

Interviewee: Martin, Mike
Interviewer: Kevin Witherspoon
Date of interview: July 26, 2005
Category: FSU
Status: Open
Tape location: Box #51 (2 tapes)

Witherspoon: I should probably have said off the record, I am a huge fan and a lifelong Florida State fan, a big fan of the baseball program. I'll try to be objective, but it might not work out.

Martin: Show as much favoritism as you want to.

Witherspoon: Well, I just want to get that out there. I may not be objective. I have read quite a few interviews in preparation for our talk today. And I have not seen very much about your childhood and upbringing and such things, so maybe you could talk a little about that to begin.

Martin: Well, I was born and raised in Charlotte, North Carolina. From a very young age I had a tremendous desire to be a baseball player. When we moved to another home – it's now Independence Boulevard – it was Independence Boulevard then also – it was about 3/4th's of a mile from the Charlotte Coliseum. I watched the Charlotte Coliseum being constructed. It was the real deal back in the late, I should say early '50s. Independence Boulevard – Highway 74 – is busy as any highway that you can imagine and it was a real challenge when I learned to drive to pull in my driveway and to get out of my driveway. It also taught me to be able to be a better fielder because if you missed the ball it went into the highway. [laughter]

I played all sports in high school. I thought I was a little bit better player than I really was in high school. Thought I would get some offers to go to school. Then there was not an awful lot of recruiting; it was just a different landscape back then. I went to Wingate Junior College, where I played basketball and baseball. The manager of the basketball team, a guy name Maurice [??] Macomb, went to Florida State a year ahead of me and told the baseball coach about a little center fielder from Wingate. Well, Coach Hatfield talked to some scouts who had seen me play in the Junior College World Series in Grand Junction, Colorado (gosh, I can't believe I came up with that) and Hatfield said something to the effect of, "Well, come on down and let's talk." So my wife and I got married on — I should say my girlfriend and I got married — June the 28th, 1964, and came down here on our honeymoon and fell in love with Florida State University, the city of Tallahassee. Have been here for the past 41 years.

Witherspoon: Just like that, huh?

Martin: Yep.

Witherspoon: So, Wingate is up in North Carolina near Charlotte or —

Martin: Yes. It's thirty miles from Charlotte. It's now Wingate University, and I was very honored when they awarded me the highest award given to an alumni on a yearly basis. This past year I received that award. I don't know where I put it, but it was quite a thrill for me.

Witherspoon: You came here and then played under Fred Hatfield?

Martin: Played for Fred Hatfield for two years. And then my wife and I thought we were leaving Tallahassee. We packed up everything that we owned – and believe me it wasn't a very big U-haul that we got everything we owned in. I went to Winter Haven to play A-ball with the Mets. That's where Nolan Ryan and I were teammates and even roomed with him on one road trip in a season. But it was a fun experience, the years that I played pro ball. Prior to that I had broken my thumb, and then I came back, of course, to Florida State to finish. I interned at Cobb Junior High School, it was. And then the next year is when I said I packed up and headed for Winter Haven to play A-ball with the Mets. At that point, the Vietnam War was at its highest peak, and the schoolteachers were not drafted. So, I said, "I want very much to serve my country, but I also have a wife that I feel responsible to, and to go to Vietnam now might not be something that would help a new marriage." So, I said, "Well, maybe if I get a job, somebody else can go." Sure enough, I got a job teaching school back here in Tallahassee where I interned.

Witherspoon: And that exemption, was that good for coaching as well? You wouldn't be drafted if you were a coach?

Martin: You had to teach school; you had to teach school. Of course, coaching was not a part, it was just a supplement, is what it was. You were supplementing for coaching. Came back to Cobb Junior High School and was a basketball coach, assistant football coach.

Witherspoon: Did you teach something else as well?

Martin: Yes, I taught PE. Taught PE to guys that are now forty-five years old, that loved to speak of the day they got a lick from Coach Martin. Because back then if we told a young man, "It's time to get started," and he just lollygagged around and we said, "Okay. You want a lick?" That young man jumped in line. The licks that I gave never really left red marks, but yet those guys would always tell, "The day you gave me a lick in PE because I did this —." Some of them are highly successful. I've really enjoyed watching those young men's careers. One is a very good friend of mine to this day, never got a lick. He was on my golf team. I'm talking about Bill Smith, one of the finest people I know, and also one of the real upstanding people here in Leon County.

Witherspoon: You ever wish for those days when you could give a lick if somebody got out of line a little bit? It is a different era.

Martin: I firmly believe that you spare the rod, you spoil the child. There are ways to discipline effectively without hurting anybody. I know we're talking about Florida State history,

but I'll tell you, I don't believe in this time-out stuff. I mean, I could take the switch and I could hit you as hard as I can with that switch and you would not feel it. I mean, I could just whale away. But you let me take a switch to my grandson — "Where's my switch?" — that boy moves so fast. It's the way I raised my children. I didn't hurt them. But you know what? By George, they did what they were supposed to do. They grew up and were disciplined. And discipline is one of the most important facets of people's lives, whether it's self-discipline or discipline that you impose on someone else. We learn from that.

Witherspoon: I agree with you there. I mean, I teach in the History department and maybe it's just me but I find a lot of my students, our students of this era, they just don't respond. I was here as an undergrad from '89 to '93, and even then it seemed like a different era. We respected our instructors; we responded to them. It just seems like a lot of these kids don't have that same kind of respect. I wonder sometimes if it has to do with time-out and lack of discipline imposed on them.

Martin: I've tried to figure out what time-out is [chuckles]. When I was a kid, if I got a whipping, I was usually smart enough myself to go to my room because I sure didn't want to stand there and look at Daddy and smile, or my mama and smile, because that would be worse. I mean, I was going somewhere by myself anyway. I used to just struggle with a lot of things. I've watched our country — I don't want to use that awful word "deteriorate" — I will not use that word. I don't feel that we are deteriorating. I just feel like that we're getting away from the values that made this country great and what we're founded upon. The silent majority, if they don't start speaking up, is going to get what they deserve. I don't want to say it, but I'm afraid I'm in that silent majority. You see the squeaky wheel get the grease, whether it's in areas of abortion, prayer in schools — one or two of those people speak up. I mean, if I go to Jerusalem and watch a game, I expect if they'd prayed, I would hear a Jewish prayer. I mean, I'm in Jerusalem. If I'm in Egypt, I expect to hear an Egyptian prayer. If I'm in Baghdad, I want to hear a Muslim prayer. I mean, my goodness alive! But yet, our country was founded on biblical principles and there's some people that are raising cane because before a football game we're not allowed to pray to God, when I would say of the 85,000 people in the seats, there's only four or five that will be offended by it. [laughter]

Witherspoon: But sometimes they're the ones that speak up.

Martin: They're the ones that speak up. And then if you don't have strong people making the laws of the land, they will succumb to that, whether it's for political reasons or whether it's their intellect coming into play.

Witherspoon: Well, I'd imagine you view part of your role as a coach here, to help impart some of those values into your students, into your players.

Martin: We try to do what's right, that's all. We try to do what's right. I just feel that there are ways to do things — there are more than one way to get your point across. I can't treat everybody alike because everybody's different. Some athletes take a moment to decide and go

back twenty years. There are others that I have to approach from a different angle, but I'm still trying to make the same point. And if they don't conform, then I have to make changes, and thank God I don't have a problem making changes, because you don't want somebody out there that is not on the same plane that you are.

But I love my job! The greatest moment in my professional life was when President Wetherell named the field after me. That was — _____ [??] Florida and they take your name down, kid!

Witherspoon: Oh, is it down now?

Martin: What they're doing is they're expanding the sign at the bottom of the stadium [laughter]. Yeah, they told me they were going to take it down, so I just use it as a line all the time.

Witherspoon: I was thinking as I came up here and I looked out, this must just be a dream job to be able to look out that window every day and be right here on the field.

Martin: It is! It is. In fact, I'll stand up a number of times during the day and just walk over to the window and look at it. I went to bat hard yesterday because I want to have the infield redone. And he's giving us a great price, and I feel like that we should do it. I'm just hoping that the bosses agree with me. But I am, I'm a very blessed man. I've got tremendous memories. I know you have your own questions, but I look back to when Carol and I came down here and that drive down. I remember it like it was yesterday, and it was 1964. We rode into Tallahassee in that 63' Falcon, and it was hot! We didn't have A/C in that car. It was hot! And the moss hanging over those trees as you got about five miles outside of Tallahassee and you're coming down old Thomasville Road then. Thomasville Road went a long way out there. It was 319 — I guess it's still 319, isn't it? Then 319 goes another direction. It used to go all the way through town. When I was in school, 319 went all the way by the capitol—just straight down Monroe Street. You would come in, go under Interstate 10 (which of course wasn't there). That was all two lane, and 319 didn't go off the truck route like it does now. It went straight down past Betton Road, the Miracle Theater, and there was no — it was Five Points there then — and it just kept on going. You'd go down until you hit Monroe Street. Then you turn left on Monroe, and you went straight that way. You know where I am now?

