

Ken Trickey

An influential leader who brought national attention and competitive success to ORU basketball.

Chapter 01 - 1:55

Introduction

Announcer: After the death of basketball coach Ken Trickey in 2012, the Tulsa World called him “one of the most influential and colorful characters in this state’s basketball history”.

Ken played basketball at Middle Tennessee State College, where he was an Ohio Valley All-Conference player for three years, is still one of the top ten scorers for Middle Tennessee, and was elected to the university’s sports Hall of Fame. He returned to Middle Tennessee and became the head basketball coach in 1964. Ken recruited the first African American athletes to play basketball at Middle Tennessee during the height of the Civil rights movement in the south.

In 1969, Ken was hired by Oral Roberts to coach the ORU Basketball team. He took ORU to the NCAA Final Eight as an independent in 1974. His ORU teams during that time also led the nation in scoring and made two NIT appearances in New York City. Upon leaving ORU in 1974, Ken coached at Colorado State University, Iowa State University, Claremore Junior College, Oklahoma City University, and Oklahoma Junior College before returning to ORU where he finished his coaching career in 1993.

Ken was especially remembered for ORU’s high-scoring “run and gun” teams of the early 1970s, which helped the young, small school, attain national attention and competitive success, including a spot in the Elite Eight in the 1974 NCAA Men’s Division I Basketball Tournament.

During the early 2000s, Ken became a supervisor/evaluator of officials for the Big 12 Conference. In 2010, he was inducted into the Oral Roberts University Sports Hall of Fame.

Ken was 79 when he died December 4, 2012, but now you can listen to Ken Trickey and one of the best basketball players to ever play the game, Richard Fuqua talk about the success of basketball at Oral Roberts University on the oral history website VoicesofOklahoma.com.

Chapter 02 - 6:50**Sports a Priority**

John Erling: Today's date is April 7, it's 2011. My name is John Erling.

Ken, would you state your full name, please?

Ken Trickey: Kenneth Franklin Trickey.

JE: Your date of birth?

KT: August 30, 1933.

JE: So your age today is?

KT: Seventy-seven.

JE: We're honored to have Richard Fuqua join us. And, Richard, why don't you state, well, you full name first, your date of birth, your age, and where you were born.

Richard Fuqua: My name is Richard Fuqua. I was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee. My birth date is November 11, I'm sixty years old.

JE: Ken, where were you born?

KT: Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

JE: Your mother's name?

KT: It's Evangeline. My father was Emmet Ray Trickey.

JE: Emmet Ray Trickey?

KT: Um-hmm, um-hmm (affirmatives).

JE: What did he do for a living?

KT: Music. He was involved in music most all of his life.

JE: He played instruments?

KT: In Memphis, Tennessee, yes, but to be honest about it, I don't think he played music but in the service, in the army, he was a bandleader. And all this time he was involved in music.

JE: So were you around him when he—

KT: No, I was not real close to my father because of my mother. My sister, now, just loved my father, but I wasn't that close because I felt like he had mistreated my mother because he was gone all the time.

JE: Your mother worked to help support the family?

KT: Oh, my mother worked all the time in restaurants. I had a grandmother that spent a lot of time, you know—

JE: Did she spend time looking after you and raising you?

KT: Well, yeah, yeah. But I could always get a little money because there was always money in the pockets. My mother, you know, would get tips. I could always go to the movie.

But I got into athletics because of a guy, who I love very much, his name was Gene Blan. When I met him in the seventh grade I just couldn't get over it because he was such a

good looking man. He was dark complected, and he just was almost what I wanted to be. I was very, very close to him all my life. He's been dead but his name is Gene Blan. He was a great athlete himself. I spent a lot of time with him.

JE: This was in Cairo, Illinois.

KT: Yes. Uh-huh (affirmative).

JE: But you were born in Missouri.

KT: Yes.

JE: And then—

KT: Moved to Cairo, Illinois.

JE: When you were very young?

KT: Well, I was living in Charleston, Missouri, and then we moved to Cairo. And I was in the fourth grade.

JE: And that's when you met Mr. Blan?

