, adding "another feature of the Sudan Game is the pitting of so-called small college players against big brethren, which allows a chance for comparison. The West was coached by Tom Harp from Duke, assisted by Homer and Bert Piggott from NCA&T, and included Jimmy Poole, John Giles, Pete Glidewell, Walter Greene and Lowell Bryan from Davidson, along with 8 players from Duke, including Herb Goins from Myers Park, 5 from Wake Forest, 2 from Guilford and A&T, and 1 each from Mars Hill, Western Carolina, Appalachian and Livingstone. The East was coached by Earle Edwards from State, assisted by Clarence Stasavich from East Carolina and Tom Caldwell (no relation that I know of) from Elizabeth City State, and included 8 State players, 4 Tar Heels, including Myers Park's Jeff Beaver, 3 @ from East Carolina, Lenoir Rhyne, and Elizabeth City State, 2 @ from Elon, and 1@ from Catawba, North Carolina College, Fayetteville State and Shaw.

We had played against a few black players at Davidson. I remember meeting a black running back from probably Lehigh or Lafayette at a home game, helmet to helmet as he ran off tackle and my receiving probably a concussion. I saw stars and wandered around unawares during the next play before being spotted from our bench and taken out of the game. I was back in a few plays later. That was probably the worst head ringing I ever got playing football, or doing anything else, for that matter. I wonder if whites and blacks had ever played on the same team in the South before this game.

Tuesday or Wednesday Homer called me from Raleigh and asked if my knee was well enough for me to come up and punt in the Sudan Bowl, and when I replied in the affirmative, I drove Janet, 8 months pregnant, down to Mom and Dad's in Charlotte, where Mom produced all the clippings she had cut out from the newspapers and where Janet spent Thanksgiving assembling this scrapbook I'm writing from, and I headed to Raleigh. I had a punting field day. There was a no rushing the punter rule and I took all the time I needed and just teed off on the ball. An article in the Raleigh News and Observer on game day, Saturday, Nov 25, said that NC State qb Jim Donnan (I googled him, who went on to a distinguished college coaching career, including coaching the wish-bone offense under Barry Switzer at Oklahoma and then as head coach at Marshall and finally at Georgia) would punt for the East and "Tom Caldwell, Davidson, for the West". Jimmy almost passed us to a win before we succumbed, 7-10. The stats show me punting 6 times for a 40.6 yd average and Donnan 9, for a 32.0 average.

Two things stand out in my memory about the game, 1st, how much bigger and faster some of these guys were and, I guess consequently, how much harder some of them hit. Glad I only punted and that Homer didn't call for the fake punt! 2nd, the walls of the 2-stories of the field house facing the field from just behind one end zone were all glass, with a balcony running the length of the 2nd story. Guys with long poles with nets on the end patrolled from the ground and the balcony to catch extra point and field goal attempts. This was Carter, before it became Carter-Finley Stadium's first year and I don't guess the NC State architects and engineers had yet devised a face saving, less obvious and more efficient and secure method for preventing glass shards from entering the dressing rooms. I wonder if the ball catchers had to try out? It would have been a good job for former pass receivers or lacrosse players!

One last thing before I leave Raleigh; I feel sure that some of the Sudan All-Stars played in the NFL, but one I'm sure that did was Elvin Bethea, listed in the program as a 6'3", 250 lb defensive tackle from NCA&T. I just googled Elvin and learned that he played defensive end for the Houston Oilers, later the Tennessee Titans 1968-1983, who retired his #65 jersey. He was All-Pro twice and played in the Pro-Bowl 8 times. He was inducted into the NFL Hall of Fame in 2003, the first from A&T so honored, and the NC Sports HF in 2005 and authored a book, "Smash-Mouth: My Football Journey from Trenton to Canton."