Witherspoon: Yeah.

Martin: And that went all the way down by right by the capitol and down there. And Old Centennial Park was there then. The great memories of this great community. I've always loved this area. But that drive is so memorable. And the first person that I met at Florida State was Ernie Lanford, who is now Doctor Ernie Lanford, who was the assistant baseball coach. Ernie Lanford later left — it was a shock that he left. I can't follow all of his career, but I know he went to Michigan State and became — got his Ph.D., was a very late-marrying bachelor. His son now is twenty-eight, twenty-nine years old. But Ernie returned to Florida State as the golf coach and is now working in our PGM program out at the golf course. But Ernie was the first guy that

I met. He showed Carol and I around. There was — remember the field? Never forget the first time I saw the field, it had palm trees all around, down the right field line, all around.

Witherspoon: Was it in the same spot here?

Martin: Same spot, yeah.

Witherspoon: But very different, I'd imagine.

Martin: Oh, my goodness. No lights. No lights. I can find some pictures of what it used to look like. And I remember the grass being the most unbelievable grass I had ever played on, because living in North Carolina, we didn't have Bermuda, we had Kentucky blue, and _____ [??] and weeds. But to have a ball roll smooth in the outfield, that was incredible. Every time I charged the ball, you would think, "Now what's it going to do?" But it was a tremendous experience, from the first time I walked on the field, to the first practice, to the first game. Met some great people and still have a lot of fond memories from my playing days here. In all honesty, when I left after my senior year and graduated, I never dreamed that I would ever come back to Florida State in a working capacity. And in 1975, Woody Woodward — really, it was '74 — Woody Woodward was named head baseball coach in August of '74, and he asked me if I wanted to be the assistant. I almost changed my mind after saying yes. I almost changed my mind because I was a head basketball coach at Godby. And Mike [junior] was two years old, and I could just picture him being a point guard and all of this stuff. My wife said something she hasn't said to me many times, and it was in the form of a question. It was, "Are you crazy?" [laughter] So I made the move. I went back to Cobb Middle School as a teacher because the \$2,000 that I was making at Florida State just wasn't enough to make ends meet. That was the assistant's payroll. I made \$2,000, and the next year I made \$2,500, and then I made \$3,000, at which point I said, "I can't do this anymore." Getting to Cobb every day at 7:30 and not leaving over here until late, just got to be too much. My children were getting by me and I was hardly even watching them grow up. So I told Woody, "If I can't get on full-time, I've got to leave. I've got to do something else." And they created the first assistant baseball full-time position. What a great thrill that was; I got to teach. I taught the theory and practice of baseball and basketball, and I enjoyed it so much I took on sports officiating. I loved to teach that. So I taught three courses for the years '78 and '79. Started in '77, so it was '77, '78, '79, and then in 1980 I was given the head job. So that basically sums up how I became the head coach.

Witherspoon: I took that theory and practice of baseball with Chip Baker, by the way.

Martin: Did you really?

Witherspoon: It was '89 or '90.

Martin: We'll, I'll be durned.

Witherspoon: It was a good course. I enjoyed it. And he taught it well.

Martin: I don't know what format he used. Did he have pop tests? Did he give five point pop tests?

Witherspoon: He did. Was that one of your methods?

Martin: That was me. And honestly, honest truth, I got it from a guy named Bud Berringer. Dr. Berringer was my anatomy and kinesiology teacher. And I will never forget this, and I'll admit to this (hate for the players to read this), I worked; I was not a bright young man. I had to earn what I got. I graduated with an overall 2.75, but internship played a big role in that [laughter]! But I mean, I knew that course was going to be tough. Reputation preceded itself regarding Berringer. Man, I did a great job. To this day I can go — somebody gets hurt, they'll say something about the clavicle or the scapula or whatever; I know where all the bones are. Well, I took the final exam and it was unbelievable. I didn't study anything that was on the final. He gave out seven pieces of paper with diagrams. I will never forget this as long as I live, because I sat there and I went, "I've got no clue." You had to trace the blood. You had seven systems, from the reproductive system to the endocrine system, and he had them all right there and you were to name the parts. I had never heard him go into this in detail. I mean, I had studied everything else but that. I just bombed it! Passed the course, but still that's not — I'll never forget, I walked in there to him and he said, "Martin, you don't deserve this grade, I know that." I said, "You're doggone right I don't. I learned an awful lot in this course." But he said, "That's what you got." Now what was I supposed to say? "Give me what I didn't get?" Yep, I walked out of that room. I knew I had passed. I knew I was not in jeopardy, but it was the principle of the thing. I worked like crazy in that course. Did not get the grade that I thought I learned [laughter]! I didn't earn it, I learned it.

But that's another thing about this university of ours — great people! That guy left, and I couldn't understand why he left. He was so good for this university. I guess he wanted a change. I think he just went over in Pensacola. I guess he wanted to live at the beach. Taught over there for a while. Never did know what happened to him. But I've watched a lot of great people retire from this university that taught me. I had the great pleasure, and I really mean this, of watching our former — he was a former football player — watching our current president play football. The fastest guy on the team. President Wetherell could fly. That's a thrill to me. Now, he's the leader; now he's our man, and he played here. He has the same feelings for this university that I have. And it means a lot to me. It means a lot me that he doesn't get a smile on his face when the University of Florida is mentioned [laughter]. He doesn't have a feeling of awe when Florida is — because he was on the team that beat them for the first time. And I was in the dadgum stands in front of the band, yelling my head off. I mean, can you imagine seeing another team walk out with "Never FSU Never" on the back of their jersey? Sorry, it's been a long time, but I still ain't got over it [laughter]. I'm a Seminole, man.

Witherspoon: And your still a big football fan too, right?

Martin: Absolutely, yeah. Absolutely. In fact I've sat in President Wetherell's box a

couple of times, and we'll exchange pleasantries, but when a game starts we don't say to much. We don't say to much because — it's tradition, it's history, man. When the spear hits the 50, I got to see it. And that only goes back since Coach Bowden was here. I mean, the tradition of that. Of course, talking about Coach Bowden — that'd take a week because he's so special. But the things that he has brought to our university. Just think of what that spear hitting the 50 indicates. You can go back to when the balloons when up in the air.

Witherspoon: I feel that same way, and its only been since about the mid-'80s. My family, I've got a long line of folks, my grandfather taught here. My dad and uncles, everybody came here, so I feel that same kind of tradition, you know. You see that spear hit the 50. I'm with you on that one.

Martin: Well, I get cold chills. I'll never forget, I ate dinner with Burt Reynolds a couple of years ago and there's only — surprised me and called the hotel and said, "Let's have dinner tonight." Of course, I'll never forget the night that he got off the horse. Remember he was, to my knowledge, he was the first one that got off the horse and held that spear up like that. Jimminy Christmas! I was ready to put _____[?]. But that's tradition. That's Florida State, that's Florida dadgum State. And that's what I tell our players. That's what this place is about. Don't do anything to embarrass my university because if you do, you're in jail. Don't half-fanny play. Don't go after a ball half speed. Don't approach the game any way but the best you can. One of the sincere strong traits of a Seminole Indian is persistence. That's a big word in life. Keep on, keep it on, baby! Coach Bowden has persistence written up there as you go on the practice field. I don't have that because some of mine don't understand the definition, don't know the definition [laughter].

Witherspoon: But you'll teach them. Well, let me go back for just a moment to the mid '60s. And you may not even be aware of this, but I hope you are. When you played here in '65 and '66, that was actually the first year that any sport at Florida State was integrated. That was the baseball team; Fred Flowers played for the team that year. I just wondered if you have any recollections of that?

Martin: Yeah, I remember Freddy. I don't think he made the travel squad, but I certainly do remember Freddy. Yes.

Witherspoon: Did you know he was the first?

Martin: Yes, but I just never thought anything about it. I never have. I just never thought anything about it, stuff like that, I mean.

Witherspoon: Well, he didn't actually make the varsity team. I think that you were a senior at that point. Correct?

Martin: '65, I was a junior.

Witherspoon: He started in '66, and he was on the practice squad. So it might have been something like that where you were a senior and might not have noticed him as much.

Martin: I do remember Freddy, don't get me wrong. I do remember Freddy, but I didn't remember him on the travel squad. That's why I say what I said. Thank God you say he didn't make the travel squad [laughter].

Witherspoon: He's still here in town, by the way, doing very well. He's an attorney here in town. I talked to him not too long ago about some of the other things we do for our program here.