KT: Yes, he was really like a father to me. I spent lots of time with him and at his house. He used to come to all my games.

JE: When did you actually start playing at sport? And was it always basketball?

KT: Football.

JE: You played football first?

KT: Yes, a very good football player, in fact, I thought I was going to play football and basketball, but they said, "Why don't you miss football for a year and just work on the basketball and then play football next year?"

Well, the football never got around after that. I kicked off in college, I could play.

JE: The earliest time you probably played was in elementary?

KT: Sixth grade, seventh grade.

JE: And you—

KT: That's all I wanted to do.

JE: So you were born to be an athlete?

KT: Yeah. Never wanted to do anything else.

JE: Did you enjoy school?

KT: Oh, yeah, I was a decent student, well, I was a good student but later on that wasn't one of my priorities as I got a little older. But it was just a great time. It was almost like Huckleberry Finn, because right there where Cairo, Illinois, is the Mississippi and Ohio River.

Heck, we were in and out of those rivers and no one had a great place to grow up as I had there at Cairo, Illinois.

JE: So that's what you did, went swimming in those rivers?

KT: Yeah.

JE: You played baseball probably as kids and that type of thing.

KT: Um-hmm, um-hmm (affirmatives), people would come by the house and the restaurant and they'd say, "Miss Trickey," they were wanting me to pick up a game because the blacks couldn't play in Cairo. That was back in the days where black people, well, they played over on one side of town and the whites had to play on their side.

But I could always get a game, it didn't make any difference. We'd go find a game. They might take our goals down because they didn't want us to play on the playground. And I had promised them I wouldn't let them play, and then about three days later, they'd be back out there playing again. [Schules] and my friends wanted to play.

JE: Oh, so they didn't want you to play blacks and whites together?

KT: No, no, no, they would take the goals down.

JE: So that—

KT: When I was in high school, took the goals down.

JE: We're talking about if you're seven, eight years old, about 1937, '38 and '39, to 1940, in there.

KT: Um-hmm, um-hmm (affirmatives).

JE: That kind of attitude was happening.

KT: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: But you then established a rapport among blacks and whites and so that kind of bode well for you later on in your life.

KT: Yeah, and it was not anything that bothered us, I mean, the kids.

JE: Yeah.

KT: You know, we just didn't get to go the same school. We had to go to the white school and black kids went to the Sumner High School.

JE: It was all an adult thing then, wasn't it? This business of being separated.

KT: Um-hmm (affirmative).

RF: It was that way when I played. We started playing white and black when I was in eighth grade.

JE: And that was where?

RF: In Chattanooga, Tennessee.

JE: What year are we talking about?

RF: Nineteen sixty-five.

JE: So you faced a lot—

RF: Yes, because I went to an all black school, from the seventh through twelfth.

JE: You faced a lot of prejudice back then—

RF: Yes.

JE: ... even though you were a superior athlete—

RF: Now when I got in the ninth grade we was undefeated, that's when the integration came in and the white school tried to recruit us.

JE: Did they?

RF: Nah, (negative). Nobody went.

JE: As much as the white schools wanted you, you said, “No, you didn’t want us before”?

RF: And I was the best player in the town.

JE: And you chose not to go to their high school.

RF: No.

JE: So what high school was it you went to?

RF: Riverside High School.

JE: Riverside High School. Is that where Ken found you?

RF: Right.

KT: Darcy Simms was the high school coach and he and I got acquainted. We got to be great, great friends.

JE: Well, I’m going to get to that. Let’s take you to high school, what was the name of the high school you attended?

KT: Cairo High School.

JE: You were a letterman, I suppose?

KT: Oh, yeah.

JE: And you lettered in which sports?

KT: Track, football, and basketball, baseball. Just anything that had to do with the ball.

JE: Was there a particular coach that was important to you in high school?

KT: Oh, Gene Blan. Coach Blan. I met him when I was in the seventh grade, he was in a Phys/Ed class and that’s the first time I’d ever seen him.

JE: But then he was a high school coach?

KT: Yeah.

JE: So you had him as a friend all those years and then he was your coach in high school?

KT: Yes.

JE: Then you go on to Middle Tennessee State.