The group Phi Gammals's 2 page photo of 30+ of us with, amazingly, all in jackets and ties, in the 1968 Quips & Cranks, is accompanied by some clever snippets, such as "Carr leads chorus to another winning season", "Bishop gets break in W. Va.", and "Co-captains Poole and Greene joined by T.C. in Sudan Bowl." Immortalized in glossy black and white is Sizemore's finger up his nose. It seems like there was a self-congratulatory saying in vogue amongst some Davidsonians in those days, something like "A Davidson gentleman needs no introduction." HA!

GOLF! After the football season ended, Sizemore, Greg Cox, Ray Ledford and I took to the golf course, usually the 9-hole public course in Mooresville. Greg's athletic skills extended to golf, Sizemore's in that direction, mine slightly behind Big Mike's and Ray's didn't get off the first tee. I had played a little over the years, probably first (discounting brother Bill and me playing the course we designed, built, and maintained in the backyard on Sharon Amity) in high school days when Bill Carr, 5'8-9" shared his dad, Rev Bryant's, same height, clubs and played for free on "preachers' day" at Eastwood, a scruffy, short 9 hole course on Eastway Drive in Charlotte. By college, I had acquired an old set of Spaulding clubs for, if I recall, \$35, and played with them until I bought a new set of Lynxes in the mid-70s. Our "fearsome" foursome was playing at Mooresville and a group behind kept hitting into us. Finally Big Mike teed up one of their drives that had rolled into us, took out his driver and hit it right back at them. You could get by with that if you were Sizemore's size! They didn't hit into us again.

Janet got her Dad to buy me a pair of synthetic leather golf shoes at the PX at the Little Creek Naval Base in VA Beach, which had a 9-hole course her brother Doug and I played several times (everyone should get the chance to drive a car with a Marine Colonel's sticker on the front bumper up to the entrance gate to a Naval base. I'd never been saluted before, nor since, except I guess in advanced ROTC drills, and then never with such precision and fervor) for our first married Christmas. That leather may have been synthetic but it sure wasn't sympathetic to my feet. The sharp looking black and white wingtips, very stylish on the links at the time, wouldn't break-in like real leather, and after wearing them 5-6 times and coming home with blisters on both feet, I tossed Janet's well intentioned Christmas gift in the trash. My next pair of golf shoes were Hush Puppies!

I still play AT golf, justifying the expenditure of time and money with the exercise I get walking. When we were living in our cabin near Spruce Pine, NC for several years, I played the beautiful Mt Mitchell Golf Course, actually located under the shadow of Mt Mitchell, at 6,683' the highest point east of the Mississippi River, several times, once with frat bro, Dr (from UNC, his Phd, that is) Mike Westall, retired math/computer science professor at Clemson, where he and his wife still live but who comes to Asheville occasionally to check on the condo he inherited from his mother, but occasionally I drove

down off the Blue Ridge escarpment to play the Lake James course outside Marion. I got invited to play with a group of mostly geezers, who played once a week, including Bob Hunter, a retired lawyer and Judge on the NC Ct of Appeals for 16 years, a Democrat, if you can believe it. Once I got paired with Julian _?_, probably then 92-3. I don't know what he or I shot, but when the group gathered for refreshments on the porch to decide who would take home the pot (they used a handicap system of some sort), someone asked him to tell me how many times he'd shot his age. "Over 600", he said. I probably said "You're kidding." Someone asked how he knew how many times he'd done it. He said that the first time was in his 70s and he kept the scorecard. He kept keeping the scorecards on such occasions and put them in a shoe box and that he'd recently counted 600. AMAZING! UNBELIEVABLE! HOLY MOSES! JUMPING JEHOSEPHAT! SHEEZAM! I'm 76 and have never shot my age and time is running out because my bone on bone shoulders may retire my Ping Eye 2 irons to the basement, to rest beside my Titleist irons and my "never used in a round" ancient hickory shaft irons. Who was it that said something about golf spoiling an otherwise nice long walk in the park? Wise man!