Martin: Good. Did he remember some of the guys on the team?

Witherspoon: Yeah, he remembered some of the guys on the team. He talked about Coach Hatfield, too. He remembered the coach. But he never did make the varsity team. It was just sort of an interesting episode. He was the first black athlete here. The university itself was just integrated at that time. He was among the very first black students, period. And he came out for the baseball team, never did make the varsity. He remembered a few of the guys; he remembered the coach.

Martin: Do you know who the first black basketball player was?

Witherspoon: I do actually, and I am trying to remember his — do you know?

Martin: I watched him play, and I'm drawing a blank.

Witherspoon: I am drawing a blank on his name, too.

Martin: He was unbelievable. I mean, you talk about a Dr. J. or a Michael. People were oohing, me included, were oohing and aahing at practice. He didn't play two minutes. He got injured.

Witherspoon: He got hurt.

Martin: What was his name?

Witherspoon: I should remember that.

Martin: I should, because I —. You know what I miss as much as anything? I miss teaching. The interaction that I used to have with players. I'd get to know all the football players, the basketball players. And it was fun. Fred Rouse ran me down yesterday. Fred Rouse and I grew up in the same city. So therefore, we know each other. Never been introduced formally that I can remember. But yet we're talking back and forth with a lot of laughs, whether

it be Jamie's son, who played against him — Jamie asked Jake, "Did you shake Fred Rouse's hand after the game?" Jake said, "I sure did." Jamie said, "Good, because that's the only time you touched him all night." But that's what I miss.

Witherspoon: Well, let's see we've gone over a good bit of these early — the early part of your career. When you started coaching, was there anything that you learned in particular from the men that coached you and then you tried to emulate?

Martin: I feel like I learned better organization from Woody Woodward. From Dick Howser, I feel like I learned about responding to adversity. I thought Dick handled a bad inning a lot better than I did or would have. He could just stay on this plane. And you see coaches today like this. And you have to be able to be like that, in my opinion. And I learned that from Dick. Patience is probably a better word. I learned that from Dick.

Witherspoon: When you came in and started coaching — I've been looking over the records and I'm just amazed — I mean, you came in winning fifty games right out of the chute and haven't stopped. How do you think you were able to pull that off? I mean, it's like you really never had a bad stretch.

Martin: Well, I think, Kevin, in 1980, we had — and this hurts me to talk about Mike Yestremski [??] — golly, he's gone now. We had guys that were very good competitors. It started out right. We had guys that had gone on to be productive citizens, very good people. I can name the lineup and where they all are. I can do that just about with every player that I've ever coached. And I think that their competitiveness, their real love of Florida State — and I feel that's important. I feel like if you play for this university that you have to understand, this is your university, which means it's our university. And I want our guys to know how I feel about this place. I want there to be a feeling in the other dugout of "uh-oh." I don't want to play Georgia Tech and there be 2,500 people in the stands. I want to hear that announcer say, "Ladies and Gentlemen, may I have your attention, please. This is a new Alexander stadium — Alexander (whatever his name was) — record crowd." I want to sit there and say, "I thought Georgia was their rival." I want to be everybody's biggest game. I want our players to understand that we're everybody's biggest game. And it's not just because of them or me; it's because of what the other people did years ago. That means a lot to me.

Witherspoon: I think that's got to have something to do with the success of this year's team. And it was a great season, by the way. I mean, that team came in with kind of lowered expectations and had a great year.

Martin: Kevin, it was as fun a year I ever had as a coach. Gosh, they were good people. And they would fight you. People won't forget this. We were literally pushed aside at the last game against Florida, and they were good men, they were a good club.

Witherspoon: They went all the way to the championship game. Do you take any kind of solace

in that?

Martin: Absolutely not! [laughter] Not when they did what they — I don't give a flip if they played for it. They beat us. So if you would have said it was LSU and they had done that, I would have said, "Well, that just goes to show you how good they were." But it hard for me to say, "It goes to show you how good they were." You got to remember I'm Florida State, man. [laughter] I'll tell you a funny story. I got a call from Jeremy Foley about two years ago. It was the nicest call, so first class, so flattering. But I hung the phone up and I said to myself, "Does he know who he just talked to?" [laughter] I mean, does he have any idea that I can't pull for him on Saturday afternoon against Vanderbilt. I can't pull for him when he's playing Georgia, Tennessee, because if they're successful down there, it's going to affect us. Now I don't care what you want to say, it's going to affect us. If that's not the case, why'd they go out and hire what they thought was the football coach — *what they thought* was the best football coach in the country. If they're successful, can we be as successful? If they're successful, they're gonna get good players. They get better players than we get, the reason they got them is because they were successful in the first place. So how can I ever say I'll pull for Florida as long as they're not playing us? I mean, let's be realistic, let's be straightforward, let's cut through the chase.

Witherspoon: I've never understood that. I have a lot of friends that when Florida's playing somebody else, they'll root for Florida or they'll root for Miami. And then when they play us, it's a big rivalry.

Martin: I'm not one of those people. I don't pull for them ever. A true Seminole can't.

Witherspoon: I believe that.

Martin: A true Seminole that understands, can't. If they're successful, they're going to get players. They're already ahead of us in so many different areas that we can't do it well. We've tried to do things about — we don't have a journalism school, who do you think writes them? Come on man, they're the ones that write the stuff against us every chance they get. We don't have a journalism school. If we do, I haven't been informed. Our medical school, okay, we're on the rise, we're just getting started. How old is theirs? I mean, they have a teaching facility there and a hospital that, God forbid I ever have to go to, but I must admit I would be — don't want to say comfortable, but you know how big and how bright and how sophisticated the hospital is at Shands. Maybe one day, not in my lifetime, Florida State University's medical school will be on the level of the University of Florida. But as much as you and I hate to admit it, it's going to be a long time.

Witherspoon: It may be in your lifetime, we don't know.

Martin: I won't shoot for that.

Witherspoon: All right. As I said, you came in winning fifty games a season and just kept right

on going. What did you learn over those early years? I mean, surely there was some learning curve, even though you were able to put up those great seasons.

Martin: Learned the first year that I made a big mistake by winning fifty, because the expectations were now set. And it's just something that goes with the territory. In 1981, we had a good club, a lot of power, though we didn't pitch very well. Went down to Miami, and I can remember it like it was yesterday. My assistant coach was Jim Morris. Clem Freeman threw a change up to Castro, their catcher. He hit a three run homer. I reacted very much unlike I react today. Never forget, I reacted in a very strange way. Shouldn't have done what I did, but the competitiveness in me — you realize that was twenty-five years ago? Holy smoke! Little disappointed —

End Side A, tape 1

Martin: And then '82, '83, '84, '85, we had good clubs. We won fifty, I believe, every one of those years, but we just couldn't seem to get it done. I really believe it was me wanting it so much instead of just being able to relinquish that strong desire to say, "Okay, we're going to do this. We're going to do it better than we did. And let's go play." Then in '86, we were tough. We had a heck of a club. And probably had the best club in the country. Arizona beat us and it was not nearly as close as the score. But we had a nice little run from '86 to 2000. And then we have just not had a break. Every one of those, from the Georgia regional — we went Georgia, Notre Dame, Texas, Arkansas, Florida and for super regionals. And it was Georgia, no rhyme or reason, no rhyme or reason other than the home-field advantage, that was the loudest place I've ever played in. You could not — I would have to scream from our distance right now — scream — for you to hear just a few word that I was saying. I am not kidding you. I could get up in the guy's ear, they were so loud.

Witherspoon: Is our place like that, you figure?

Martin: I'm in the dugout and I don't really get to hear a lot of the excitement. I only get to hear it from one to two sections only. When you step out of the dugout, good gosh, it's a big difference, because the "Animals" now are right there. But yeah, it's to me the best environment to watch a college baseball game in the country. I mean, you're right on top of it. That's what the fans love.

Witherspoon: Oh, it's a beautiful facility too, especially after the remodeling.

Martin: Second to none. And now the Gators are building them one, just like they did the year that we built our first one. Anytime they see what we're doing.

Witherspoon: They try to keep up. Well, I've got a little run of questions here that are all kind of similar. What has changed in Mike Martin, the coach, over these twenty-five plus years?