KT: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: You spent your four years there, graduated from there—

KT: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: That was a good experience for you?

KT: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: You played basketball for Middle Tennessee?

KT: Yes.

JE: And not football?

KT: I thought I was going to play both sports, but they talked me into just playing basketball.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

KT: And then I would play football the next year.

JE: And you were so good at basketball, I suppose, they thought why waste your time. What position did you play?

KT: Played guard.

JE: Point guard? Shooting guard? You did it all?

KT: Yeah.

Chapter 03 - 5:00

Middle Tennessee State

John Erling: So you graduate from Middle Tennessee State. What did you do then, and what did you want to do?

Ken Trickey: Well, I went into the army. I was involved in the service and I spent two years in the army.

JE: Well, you graduated in 1954. The Korean War had just ended.

KT: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: The Korean War was on from 1950 to 1953. So you went into the army?

KT: Yeah.

JE: Why? Because you weren't drafted.

KT: That was just what I did. I was in the service those two years and I never had to go any place except stay right at Ft. Knox. They found out I was a basketball player and the next thing you know, I'm playing basketball most of the time. Then I'm working at Ft. Knox and I'm taking care of all the sports.

I was a second lieutenant and then I became a first lieutenant and then I got out of the service and that's when I went back to teach school.

JE: That was Ft. Knox, Kentucky. You weren't all that far from home, really.

KT: No.

Richard Fuqua: No.

JE: Well, that was an easy two years for you and a fun two years, I suppose.

KT: Oh, yeah, unbelievable.

JE: You come out of the army, then what do you do?

KT: There was a two-star general, Paul A. Disney took a liking to me. It's just one of those lucky things, I guess. General Disney wanted me to stay in the service and wanted to change back to regular army in the tank corps.

And I told him, "If it was just me, I would stay in the service." Because I kind of liked the army. But I had already made up my mind that I was going to coach for a living.

JE: Somewhere along the line here, had you met your bride, your wife, yet?

KT: Met her in college.

JE: And her name?

KT: Peggy McQuidy.

JE: When were you married?

KT: I was a year ahead of her. That spring that she graduated I was at Culver Military Academy and I was teaching there. I never had any problem getting a job, it just seemed to be easy.

JE: You knew you wanted to be a basketball coach?

KT: Yeah, because I had been doing that a long time.

JE: So you come out of the army, do you begin to look for a basketball coaching job then?

KT: Yeah, that's what I was going to do, I was going to teach Phys/Ed, physical education and coach football and basketball.

JE: Your first coaching job was where?

KT: It was at Tullahoma High School in Tennessee. A nice, big school. I was there that first year and my principal and superintendent, he called me and said, "You've got to come home." I said, "Well, I can't home just this first year."

[Schules], he'd been awfully good to me, and he said, "No, you've got to come home. We need you to come home and take care of football and basketball."

I asked not to do the football that first year because I hadn't been involved in football for four or five years. But the intention was that I was going to coach football and basketball, track.

JE: So then you came to that high school. Again, the name of that high school?

KT: Cairo High School. After that though I realized that I needed to get that master's degree. So I went back to Middle Tennessee; in nine months I got that taken care of.

JE: Why was it important that you have a master's degree?

KT: Well, it just helped.

JE: Yeah.

KT: In fact, I even thought about going to Peabody and working on a higher degree.

JE: You chose not to do that?

KT: Yeah.

JE: But you got your master's.

KT: Yeah.

JE: Then how did the Middle Tennessee State job come about?

KT: Well, after that I didn't have any problem getting a job right there at Middle Tennessee. Coach Murphy was athletic director and a football coach. The next thing you know, I'm assistant basketball coach. Four years later, I'm the head coach.

JE: At Middle Tennessee State?

RF: Yes.

KT: Yeah. I was assistant coach for four years and then the next year I was there five years as the head coach. That's how I met President Roberts because we flew out to Tulsa. ORU did a, Bill White was the coach there and I had a friend that wanted us to come out to Tulsa.

JE: To play?

KT: To play because they needed some help. I just would come out there because it didn't have much reputation.