Well, it looked like golf was going to be it for me athletically as graduation approached and Janet, little Tommy and I turned our thoughts to Chapel Hill and mine to three years of law school. Then I saw in the Observer that the Dallas Cowboys Kicking Karavan's closest tour stop was Jacksonville, Fla. I'm not sure how long the Cowboys had been operating what was basically a PR stunt, traveling around the country and inviting anyone to try out as a kicker, place or punter. I called Dad and he bought me a round trip ticket to fly to Jacksonville on try-out Sunday. I don't remember Janet's reaction. All I took was a pair of shorts and cleats, and took a cab out to the high school field where the Karavan had made camp. It was early afternoon and there were probably 50-75 hopefuls already there, some obviously over 40. They were all place kickers; I don't remember any punters.

The special team coach(es) had brought along their long snapper Dave Manders, who played at Michigan State, and after he almost knocked me down with the snap (I was used to getting the ball on first bounce, ankle or chest high or even having to leap for it), I rocked my first kick and maybe 8 or 10 more. I don't think I hit a bad one, each spiral turning over, probably averaging 60-65 yards. The coach(es) took me up in the press box and pulled out some blue, four page forms reading (I don't remember them from then, but I'm looking at them as I'm typing this) **"STANDARD PLAYER CONTRACT For Major Professional Football Operations as Conducted By THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE And THE AMERICAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE, Between** (typed in) **'DALLAS COWBOYS FOOTBALL CLUB, INC.'** a (typed in) **'TEXAS'** corporation, hereinafter called "Club", which Club operates under the name and style of (typed in) **'DALLAS COWBOYS'** and which Club is presently a member of the (typed in) **'NATIONAL'** Football League, hereinafter called "League" and (printed in with blue ball point) **'Thomas J. Caldwell'** hereinafter called **'Player'**". My introduction to the NFL and to the legalese of contracts (in 37 years practicing law, I used that or almost identical language in drafting scores of contracts).

I don't remember any of the conversation between me and the coach(es), but I feel sure there was no negotiation of terms. There were two contracts, one in which, after 19, they/he penned in '68' and down a few paragraphs, after the \$ sign, 12,000. On the last page, a coach, whose name appears to be Larry Gardner signed on behalf of the "Club" and dated the contract May 12, 1968 and then I, "Player" signed and dated it. Below our signatures, **"CLUB RULES AND REGULATIONS"**, and thereafter follow 7

such, all contained within a bold lined box. Can you believe #2: "Drinking of intoxicants is forbidden."? #6: "Players must familiarize themselves with their contract, especially paragraph 11 thereof (I would have used "hereof")." Paragraph 11: "Player acknowledges the right of the Commissioner (a) to fine and suspend, (b)...for life or indefinitely, and/or (c) to cancel the contract of any player who accepts a bribe or who agrees to throw or fix a game... ". Who woulda thunk??? At the very bottom, I wrote "camp July 9", "2 pr. shoes, well broken in", and "call collect about Giles". I have no idea who I was going to call collect and for what about Giles. The second contract is identical to the first except it is for 1969 and for \$14,000. I began practicing law 3 years later for \$9600.

When I got home, I contacted UNC Law and the married student housing office and told them I wasn't coming to Carolina. I even contacted SMU Law and had them send me a law school brochure and application form. I must have gone by to tell Homer because a few days later my photo and "Tommy Caldwell Signed As Punter" appears above a short article in the sports section of the Charlotte Observer entitled "'Cats' Caldwell Signs With Cowboys": "Tommy Caldwell, of Charlotte, a defensive back on the Davidson football team, has signed a National Football League contract with the Dallas Cowboys as a punter. Caldwell, a graduate of East Mecklenburg High, punted regularly for the Wildcats two seasons ago and had a 38.2 yard average in 35 attempts. He set a school record with a 71-yard kick against Richmond. Another Davidson player, place-kicker John Giles, has been offered a contract by the Green Bay Packers. Giles, however is a member of the golf team and is waiting for his eligibility to expire before he signs." I started to say that I dropped by to watch spring practice, but that may have been before May 12 (so maybe it was when I hobbled down on crutches to watch practice after I hurt my knee and before the season had ended) and was smoking a Winston. Homer asked me to leave and not come back; I'm not sure if he said, or meant ever, or just if I was smoking, which along with drinking, Homer called "dissipating" and forbid among his players, in season or out, the penalty for getting caught being getting roused by Coach Fagg for the "Dawn Patrol", about which I've written in "WESTWARD HO".