Martin: Well, I think in 1986 I was a little more aggressive in my approach to things, and I really wanted to go to the college world series very badly. I drove around town and went to a Christian book store and looked and looked for something to give me satisfaction, reassurance, whatever, confidence, and I couldn't find anything. I must have looked for I don't know how long, and then I was getting ready to leave and the guy recognized me. And I looked at him and then over his shoulder – I'll never forget, I looked over his shoulder, kind of behind the counter, and there was a book, and it said – I'll never forget it, "Expect to win." And I just literally reached right over his shoulder and pulled that book out. Bought it, took it over to Myers Park and read it, and it's still in my bag to this day. And it gave me a different perspective about life, and that year we played for the national championship. Jerry Kendall, the coach at Arizona, his wife died six weeks after the college world series final game. She was just a precious lady. I knew there was a different plan than the one that I wanted, so I've been able to accept things a lot more since that day. I feel that you can't expect something to happen without hard work. I can't sit here on my butt and say, "I'm gonna shoot me a 75 in two weeks." Now, I might shoot 75 in two weeks, but it won't be sitting here. I've gotta go out and practice. That was a big change in me. And since that day I've been much more at peace because I can't pick up ground balls for them. I can't take the bat up there for them. I can't make every pitch. But I can teach as hard as I can and expect this to happen. And if it doesn't happen, I don't get nearly as frustrated, I become more determined. And that's to me the key to life. You see so many coaches, "Oh man, not going my way, not going my way. This guy doesn't know what he's doing. He can't cover first base when the ball hit to the right side, for crying out loud! I worked on it." No, you didn't work on it enough. If the guy's not covering first base, then you haven't worked on it enough. If you feel that you've worked on it enough and he's still not covering first base, then it's still your fault because he shouldn't be out there. Some coaches can't accept that. They want to blame the kid. That's the easy way out. No, blame yourself.

Witherspoon: I've seen over the years quite a few times either people saying, or just in my own observation, it seems like you are incredibly standup about taking responsibility for any failure of the team. It's like you take it on your shoulders, but the credit you dispense it right out to the players. That's sounds like that philosophy; that's kind of the reasoning behind that.

Martin: I want a young man to come here and do everything that I ask him to do. And when he leaves, I want him to feel like he did it all. And I mean that. That's the stage of their life that they're in. My philosophy in coaching is derived from so many different sources. I could tell you where I learned just about every single thing that I try to do, whether it's teaching, whether its coaching. I used to never could expect a guy to get the bat on a 92 mile-an-hour fast ball tight. One of my assistants, Steve _____[??], said one night, "Why in the world do we sit there and expect the guy to miss the pitch? We expect the pitcher to throw the ball in there. Why can't we expect our guy to foul the ball off or put it in play? You never say a word to them about that." And I guess the reason was, I couldn't handle it [laughter]. So I started challenging guys. Sure enough, results, positive results, started happening. That's hard man; that's tough to do, to fight that ball off. But yet other people do it. Found that to be a very interesting thing when he said that, because it's the only time he had ever spoken up. I expect guys to be in the right place every time the dadgum ball's hit. I expect the pitcher to be able to

throw the ball exactly where it needs to be thrown. I accept some things when he doesn't, but I didn't expect that guy to be able to do that with that tight fast ball. But Steve talked me into believing it. So that's just one of many, many, many things that I've learned over the years.

I think the key to coaching is change. Being able to accept change. Changing yourself. You have to be able to change. Those that don't change, that are not successful, never become successful in my opinion. I've never been above doing something somebody else is doing if they're successful at it. And I'm astounded at some people who have good talent, but they do the same thing every year; they're predictable at what they're going to do. They'll have a team with more speed than they had last year, but they won't run. They'll have a team with power, but they'll put a guy on the bench because he doesn't make contact as much as this particular guy, and this particular guy's best contact is a routine fly ball. You have to understand that the guy in the other dugout has feelings. I don't have good feelings when the guy at the plate that can hit the ball out of the ballpark. I got no problem with the contact guy. You got to have a feeling for what they guy over there is thinking. I hate it when somebody comes to the plate in a certain situation that one swing of the bat can produce three runs. Heard a joke one time [chuckles], "This guy hit eighth in the National League, and the pitcher got the first two outs in the inning, and the next three hitters five, six, and seven, walked. And that guy comes up to the plate that's not the greatest of hitters, and the catcher says, 'That goes to show you how much we respect you man – we just walked three guys to get to you'" [laughter]. They said the guy had to turn back, he was laughing so hard. Obviously that didn't happen. They hadn't walked three guys to get to this one. But the line was beautiful, "We walked three guys to get to you." [chuckles] And my philosophy's not gospel; it's just my philosophy.

Witherspoon: I read another interview with you earlier, you said the key to your team is pitching and defense, but in that particular interview you'll adapt if you've got a power hitting team, or if that's a strength, you'll play that way. So I guess you're willing to change with the kind of talent you have.

Martin: Kevin, I wasn't able to do that early in my career. I was a pitching three-run homer guy. In '80, '81, heck we had—I've got every stat—we had a hundred and, I think we had 120 that year, but that was also before the screen. And we played—yeah, we had 120 home runs. In 1982, didn't go to the College World Series. Got sent to Texas. That is a graveyard. Oh, my goodness!

Witherspoon: I was looking over some of the records and I saw the top two all-time winningest college coaches are out of Texas, which I didn't know that.

Martin: Oh, Cliff and Augie, yeah. That's a shame about Cliff. He basically retired because his son made some mistakes. Cliff's wife was sick and he got out of it. Augie was at Cal State, Fullerton, and he and Cliff were good friends. Cliff mentioned his name to the AD, and the AD—what's ironic, really truly ironic—Augie was a great coach before he went to Texas. It's just easier at Texas. But the first couple of years he was there, he struggled, in Texas standards.

Witherspoon: So do you get along pretty well with a lot of the other top coaches? Do you know them personally?

Martin: Oh, very, very, very much so. I'm proud of that. I called Augie after he won the national championship. He called me back. He said, "Mike, you know when you finish second, you can ride off into the sunset. When you win it, everybody wants a piece of you and there's so many things you have to do. I enjoyed last year because I had finished second the year before." Augie and I go back a long time. Tell you what I learned from Augie Garrido, 1976. He was coaching in the Alaska league. One of these players was Terry Kennedy. The end of the summer, we took a team from here—I coached a summer team back then, it was all legal. I coached a summer team of Florida State guys because I coached at Florida State—and went out there and Augie and I had dinner. What was the name of that hotel? Right across the street from the stadium. It's a Red Lion now, because I saw it when I went out there with Tony Richie a couple of years ago. I had to go back to see it. But anyway, we're sitting there talking, and I'll never forget this as long as I live. He said, "I let Terry Kennedy down." And he said, "I couldn't get across to him what it takes to be successful." And I had never looked at it that way. Here was a man who was very popular, obviously not what he is today. He was not a beginning—he had been in it three, four, or five years, maybe more than that. But he said, "I didn't do my job. I wasn't able to get across to him, 'this is what he needs to do to be successful.'" And it really had a great impression on me; truly had a great impression on me. And that, my friend, was thirty years ago, 1976, because Terry signed at '77.

Witherspoon: And he went on to have a good career after that.

Martin: Absolutely. Terry will say things that I did here to him because I was responsible for catchers. And I'd throw balls off of his chest. I worked him hard, and I pushed him. He would start crying. Didn't pay any attention to him. Just kept on pounding him. But it was a great thing when he called me from the big leagues and thanked me. That was a big thrill. He's managing again, got back into it. Good baseball man.

Witherspoon: Is he in the majors managing?

Martin: No, he's managing in AAA. He was out of it for a year and then Jim Hendry hired him. I don't know what happen; they had a falling out, I guess, and Terry went with the Dodgers. He surprised me. Terry does have a mind of his own [laughter].

Witherspoon: Well, I've got the same line of questioning. Over the past twenty-five plus years, what has changed in the college baseball game?

Martin: Well, the draft has a way of changing the landscape. You don't see as many great arms as you used to.

Witherspoon: They're taking the high schoolers?

Martin: Yeah. They're taking the high school guys. They're gonna gobble those up. Recently with the draft being reduced to fifty rounds, you're seeing a good quality of overall players. The bat being reduced to a minus three has certainly had some effect on the power in the college game. If you're not familiar with that, it used to be that the bat manufacturers could make a 33 inch bat, and the ounces could be 28. Now when you make a 33, the ounces must be 30. That has taken away some of the power. The big difference that I see is the emphasis, the popularity—administrators are starting to fire baseball coaches. That has a way of making the game stronger. I don't care what you say. I'm the only coach that's in his current position in the Atlantic Coast Conference as when I came in, and that was 1992. It hadn't been that long ago. They're all gone, either fired, retired, or moved, like Ray Tanner, to another position. That doesn't count the new schools that came in. The two of them fall into that category. The other one's Chuck Hart [??], and Chuck's been there since I was in diapers; he's been in college since I was in diapers. But anyway, the coaching has definitely strengthened and made the game more difficult. You don't fool people any more. Everybody's doing the same thing. You have strength and conditioning programs. Goodness sakes alive, when I first started coaching we did three exercises and told our guys to get dumbbells to try to increase the strength in their forearms. Working on your legs, you got to be kidding me, man! Get your legs in shape running. Russell Orr, our strength coach, must have ten different exercises that our guys do with their legs. So athletes today are better because of the strength and conditioning program than they were fifteen years ago. A lot of people ask that question, thinking that I'm going to talk about the game being less than it was fifteen years ago. No! Look at the facilities. Look at the crowd participation, the attendances all over the country. Strength and conditioning programs. We have a strength and conditioning coach that travels with us. Goodness sakes! We wouldn't any more pay for him to eat and house him on the road twenty years ago than we would a sport psychology guy [laughter]. Now they have sport psychologists that travel with some teams. We don't have one travel with us.