I'm not sure when after graduation that I packed Janet and Tommy up and took them to Mac and Mary's in Virginia Beach. I don't remember what I did with the little bit of furniture, pots and pans and the other stuff we had accumulated. The Cowboys sent me a plane ticket to LA for an unspecified date because the veterans in the NFL were on strike. Dad went with me down to the Oldsmobile place and I picked out an Olds Cutlass (I think it was yellow, same as Bill's first new car, a Chevy Corvair-after getting out of the Army, he bought a light green Buick Skylark, Buick's equivalent of Olds' Cutlass) and told Dad that if I made the team, the exhibition season would start and then the regular season and I wouldn't have time to come and get Janet and Tommy, so for him to buy me the Cutlass and help pack my family up and send them to Dallas and I'd pay him back as soon as I started getting paid. I don't remember what I did about two pair of well broken in football shoes. I guess I talked Homer or the equipment manager into giving me the pair of Riddell's I'd last worn and maybe even a new pair to break in. I don't remember working out or even punting any. Punting is like riding a bike; once you learn how, you never forget, and conditioning-wise, punters don't have to run too much.

As I think about it, Janet, Little Tom and I stayed in the tiny brick house we rented several miles north of the college until probably near the 1st of July because I had pulled the wooden hulk of a "speed" (ha!) boat called the "Best Yet" (I've written a story about it appropriately(?)/creatively(?) called "THE BEST

YET”)that Dad accepted from one of his customers in payment of his tab at Dad’s wholesale household goods store, up earlier and had sanded and varnished the deck. A side note: Bill, recently home from Vietnam, out of the Army, returned from an epic trip out West with his good friend and Army buddy, Ken Carpenter, and working in R&D at Celanese in Charlotte came up and we pulled the BY out to Lake Norman to try out the newly varnished hulk, Bill’s virgin voyage on the BY. We backed it partially in the water and for some reason removed the prop from one of its outboards and, unlike the meticulous A-Model Ford restorers (actually Bill; I wasn’t certified) we were, dropped the prop in the drink, never to be seen again. I have no idea what Pop did with the BY. While I’m on this Bill side note, I’ll mention, though I think I’ve previously mentioned that he was a high hurdler from McClintock through NC State, but that’s his story to tell.

The Cowboys finally called to give me the date for the delayed rookie (because the vets were still on strike) camp, so I took J&T to M&M’s in VA Beach and flew from Charlotte, through Atlanta to L.A., CA, on the way to the Dallas preseason camp at a small Lutheran college in Thousand Oaks, just outside L.A. A large dude my age got on the plane in Atlanta. When we deplaned in L.A., his largeness, DD Lewis, an All-American linebacker from Mississippi bummed a Winston from me and puffed on the way into the terminal, where all the green horn Cowboys, I assume most all draft choices except me, had flown in from all over, an assembly of the largest guys that I’d ever been a part of. I saw a guy about my size, wearing as cheap a suit as mine, and, figuring here was a player I probably could relate to, walked over, stuck out my hand and said, “Tom Caldwell, Davidson College”, and he shook it, responding, “Roger Staubach, Navy”. Dumbfounded, I think I said something like, “Yeah, I’ve heard of you!” Staubach of course had won the Heisman in ’63 and was the Cowboys #1 draft choice, but had to fulfill his 4-5 year Navy active duty commitment, on which he had a year to go, but he had taken some leave to attend rookie camp.