Witherspoon: Well it seems to me, and this sort of anecdotal because I don't have any statistics to back it up, but it seems to me that there's greater depth across the board in college baseball. It just seems like there's a lot more top flight teams. I mean when you get into those regionals, it's not an easy out anymore. I remember back ten or fifteen years ago, it seemed like you could just count on getting past some of those teams earlier. I mean, do you agree with that?

Martin: Yeah, I do agree with that. I think that was evidenced by us playing Army. And lucky to win the ball game. I think when you say depth, what we really need to look at also is the ability of the college coach to teach. The guy at Army didn't have great players, but he had people committed to a goal that he was responsible for directing. And he had guys that would work at strength and conditioning to enable them to do things on baseball field that surprised people.

Witherspoon: They had one of the top pitchers in the country, right?

Martin: Absolutely!

Witherspoon: That's one of those situations that you might catch them in a one game situation where they can stick with you for a game. Over four or five games you probably _____
_____ [??]

Martin: You know, we won that ball game. You were here probably. We were lucky. As soon as _____ [??] crossed the plate, I said, "You gotta be kidding me." Because I figured it was over and we had _____ [??] and one inning to go. And when AC scored, it just shocked me.

There again—and you won't use this – this is just you and me talking baseball—that wasn't a good thing to allow to happen. _____ [??]; why you trying to pick him off second place? Get the dadgum hitter. _____ [??] was at third, for crying out loud; he's not going to score on anything but a double. Why in the world are you trying to pick him off from the catcher? My catcher ain't going to throw in that situation. My pitcher ain't going to throw in that situation – I hope! If he even thinks about throwing, we're going to start yelling. If the shortstop puts the play on, we're going to cotton-picking ring his neck, because we've gone over and over and over and over and over – the guy can't cotton-picking steal third base. Play your position! If there's two outs, I don't give a dadgum if he can steal third. Get back here where you belong. Cover ground. We ain't going to pick this guy off. We had two outs, and they tried to pick him off second and then tried to pick him off third.

So the game has changed, but it's changed to an extent in which players are better, facilities are better, coaches are better, excitement is higher, more is at stake – people losing their jobs. And baseball is probably the least—I haven't said anything like this, but I'm going to say it— baseball is probably, in the overall scheme of things, in the opinion of others, probably the least most understood game of all. You have a son?

Witherspoon: I have a daughter.

Martin: You have a daughter – your daughter may play softball

Witherspoon: She might. I'm throwing the ball to her. She's only two but—.

Martin: All right. You're not through, are you? Maybe you'll have a son. Beautiful. If your son goes out and hits the ball on the button four straight times and it's four balls right at somebody—or maybe it's a ball that's a base hit and the official score says, "Uhm! No, it isn't." So he's 0 for 4. The average person looks in the paper, sees that he went 0 for 4. Sometimes they put the strikeouts where they struck out. Most of the time they don't. They just put 0 for 4. They give the pitchers the credit for the strikeouts, but they don't put the kid, whether or not he struck it. So therefore, you know that your son had four good swings, but the average person sees an 0 for 4 and says, "Boy, he had a bad night. He didn't hit the ball there four times!" Or the next night he goes out and he gets jammed three times; he's 3 for 4. So that guy sees that he's now hitting 375 because he's 3 for 8. Well, that guy must be good, he's hitting 375, even though his hits were that sorry. Or how about a guy goes 0 for 10, and the coach, who doesn't know, really, the game, sits him on the bench. The guy's a very good player but he sits on the bench. And that other guy who can't do doodly-squat gets in and gets on base a couple of times.

And the next game, the same guy starts. And this guy's over here sitting because the coach doesn't understand how difficult it is to get a hit. And so many people don't give that guy the time it takes to prove whether he can or can't hit!

My son came in my office – 1993. Obviously moved out, but he's still my son. Nice tone of voice (which wasn't always the case) – “I don't think I should be playing. I'm not doing my job.” He was 2 for 17, I think, maybe it was 2 for 13. But anyway, I say, “Well, you and I had an agreement that if you came here, you'd be treated like every other Seminole.” And I don't judge a guy on fifteen at bats. I judge a guy 25 or 30 at bats. “I don't deserve to play. This guy blah blah blah..” I said, “And there's something else that you need to understand. I make the decisions on this club. You do what you're asked to do, and if you can't do it then, I'll find somebody else that can. But I don't think it's time to bench you. If you continue like your going and show me a sour attitude, you will be benched! Your job's to handle the pitcher and to do the best you can at the plate.” Got tears in his eyes. Knew I wasn't going to change my mind; been living with me long enough to know. Got tears in his eyes, walked out of the office. As a father, I felt, not terrible—it was tough. It was a tough thing, I'd just said to my son exactly what I'd tell anybody else, but that's the way it had to be, and the way it's going to be. He went on to have the best year he had of the three years he played here. But if I would have allowed him to dictate to me, then I would have had to conform to something that I don't believe in. I treat that situation the same to this day!

Witherspoon: This is a question I had a little bit later, but while were on the subject, so what's it like to have coached your son and then also work with your son?

Martin: Both are challenges [laughter]. One's an ongoing challenge. If you haven't done it, you have no idea what it's like. Meaning, you don't talk to your son like you would someone else. When sometimes he needs to be talked to the way I talk to others (and I can't say that I've never talked to him like I do others) – when Jamie comes in with a suggestion, I can say, “Jamie I don't really like that. I don't think it's gonna work.” And he can say, “Well, I really think that we should give this—.” And I can say if I'm adamant, “No, sir, we're not gonna do that.” All right. He understands exactly how—that's it. Mike can come in and get to the point where he says, “I think we should do this.” And I say, “Mike, I'm telling you, we're not gonna do that.” And he can keep talking to where I got a decision to make. “Boy, we ain't going no further with this conversation.” At which point I feel like I'm then demeaning him, but yet I'm really not. But he is my son, and I don't want him to feel that I'm treating him like you was treated fifteen years ago when he lived at home. But yet I'm done talking about this. I don't want to talk about it anymore, but yet he wants to know how far he can go. He wants this certain player. I mean, I want this certain player. So you have to look from the standpoint, “That's tough!” But yet you got to do what you got to do. But it's tough because there's that line there. I don't really know how to say it best. The job is here and relationships are here. You do the best you can with this job. You do the best you can with this relationship. But if one is going to be affected, it's got to be this relationship [chuckles]. Did I explain it—did I do a pretty good job of that?

Witherspoon: I think so.

Martin: I think I did, too. I'm very proud of myself on that one. Nothing comes before Florida State baseball! It can't! It can't. Nothing! That's pretty good. I never looked at it that way.

Witherspoon: And he understands that, too, I'm sure.

Martin: Absolutely, absolutely. But he'll understand it more if he ever goes through this. If he's coaching at a Wingate Junior College, excuse me, Wingate University, and his son is his assistant, he'll still feel the same way. He has to be the one to make the decisions and he can't do something out of agape love. He's gotta do what he feels is best for his program. If it means this relationship is affected to a small degree for a short period of time, so be it. That's the key!

Witherspoon: It's interesting – I just thought about it just now – but Bobby Bowden goes through the same kinds of things, I'm sure. Do you ever talk to him about that?

Martin: No, we've never talked about that. I think each person is different in their feelings, but I'm sure that Bobby feels the same way when it comes to the program and relationships. I mean, Bobby Bowden built the dadgum program to where it is today.

Witherspoon: Well, actually I think it's great that were at a university where we can have that kind of relationship within the coaching staff, that you can have fathers and sons come in—it's a real familial sort of atmosphere. But I just thought I'm sure it comes with some cost.