I guess we took a bus to the college, but I don’t remember who I sat beside, talked with or anything else about the ride, or about being assigned a room in the dorm or a roommate, or receiving any instructions. But I was assigned a roommate, a nice guy, a tight end from Boston College. I don’t remember whether he was a draft choice or, like me, just an invitee. I do remember walking across campus and a green Mustang convertible with its top down pulling up beside me and one of its blonde occupants asking me if “Dandy Don” had arrived yet. I assumed they were referring to quarterback, later long time NFL announcer alongside Howard Cosell, Don Meredith. I don’t remember exactly what I told them, but later wondered what they would have said if I’d said, “here I am, don’t you recognize me?” I also wondered how well they knew Dandy or even if they’d ever met him.

Either the afternoon we arrived or the next morning, we all went out on the practice field in cleats, shorts and tee shirts and just messed around, and if I remember correctly, I punted some and I guess a wannabee return guy caught them and ran or threw them back. Later that day the team doc gave us a short physical. He twisted my left foot back and forth and hearing a little popping asked if I’d had any knee injuries. I then said the most fateful words I’d ever uttered except “Will you marry me” and “I do”. Why I didn’t lie, I’ll never know! Tommy says I was right to tell the truth, but to tell the truth now, I wish I had lied. I told him about hurting my knee the previous September but was quick to assure him that it was fine. That night head coach Tom Landry came to my room and I think called me “Tommy” and said

something like he knew I was a good punter but if I got hurt that they would have to pay me until I'd recovered and that they couldn't take the chance. I wish I had begged or cried or something, maybe even asked if their doc couldn't call Doc Wrenn (for his help in getting me out of my Army ROTC commitment, see my story "BONE SPURS and BUM KNEES and in just a bit I'll tell you how he helped to try to get me in the NFL), but I just told him I understood. I don't remember whether my roommate was in the room, but he also got the boot because of his bad back and was with me and a large lineman in the cab taking us to the airport the next morning. BYE-BYE, L.A., BYE-BYE, NFL, BYE-BYE DREAMS!

HELLO, CHAPEL HILL! After I flew back to Charlotte (at least the Cowgirls paid for my ticket home), I waited a day or two before calling Janet and giving her the news, and she suggested, strongly suggested, actually, she virtually (and wisely) demanded (I still have all of her letters to me, one sent to Mom & Dad's address, where I was sleeping in my old bed, that said that she didn't care about football, she just wanted our family back together) that I get up to Chapel Hill and get back in law school. Harry was in summer school at Carolina and I spent the night in an apartment he was sharing with a couple of guys, watched the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago and saw live the exchange between commentators William Buckley and Gore Vidal in which Bill called Gore a communist pinko queer and Gore responded that Billy was a jack-booted Nazi (my first lawyer employer and later law partner, Frank Griffin was a delegate at the convention), and the next morning went over to the law school in old Manning Hall and talked assistant dean Bob Melott, a Naval Academy (don't know where he went to law school) grad and the official time keeper for the Tar Heel basketball team into letting me back in, and accepting the \$250 scholarship he, Cowboys fan that he was, offered me. Then I went over to the married student housing office and through a moist eyed plea to the young lady who had just told me that I was at the bottom of a long waiting list since there was a letter from me in my file saying that I wasn't coming to UNC, after gathering that the call she answered while I was standing there was from a tenant vacating an apartment, that if she would let me have that unit for my wife and baby, no one would ever know but she (I know, I know it should have been "her", but "her" doesn't rhyme with "me") and me, I got us a second floor, two bedroom apartment on Branson St in Odom Village, the nice brick apartments that were built to supplement Victory Village, the still used Quonset hut type housing built to house married veterans after WWII. Still today, that remains the most successful day of my life!

We moved in on what still remains the hottest day of my life, and after searching Chapel Hill and Durham found the last window AC unit in Raleigh, the installation of which culminated in the 2nd most successful day of my life (hope you enjoy hyperbole). I got a job helping finish the brick sidewalks for the brand new law school building, Van Wettach Hall, I think it is, where I would start classes in a month or so. Janet got a clerical job in the graduate school (the next year she started her junior year in college at Carolina and got her undergrad degree when I got my law degree) and Tommy went to day care at the Presbyterian Church on Franklin (the main drag) Street.

When school started, Dave Mescham, two years ahead of me at Davidson, a third year law student, asked me to play on the law school intramural touch football team. I told him my knee was still gimpy and I didn't want to make it worse, so he asked me if I'd just punt, and I agreed. In the first game, I went in to punt, knowing I had all the time in the world to turn over a 60 yard spiral, which I knew would wow them all because there was a no rushing the punter rule. Some yahoo on the other team apparently

didn't know the rule (how dumb do you have to be not to know not to rush the punter when no one on the offensive line is blocking) and plows in to me when my right leg is fully extended and I'm completely off the ground. Nice punt block, you JERK! I guess it cost his team a penalty but it cost me a night in the infirmary and a hurting and swollen knee. From the 8th grade until then, that was the only punt I ever had blocked. What a way to end my punting career! Once I learned how, I should have sued the yokel!

I hadn't given up on punting in the NFL. I contacted Dr. Wrenn at the Miller Clinic and I have a copy of a letter from him addressed "TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN, Re: Mr. Thomas James Caldwell, 209-D Branson St, Chapel Hill, North Carolina", which reads as follows:

"The above captioned patient has been followed by me for various minor football and athletic injuries since October, 1966. In June of 1967, the patient had a torsional type injury with an effusion into his knee following this injury. It was suspected at one time that he had a torn medial meniscus, however he has had very little, if any, difficulty with it since that time. For the past year his knee has been completely asymptomatic.

His examination at this time with respect to his left knee is essentially negative. This boy has played hand ball, tennis, basketball, et cetera and has had absolutely no difficulty. When I check him for the tibial rotation signs, there is a slight click that could easily be confused with a positive McMurray's sign, but I think this small click is coming from his ankle rather than his knee. I do not believe this boy has a torn medial meniscus and I think he can play football with no greater risk than anyone else with respect to his knee.

With kindest regards, Richard N. Wrenn, M.D."

To the letter is stapled this note: "Tommy, Attached please find copy of letter which Dr. Wrenn sent to Coach Homer Smith...Karen O'Neil, Secretary to Dr. Wrenn." I don't remember it but during one of our visits to Charlotte I must have scheduled an appointment with Doc Wrenn and this letter was the result. I don't know who paid him; Davidson, I guess. Thanks, Homer.

During the first year of my sabbatical from punting, except for the touch football fiasco that is, I had contacted some of the NFL teams I had previously heard from, trying to revive my dream. I have a letter addressed to me at our Branson St apt, dated May 12, 1969, which reads "Dear Tom, Scout Bill Jobko came through the area but was unable to contact you (me: oh how my life could have been altered if there had been voice-mail or cellphones). We are always interested in new players and it is unfortunate you were not available when our scout came through. If you are ever in the Atlanta area, please feel free to call on us for a try out. Sincerely, Tom Braatz, Director of Player Personnel". It was on stationery with a black falcon in flight at the top, and "Atlanta Falcons Football Club, Atlanta Stadium, Atlanta, Georgia" along the bottom.

I don't know why I didn't hop in the car with Janet and Tommy, drive down to Charlotte, drop them off with Dad & Mom, and high-tail it to Atlanta. It might have been because our across the hall neighbors, Wayne & Sybil Smith, he a pharmacy student and a newly having discovered golf golfing fanatic, had just bought a new car and talked us into going down to Long Beach, then mostly populated with fishing

cabins, now with upscale houses and going by “Oak Island”, for a few days of golf and fun in the sun. It was a miserable trip. Wayne, with Elvis resembling, black slick backed hair, I soon discovered was not only a hick but also a jerk, who got ticked when 1.5 year old, adorable Tommy, got a little sand on the floor mat of his car. Wish we’d stayed in Chapel Hill, or better yet, gone to Charlotte and Atlanta.