Martin: Yeah, it presents an awful lot of challenges. But I think as long as I'm able to keep it in that perspective—and I have. I mean, golf is a very tough sport, but you don't just give up. You don't give in. Coaching with your son is tough, but I'm not gonna give in. I'm going to continue to try to do things the way I've tried to do them since he was in diapers. But I'm not gonna make him feel unimportant on purpose. This program wouldn't be what it is today if it wasn't for him, both as a player and a coach. He's contributed greatly to the success that we've enjoyed in the last—since he came back and started working with us in '98. He turned the season around for us in '98 by having a team meeting in Arizona, unbeknownst to me. First year. But I can't harbor things—I can't allow my opinions to stay here. If I don't like something that's going on, I gotta get it out. I can't let anything affect the way I feel about Florida State baseball. But the relationship is still what it is; it's important. If he handles that very well, he knows. But that's a great topic of conversation; it really is. A great, great topic of conversation, because love is so deep. I was there the day he came into the world. He's a very independent person. He won't let me do anything, to this day, for him. He'll do it all himself. He don't want any—whether it's financial or—he's always been that way. Always been his own man. And I really respect him for that. My daughter, daughters, they're not exactly that way [laughter]. Mike is, believe me.

Witherspoon: I imagine it's a little tough for him, too, to have to try to kind of get out from your shadow, respectfully.

Martin: Well, I have to understand. He can't agree and have the same philosophy that I have. That's not right. You don't have the same philosophy your dad has. Your daddy may be your idol, may be your mentor and your example, but there's still things that your going to do differently than he did. It's nature.

Witherspoon: But he still puts up with you.

[unrelated conversation not transcribed]

Martin: I take Mobic; I've never taken anything. I've never smoked marijuana. Thank God I never did that cocaine. Never, of course, took steroids. So I don't really know what marijuana does.

End side B
Begin side A, tape 2

Witherspoon: [continuation of unrelated conversation]

Martin: The average person does not know what steroids does for a person. Many people think that you inject yourself with steroids and all of a sudden you become Hulk. They don't know that— this is the way I understand it, maybe I'm wrong—that what it does, it allows you to recover quicker in order to go do something else to help yourself get even stronger. And most people think injection, you're Hulk. It don't work that way. It enables you to recover quicker. I'm sure that along those parallels [??] that would great reading because you could say, "This twenty-four year old injected himself on Tuesday, lifted weights, rested for four hours, came back and did the same workout." I don't know. I'm just making this up, I don't know! But usually when you have a workout, you'll take the next day off. You work upper body one day, you work lower body the next. I would think that using steroids would allow you to use upper body and lower body three or four times a week if you wanted to.

Witherspoon: These people do incredible things to their bodies by using that stuff. They were originally developed as a almost a miracle drug or a fountain of youth, is what they were called back then in the early 1900s when they were first starting to develop these things.

Martin: Did the eastern Europeans do it?

Witherspoon: A lot of it was developed in Germany. But you know, the Americans did their share, too. It started out—in terms of sports, it started out as a competition. The Americans were trying to prove that the Germans or the Russians were doing it. So in order to prove that they were doing it, we had to develop our own steroids and put people on the steroids and say, "See. This is exactly the result that they're getting." And that's kind of how the whole thing spread from there. It's almost like chemical warfare or something, where we develop these horrible weapons, you know essentially to have them so the other side won't use theirs, you know. I'm starting to digress—

Martin: No, no, no. I asked the question. That's good, that's very informative for me. And I'd like to have a copy of the book when it's completed. It would be great reading. Now the '68 Olympics, that was—okay, for some reason I want to think '64. I don't know why. That would be great reading.

Witherspoon: I'll get you a copy of that; it will be out in the spring.

Martin: Good. I'll bet you that's—I'd like to know where Juan Carlos – John Carlos, wonder where he is today? I'm sure it's all in the book.

Witherspoon: I'll get you a copy.

Martin: Good, good.

Witherspoon: Let me get back to these handful of questions I have along the lines of what's changed over 25 years. Now we talked a little bit about the players in terms of their play, but what about the young men? Do you see changes over the—?

Martin: The main thing that I see over the kids today is many of them have personal trainers, hitting coaches. They have an idea, many of them do, an idea of what they want to do at the plate. And as a coach, we have our own ideas. Therefore, sometimes that's difficult to say, short of saying, "This is the way it's going to be done. I don't want to hear no more about it." I'm not definitely sure of that, because if a guy comes in pulling off the ball, trying to hit the ball out of the ballpark every single at bat because he knows if he hits twenty home runs he gets attention, gets a chance to get to pro ball quicker, he's not putting the team first.

Witherspoon: Do you sort of pick up on those things when your recruiting an athlete or are there times when you don't really know about that until they get here?

Martin: Most of the time, and I say this, most of the time, recruiting is like a marriage. You never know what you're gonna get until you been in it for about a year. I had some guys that I thought were just perfect, but what they forgot was the most important thing. That's Florida State baseball. They put themselves above the program. Don't work. Don't do that, because you will not play. If winning for Florida State is not number one, then you really need to be doing something else. I don't want a kid to come to Florida State, and I sincerely mean this, thinking that I'm going to use the baseball program to further my opportunity to play in the major leagues. Now, if you do that, then you're putting the most important part of this experience in the background, and that's your education. If education is not important to you, I don't want you. You must understand that baseball's not going to be with you all of your life. Your education is. You will do your job to the best of your ability in the classroom. If you're having trouble, we will do everything we can to help you. But you will not go on a road trip if you're in trouble academically. Your academics are first. Our coaches understand that. That's been my philosophy from day one and it will not change. I've sat people down before the rules

of the university kicked in, because I do have that authority. And the thing that gets players' attention the best is taking baseball away from them. Their education must be the priority. You will hear a player say that he came here to get to the major leagues, I can't make him say that, but I'll tell you what, look at his grades and see how his grades are. Because, by George, that's my first priority. If he didn't do his job in the classroom, he wouldn't have had that chance to say that [laughter], because he wouldn't have been on the team.

Witherspoon: I personally have not taught too many of the baseball players, but I've never had a problem academically with any of them.

Martin: I'm glad to hear that. I wish I could say that's the way it's always going to be. I've got a challenge that's coming as soon as a kid gets back. Sit right in that chair, and I'm going to tell him, "I'm gonna monitor everything going on. If you're not doing your job in the classroom, I will know it. And if you're not doing the job in the classroom, I will cut you at the semester. You will not have a chance to get into the season to put us in a situation where we're looking to use you and you're not available to us at the end of the semester because you were lax. You traveled and missed classes, three or four classes in this particular course, and you're out." That has a way of getting their attention. And you know what, Kevin? If I've got an ego, the ego is telling you stories about the young men that I've had a hand in watching them get their degree. That is a turn-on. There's one conversation that the guys will tell you, you don't want to have. That's the Martin conversation, and it goes like this, "If you miss another class, you're done. You got me? You're done. Any questions?" Then I'll repeat it so that there's absolutely no misunderstanding. And if you get that—Chris Chavez got that. Before he married the most precious girl—he out punted his coverage so bad—! Golly! And it makes me proud. That turns me on. And do you know who calls me all the time? Chavez. All the time calls me, "Well, it's nice going in the regionals," or, "Good luck at Florida!" Or, "I'll be there. I need two." Whatever, it doesn't matter. That's exciting to me. Truly exciting.

Witherspoon: Well, that's actually my next question, is to talk a little bit about some of your players. I mean, it must be difficult to pick out some of your favorites over the years.

Martin: I've had so many special people. There's no way that I could start—I can go back to 1980 when I first started, how I remember Don DeLoach. He was Donny and still is Donny to me. Donny started working in the computer field at its infancy and is now one of the top computer guys here in the city. Don't hear from him much at all, but had him as a baseball player at Messer Park when he was nine, ten, years old. Ended up recruiting him. He's probably the youngest kids I've recruited. Well, what I'm saying is when I first got into it, he was the youngest guy that I could remember playing baseball. Mike McLeod was my first recruit, but Michael was in high school. Donny was just a little nine or ten year old. Doug Mientkiewicz, Eduardo Perez, those guys just are two of many that really appreciate this university. Florida State baseball is not about Mike Martin. Florida State baseball is about Florida State and the tradition that we have. I don't want people to look at Florida State baseball any other way. I owe everything I have to the good Lord and Florida State University. Florida State University gave me a chance. All many men ask for is a chance. And I want others to feel that way.

Eduardo Perez and Doug Mientkiewicz just popped into my mind because every time—they're both major leaguers, of course—every time you hear from them, you can still feel it. They know what's going on during the season. They're keeping up with the program. That's what it's about. That's a big part of what it's about. By George!

Witherspoon: And you've got hundreds of guys out there doing the same, thousands, maybe.

Martin: We got a lot. And by George, that's important. They know what's going on [laughter].

Witherspoon: They better.

Martin: You darn right.

Witherspoon: Talk a little bit about some of the assistants and other coaches you've worked with that maybe kind of stand out.

Martin: Well, I really haven't had an awful lot because I've been fortunate to keep the ones—Jim Morris was my first assistant and he is now, of course, at Miami. I'm very frustrated right now because of what happened down there two years ago. I gotta get over it. You know what I mean. You know what happened about the signs with the television camera.

Witherspoon: Why don't you go ahead—

Martin: Well, they were using a camera in center field to steal our signs from the catcher and relay it to the hitter. There's no conjecture. I heard it on the walkie-talkie. It's a great story. The walkie-talkie was set on the wrong channel and we were supposed to be on another channel. We put it on the wrong channel and my equipment manager was standing directly behind me, as closer than I am to you. And he's communicating with our bullpen. We usually operated on channel five, and I think it was on six. Out of the walkie-talkie comes, "Change up, change up." Jamie said, "Where did that come from?" And I said, "Call the pitch." And he called another pitch. Out of the walkie-talkie comes, "Fastball, fastball." At which point I knew what was going on. It had been rumored for years, and I'd even told him if anybody ever did this to me, I tell you right now, I'd terminate the series. They're in our league now [chuckles]. That took care of that. They were not in our league when this happened, but that was the next year. So I'm still frustrated that that went on. Of course, he said he didn't know anything about it. I've been coaching twenty-six years. I better know what's going on in this program in every dadgum phase. That's my responsibility. So I'm frustrated on that. In the mid '80s, we had Mike McLeod, Steve Winterling, Rod Delmonico. I also had a guy in the early '80s named Joe Macfarlane [??], who's been a head coach. He's at—one of those presidents' names up in Virginia – I think James Madison. Can't tell you what number he was. But Rod Delmonico has been at Tennessee for thirteen years, twelve or thirteen years. Went to the College World Series this past year. Constant contact with him. Called me yesterday. I talk to him twice a week on

average, sometimes four times a week. He still knows the address. He remembers our mailing address, and he's been up there for a long time. Rod's done very well. Steve's a head coach. Mike's a head coach. Bryan Reese was a head coach. He got fired this past year. Trying to help him find jobs. It's difficult. Link Jarrett called me this morning on the way to a job interview that I recommended him for. I may be leaving someone out. I'm sure we've had—oh, that was a player—Mike Bell is now the assistant coach with Rod. I literally told Rod, "Hire him." He finally listened to me. They went to series last year. Mike Bell is solid guy. I haven't competed against a former player as a head coach. Chris Hart was the first guy that I—well, I can't say that—Chris Roberts, I competed against him when he was at Western Carolina. He's now at North Carolina State. So I had two Seminoles in that dugout on the other side. Gosh, I had to watch everything I did because I don't change a lot over the years. I just hid from them; they couldn't see me in the dugout. I have not coached the son of a player that was on my team. I've coached a son of a father who played with me, but I've had a number of opportunities—I shouldn't say a "number"—I've had opportunities to coach the sons of players, but they went into pro ball. I haven't coached a son of a player, yet. I'm looking forward to that.

Witherspoon: Do you think it's coming soon?

Martin: Yeah, I do. I see a couple of players in the past that—there's one here that's – I would not count, but he's trying to get into school, went to TCC, named McArdle. McArdle was our left fielder in 1976 or '77. I was an assistant then. I probably wouldn't count that one although I did coach his daddy. I was in charge of the outfielders and catchers back then. Bien Figueroa has twin sons that are going to be eligible next year to go to college.

Witherspoon: I caught a ball that he hit for a home run in spring training. Bien Figueroa. He's with the Cardinals, back in—I don't know how long ago—1990 or something like that.

Martin: Bien's an instructor with the Orioles. Been in pro-ball a number of years. Good fellow.

Witherspoon: He was a great player, too. I don't have too many questions left, but a couple of things I want to touch on. I won't take too much more time. We've been to the College World Series twelve times. You've taken the team there. Why do you think winning it has eluded you or the team?

Martin: Some instances we were not the better team. Some instances – luck. You have to have luck. You can be the best team in the country and not get out of your super regional, and that happened to us in 2002. My gosh, we were good!

Witherspoon: That was Notre Dame?

Martin: Yep. We were dadgum good! And I think that the players needed to play an Alabama, an Auburn, a Florida, somebody that they knew could beat them. They didn't think

Notre Dame could beat them. Notre Dame never been to Omaha. Gee whiz, they hadn't been to the College World Series in ages! If at all. If at all. But they were good. And they came in here and they got it done. They got it done. Jared Brown hits the ball that a lot of people say was fair, that was this far foul. I went out there two days later looking around at that board, saying, "Do we need to pull this board up and put a line there, so that it shows?" '01, similar to '05, but yet in '01 we should've gone; we should've beat Georgia. We had our opportunity the first game. I'll never forget the at bat a certain guy had. Texas, Arkansas and Florida, they were all better than we were. Was Texas better than us with a healthy Steven Drew and a non-blister finger on Matt Lynch? Close call, close call. Did we want to play Texas? Jimminy Christmas, does anyone want to play the defending national champion with the tradition that they have? And we were a top eight seed and we're playing Texas? Arkansas was pretty good. Florida was very good. But we got the tying run at the plate when everybody just thought it was over. We had the tying run at the plate. And Wardell was something like four for five off of Falkenbalk [??], and he was in the on deck circle.

Witherspoon: A lot of close calls.

Martin: We played for it twice. We've been within one game of playing for it a couple of times. It's just one of those situations that I still have just as strong a desire, I really do. I want to win a national championship, but I want to be sure that I'm winning it for the right reason. You have to be careful in this business of not turning it into a "me, me thing." It's a goal that every coach has, but I want the goal to be the first one for this program, not the first one for Mike Martin. And I have to admit—I fight that. I don't think it's anything other than human nature. I think that's just only human. When your book comes out on steroids and the effect, you want your book to be the best one that's ever written, but you also want people to learn from their reading of it. And I'm sure that you would say the same thing. "I don't want to be looked at as the guy that wrote the book. I want to be the guy that helped people in their knowledge of what steroids can do to the body." I want to win a national championship for Florida State, and I fight it because it's going to come up, "How much does it mean to you? What would it mean to you to win a national championship?" What would it mean to anybody to win a national championship? I'm sure that the one Augie won last year was just as important as the first one he won, because it's the accomplishment feeling. It's "We got it done."

Witherspoon: Well, coming so close so many times, I'm sure there would be just that tremendous appreciation because, you know, teams that have won four, five, six times, maybe they get complacent about it. But knowing how hard it is to get one—

Martin: Well, we played Miami for the national championship and we ain't got an arm [laughter].

Witherspoon: That was perhaps my favorite season, by the way. The way they fought in the College World Series was just unbelievable.

Martin: Anybody that loves Florida State would say the same thing, because you could

probably tell me where you were when we tied the ball game up against them.

Witherspoon: Yeah. I was driving my car down Apalachee Parkway.

Martin: Is that right? All be durned.

Witherspoon: I remember that game; that's the one that stands out.

Martin: And I'll guarantee you, you probably even let out a yell or your hair stood up on your arm.

Witherspoon: My hair's standing up now, just thinking about it. But I also remember when we were going into the game against Miami, which we fought hard in that game, too, but I remember thinking, "we've got nobody left and its just going to be guts out there on the field again."

Martin: It was special because Jamie said to me after the game—I'll never forget, I looked at him, I said, "Who in the world are we gonna play tomorrow?" He said, "Blair Barnes." It had never entered my that he was available. He's going to have surgery when we get back. "I've already talked to Steve Jordan. We got another brace that's here. We can put another brace on him," Steve said. "No problem. They can't do any worse. He's gonna have surgery." And you want to hear the story—and I still will find this out before I die. Guarantee you he didn't do it in the dog pile. I guarantee you he did it playing basketball the day after the super regional over at Steve Jordan's house with kids. Guarantee you he did it there. That came back to me about two years later [laughter]. I mean, Kevin Brown hits a double just out of our reach, three-run double.

Witherspoon: That's the one that stands out in my mind. Just a couple more things here. Actually, part of it relates to our complications in setting up this interview. I hadn't realized that the coaching calendar was so busy all year around. Maybe you could just take a minute and describe year around kind of what you're up to.