My freshman or sophomore year in college, Charlie Scott, a NYer playing a post-grad year at Laurinburg Institute in Laurinburg, NC, the county seat of Scotland Co, three counties toward the beach from Monroe, was introduced at a Davidson basketball game in the old Charlotte Coliseum as having just signed to become a Wildcat. The story has it that Lefty had him up for a campus visit, took him to eat at a local restaurant, and he was refused service because he was black. Charlie went to Carolina and beat Davidson in March Madness two years in a row with a last second jump shot. I watched both games on TV in our apartment and heard redneck Wayne scream with delight in each game. I could have strangled him, Charlie Scott and Dean Smith. I put on my Davidson letter jacket and drove up and walked up and down Franklin St amongst the wildly celebrating Tar Heel fans, I started to say itching for a fight, but as I said way back, I’m no fighter, I’m a chicken at heart, a “flincher”, as Homer said, a “tip-toe through the tulips” type, as Coach Hipps said, a Tommy Dews avoiding arm tackler who discovered his aversion to fisticuffs and his fleetness of foot in the 5th grade at Oakhurst.

I learned my Social Security number my 2nd semester in law school. At the beginning of the year, we were told to look at the person on each side of us because one of us three would be gone at the end of the semester. With a wife and son to support, I studied like I’d never studied before first semester and made 4 C’s and 1 B, and thought, this is crazy, studying my fanny off and making “gentleman” C’s. Second semester I discovered Finley, the University owned 18-hole golf course where I signed in with my student ID #, which was my SS # in order to get to play as a student for \$4. I cut my studying time by at least a half, maybe 2/3-3/4, and 2nd semester made 4 B’s and 1 C. On awards night before graduation, I received the award for the most grade point average improvement from the 1st till the last semester of law school. My golf game improved little.

So, my athletic career faded into golf, church league basket and softball, a few cross-country ski outings my friend, Andy Boggs talked me into (I rode with him to an outdoor store in Fletcher, just outside Asheville, NC where we bought x-country skis, boots and poles, and then drove onward toward Mt Mitchell to join a x-country “assault on Mt Mitchell” along the road from the Blue Ridge Parkway up to the summit, only to discover, at the intersection of NC 80 and the Parkway that it had been closed because of the heavy snowfall. Consequently, we parked, skied south, at that point, uphill on the BRPWay, having to remove our skis twice going through two short tunnels, and slogging a half mile or so beyond, before turning and skiing back downhill. Now this was the first time either of us had been on x-country skis [Andy had down-hilled before but I hadn’t {the first time I tried, brother Bill and Bill Carr and I donned Army field jackets to hit the slopes at Beech Mtn, only to get rained out. The 2nd time, my family and I and Andy and his stayed at his friend’s beautiful cabin in Hound Ear’s and he and I took the boys in to Boone to ice skate the first night. I hadn’t been on ice skates since I was at McClintock, or maybe East, and we wobbled around the rink used by the Checkers Hockey team in the old Charlotte Coliseum. I couldn’t keep my ankles from turning in. The last time I “skated” there, someone in front of me fell and threw their arms out to the side, much like I had done when I slipped on the cinders at

Myers Park Hi running the 220 in the junior hi conference meet in the 9th grade at McClintock-remember back that far?- and a skater behind him either clipped off the end of his finger, or at least bloodied it up- blood really stands out on white ice. At the rink in Boone, I don't remember how the boys did, but I made a lap around the rink. Boggs hadn't gone 20' when his feet shot out from under him and his elbow made hard contact with the ice, breaking his upper arm. So much for that skiing trip.}} Where am I? Oh yeah, x-country skiing down the Parkway. I didn't know how to stop or even slow down and began to get nervous as I speeded up, with nothing on the side of the Parkway to keep me from cascading back down into the Piedmont. Finally, I just lay down. I don't remember exactly how I went down, if I hurt myself, or how long it took me to stop, but I lived to tell about it, which I'm now doing.)