Martin: Recruiting really never stops, although we do have dead periods now but they don't last long. Let's just start the first day of school. The first day of school, we don't want to see our guys, but of course we want to be sure that they're doing what their supposed to be doing. So we check with the academic people to make sure everybody's doing what—I mean, in their right classes. The third day, we'll have our meeting, at which point we will tell them, "Number one, you will go to class. You will do what you're supposed to do." Then we will tell them that the field will be open for the rest of this week and then the next week we'll start four-man. We start four-man always after Labor Day. So when Labor Day is over, we then bring out four guys and we start working on individual stuff. That goes for approximately three weeks. This year, September 25th will be the first day of practice. We do the four-man stuff four days a week. We practice every day for three weeks with the exception of a mandatory off-day. When

practice is completed after three weeks, we usually give them a couple of days off and then we resume four-man stuff. That goes up until the second week in November where we cut off practice. We want them then to have two months of strength and conditioning. Really it's strength and conditioning only for another three weeks because you're not going to get anything out of them final week and nothing out of Thanksgiving week, so you have three weeks total. And when December—I mean when that three weeks approximately, they leave for home, they take home a program that they are to work on. Some you can see that they have worked on it, some that you question. Those that worked on it are definitely highlighted when you watch them begin. And I've noticed that in the past three or four years, they've all come back in very good condition. Then January 7th or 8th, we start spring training. We go for three weeks, then we open up. From January 7th until the first of June, it's an every single day responsibility – no off-days. We give the players off, but it is hard for us as coaches to take off. If we do, it's a luxury. I'm not saying we've never done it, but it's a luxury. My luxury would be a day off, total day off, would be a late breakfast and eighteen holes of golf. And I do very little of that during the season, very little during the season. June gets here and you hope you're still playing. This year I think we finished the seventh – I don't remember. Seventh, tenth, could have been later than that. I'll just say the tenth we finished. We had a week before camp began this year. We sure did. I didn't want to have that week, but we had that week. So basically that was a week that we kicked back. Although there were recruiting calls to make, that was an off-week. Camp started the next Sunday and ran for three straight weeks and then we had a week off. This particular year I had a great week planned. I went to Ireland with some friends and played golf. Great memories. Now we're into our fifth week, so Friday, when camp concludes, and I'll have two camps that I'll conclude that day – the little camp that's run at Meridian Park and the big camp that's run here. For a couple of weeks I'll kick back and go to the beach. I'll come back and school—the guys will start coming in. In the middle of August, the freshmen get here for orientation and we'll have a deal where we meet the parents and give them some things that's expected of them. Then school will start and—. There was something that I wanted to say because I know I'm back to where I started, but I'm trying to think of— Maybe it was the orientation. Must have been what it was. The orientation and then school starts and then back to it.

Witherspoon: I think that a lot of people think it just starts with spring training.

Martin: Yeah, a lot of people don't understand that this landscape's changed. For an example, my '07 schedule is basically done. I have one weekend and that's being back and forth. It will be done quickly. '08 is going to be done in two months. When I first started at this job, I was scheduling in January and playing in February. I mean—"Yeah, I can play. Come on down!" Now the conference gives you a schedule of thirty games. That's more than half-a-year of schedule, so you only have to schedule twenty-six. So it's just a different landscape, plain and simple. There's more emphasis, more interest. I always say that back in the day when I first became a college coach, the guy that lost the coin flip was the baseball coach. There were guys that were clueless, and those days are history. You got guys now—and if you'll notice, there are not an awful lot of professional players in our business. There are two reasons for that. Number one, they made so much money in pro ball, they don't need to come back to college for a job.

And number two, you play in the major leagues for ten years, you don't have any idea what this job entails. You have no idea. You think it's go out there in the afternoons and make the guys are in the right spot for cut-off and relays, teach somebody how to hit and turn a double-play, go home. Hit some golf balls. It don't work that way. It's a year around job, and I have great assistants that take a lot of the responsibility – a great secretary – that take a lot of responsibility away from me. I'll tell you right now, when I first started twenty-six years ago, it was an 8 to 7—I had friends call me, “Mike you got to get away from this. You've got to get away.” They don't have to tell me that now [laughter]. Because when you and I've talked, when we're done, oh, I'll probably hang around. They won't talk baseball tonight. Summer coaches want to get together. I may hold court for awhile.

Witherspoon: Well, I just have two more, probably pretty quick questions. One of them is last year you won the Bernie Sliger award for service here at FSU, which I'm sure is a tremendous honor. But maybe just comment, how does that sort of represent how you believe in carrying yourself off the field, away from the game itself? I know that award entails more than just being a coach.

Martin: I think that you have a chance to influence somebody every single day of your life in a negative or a positive way. I love this university. To receive the Bernie Sliger award, a man that I have deep respect for, a guy that did so much for Florida State University during his presidency, was one of the highlights of my career. To receive the highest honor that your alumni association gives, from Florida State, that's very, very, very special to me. And to have President Wetherell give me that award made it even more special, because I was receiving it from a true Seminole. It was a big day for me, really was a big day. I'll never forget that. Very few things in this office you'll see by way of—somebody else put them up. I don't get into that, but I know where that one is. That's special.

Witherspoon: I figured it would be. And the last question that I want to ask you—again, I've read quite a few other interviews and I've read that you said several other times that your primary objective, or one of them, is to keep the program moving forward. I mean, we've accomplished so many great things already with this program, and the new field and stadium, how do you plan to keep us moving forward and where do you see things over the next couple of years?

Martin: We now have a twelve team Atlantic Coast Conference. We've only been in the conference for a few years. The challenge is to continue to fight for a title. The challenge is to get to a regional. The challenge is to win that. Then the challenge is to get to the College World Series. No matter what you have accomplished, there's still more. Each year presents a different challenge. Whether you have a new team or a veteran team, you still have a new challenge. I personally prefer the challenge of a new team, but the veteran team does give you a different feeling. You're not nearly as afraid because you know everybody has an idea of what the expectations are. A new team, they don't understand what being early is all about, not missing a class, consequences of missing a class; it's a challenge in that area. The new guys sometimes think, “I know what I'm doing now, I've been through this program. I know what's expected.”

And they go to class and they're on time and they do what they're supposed to do, but do they have the real fire in their stomach? The new ones do because it's new to them. So as a coach you have to learn to light that fire if that guy is not motivated the way you want him to. And how do you get through to him? How do you ignite that burn? Everybody's different. Some, you have to take them inside, let them know exactly how you feel. And I really am thankful that I don't have a problem doing that, to this day. It's not a "my way or the highway," but it is my way. And if you don't do it my way and you do not have success, then I'm a very uncomfortable person. If you're doing it my way and we're not having success, then I take it personal and we have to work harder. One of the biggest pieces of advice that I ever got in my whole life in this coaching business came from a guy in South Georgia that coached basketball. His best friend is one of my best friends, first friend I met at Florida State. Ernie Lanford was the first man I met; Van Bracken [??] was the first guy, that to this day we're friends. Our children grew up together. I mean he's just been tremendous. He comes to every game he can come to. But Van and a guy name Benny Dees [??] was his basketball mentor. Benny Dees' saying to Van Bracken, who passed it on to me, "You gotta get them to do what you want them to do." I've never forgotten it. I use that. I will use it when I speak to these coaches. If you don't know what you're doing then that statement doesn't mean anything. If you know what you're doing and you're having success at it, then you know that what you're doing is right. Don't deviate from that. Don't be afraid to make changes in the way you teach and coach, but don't deviate from the fact that it's imperative that they do what you want them to do. I could teach you a certain way to play golf and your—

End Side A, tape 2

Martin: — so you come back to me. And I have discovered a new way to teach you. And this new way is not a big adjustment but I think it will help you to achieve what you want to achieve, so I show it to you. And you do not buy into it. You stay more with what you were doing that I had taught you instead of what I want you to do now. You will never get any better, because you came to me for help and I gave you what I felt you needed to do, but you couldn't implement it and you lost confidence in the new way and you stopped. When a player does not do exactly what you want them to do, it destroys your philosophy, because your philosophy is not being implemented. It's their philosophy. Now you took your philosophy that you got from me in hitting that golf ball. You went back to that. I gave you that philosophy, but I gave you another one and you couldn't buy into it. So basically you got what you deserved. Well, as a coach I didn't get what I deserved. See, you didn't do what I asked you to do. So you suffered, I suffered. I hope that makes sense right there, because I'll tell a guy, "Pardner—" they always kid me about that, that I always preface things with, "Pardner, if you want to do things your way, you better be highly successful because when you're not, you're on the pine, on the pine where the sun don't shine and you shiver when the skipper walks by. And you will be there. And you won't get much of another chance, because next guy I put in there is gonna do exactly what I asked him to do. And if he fails, he's going to continue to get opportunities. So you just make your choice."

Witherspoon: I don't have any more questions. I think I'm about done. Do you have any final

thoughts?

Martin: No, I think that this has been very thorough. In fact, I've said some things today that I haven't said before that came out very well. So I'm very pleased. I think I made my point of how I truly feel about this wonderful place. Like I tell the players, "I'll tell you a lot of things maybe that you don't want to hear, but I don't ever worry about getting in trouble lying to you because I ain't going to lie to you." That's the way I start off every recruiting. I sit there and tell them, "Son, we ain't got any money to offer you, but if you want an opportunity here—" Some of them can accept it, some can't. No, I think that it was very thorough.

Witherspoon: Well, I appreciate it, very much.

Martin: You're welcome Kevin, you're welcome. Good talking to you.

End interview