And speaking of stopping, I just saw 82 at the bottom of the last page, so almost as abruptly as my official athletic days came to an end, I suspect you'll agree that it's about time I stopped telling about them. My life in sports gave me many things: friends, fun, excitement, a college scholarship (and indirectly, a law school one, too), some recognition and a boat load, more like a ship load of memories, all of which I've enjoyed remembering, as much as I've enjoyed sharing MY SPORTING LIFE with you.

Till the next story, this is old Tom, limping off the playing field, hoping that like soldiers, athletes and raconteurs never die, we just fade away. AMF!!!

A couple of Writer and Editor's Notes:

1) Tim says I should have included my, and his, fishing stories, but I'm not, because a) fishing isn't a sport in the athletic sense of the word, b) they are mostly sad stories and might cast a pall on what I've written above, and c) they deserve a separate story of their own.

2) I said I never punted for the Wildcats after the '66 season. Some more newly discovered evidence has reminded me that that's not entirely true. A letter dated July 9, 1971 from Head Coach David J. Fagg reads, in part, as follows: "On behalf of Steve Heckard and myself, let me say how much we appreciate your taking the time to be a part of our first Annual Alumni-Varsity football game over Alumni Weekend...The competition was good. You won the respect of all of us here at Wildcat Football. I suspect that we will not get hit a great deal harder in '71 than we did on Saturday afternoon, May 22, 1971...Steve had some pictures made for all of you who played in the game. We regret that some of you will be left out of the pictures since it was taken Friday afternoon at your practice session..."

The enclosed photo is a team picture of 31 players in shorts and tee shirts, all wearing low-cut cleats and coaches Gene McEver and Bill Story. 12 are from the class of '71, 1 from '70, 16 from the 60s, but none from my class of '68, 1 from '59, and Sandy Carnegie, the director of the Wildcat Club, '50. I didn't arrive until Saturday morning and thus missed being in the photo. I don't remember whether May 22 was before or after my law school graduation but I'm pretty sure that I didn't work out much in preparation. I played most of the game on defense and did all the punting. Esterkamp wasn't there. Neither was Homer, who had departed for Stockton, California and the University of the Pacific after leading the Cats to the slaughter by the University of Toledo in the Tangerine Bowl the previous December. After the

game, Janet and I had dinner at Slug's Rib with Frank Griffin, who I had taken a job with in Monroe, subject to passing the bar (on April 21, a week from today, I'm driving down to Raleigh where the next day the NC State Bar is having a luncheon honoring those of us who passed the bar 50 years ago [I passed in August, '71, so we were supposed to have been honored last year but it was Covid delayed]) and his wife Betsy. I remember being very sore and very, very tired.

3) And I punted on Richardson Field one more time. I took Tommy and Tim, who must have been around 12 and 8 to see their old man play in another alum/varsity spring game. I punted, decently, if I recall correctly and after one I stayed in on defense for a play or two. The offense completed a pass in front of me and I made the tackle. When I hit the ground, I saw a whole galaxy of stars, thus finally and forever ending my playing days, and with this, finally, MY SPORTING LIFE, at 6:54 on Maundy Thursday, April 14, 2022!

OOPS: The Carolina Panthers' first season was 1995. That summer, Mac & Mary were visiting us in Monroe and Mac went with me to Walter Bickett Stadium, home of the Monroe, then Rebels, now Redhawks, and I punted a few, wondering if I still could and if they were NFL caliber. They weren't. I could still kick a spiral but not over 45 yards, 50 at the most. Mac, 75, was the return man. He was second, only to me in disappointment when I didn't make the Cowboys!