JE: Let's go back to Middle Tennessee State, we talk about blacks and whites here, you recruited blacks that played for the first time at Middle Tennessee State, is—

KT: Oh, yes, yeah. I went to see the president. I said, "Dr. Cole, is there any problem?" He said, "You can recruit anybody that you want." And that's when I was able to bring the two black kids in. It was Willie Brown and Art Poke. Willie Brown and Art Poke were two great players.

JE: Were they playing right there?

KT: One of them was playing in Kansas City and one of them played in Nashville. They were freshmen.

JE: From the community or from the college or students, any pushback?

KT: You know, not really, John, but yeah, they didn't really get after me but I could tell there was some undertow.

JE: But these two ballplayers, they were obviously stars for you, right?

KT: Oh, yeah.

JE: They started winning games?

KT: Oh, yeah.

JE: And you start establishing a good record there at Middle Tennessee State.

KT: Yeah, yeah, oh, we struggled in the beginning, but when I got the kind of kids that we were getting, you could tell that we had something that was going to happen.

JE: Yeah.

Chapter 04 - 7:00

Oral Roberts University

John Erling: Somehow you got connected with ORU. They wanted you to come out here and play. This was in the '60s. They hadn't started a basketball program yet, had they?

Ken Trickey: Oh, yeah

JE: Oh, they had?

KT: Bill White had a team, they were four years and the basketball was four years. Bill White was the coach.

There was a friend of mine named Benny Purcell. Bill White knew Benny Purcell. I got a call from Benny Purcell and he said, "Would you do me a favor?" He wanted me to play Titans.

I said, "I can't do that."

And they said, "Well, do him a favor."

So I did. I said, "Okay." But I don't want them to come where we were because I just didn't want to do that.

We played this team at ORU.

JE: Did you beat them?

KT: Yes, high score, well, yeah, yeah.

JE: You were intrigued by the campus and everything that was going on there?

KT: Not really.

JE: No?

KT: Not really. I wanted to find out some things, not anything to do with ORU. I called President Roberts and he called me back. He said, "Coach, would you come out and visit? Would you be interested in coming to Oral Roberts University?"

And I was really trying to see how strong that maybe I was going to be at Middle Tennessee, and this kind of thing. So I went to see my athletic director and I said, "I've gotten a call from President Roberts. He would like for me to come out and look at the Oral Roberts University."

And I said, "Okay." So I fly out there and then I see this building. We didn't have a very good gymnasium.

But anyway, it was okay and President Roberts was just unbelievable. He just said he'd do about anything to get me to come. He wanted to know about my team, the team that played.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

KT: That's what he wanted to do. He wouldn't hardly let me leave and I had to get on the plane to fly home.

When I get back home then that's when I got a hold of President Roberts. I really wasn't interested but I was trying to see what was happening around me too. President Roberts really wanted to come, because of my team. We had come there and played and he just couldn't understand how we had a team as good.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

KT: I got a hold of Bob Brooks, and I said, "Bob, would you want to fly to Tulsa? We might have a great job."

Brooks said, "Well, I'm not going to Tulsa."

And I said, "Well, just come on and go fly out there. We'll just fly out there and see what it's going to be like."

Brooks can't turn it down. Brooks did have any money, he wasn't making any money. And I said, "Let me tell you what we'll do. Bob, you'll be taking care of all of the inside duty stuff." He was doing that but he was helping, I mean—

JE: Yeah.

KT: ... he would do whatever I asked him to do.

JE: Bob came out of Tennessee.

KT: He came because of me.

Richard Fuqua: Yeah, he brought—

KT: I brought Bob Brooks out there.

RF: Um-hmm (affirmative).

KT: Richard will tell you that.

RF: Yeah.

KT: This comes up about all that stuff but Bob did do some things after I was gone.

JE: Did you know Bob, Richard?

RF: Yeah, while I was there, yeah.

KT: Yeah.

JE: You were here at ORU already when Bob came?

RF: When Bob came, I was here before he got here. Then he came, I think, my sophomore or junior year.

KT: Yeah. When I go out there, President Roberts had a house. He told Bob, "If you'll come we'll have a nice home for you." And when Bob saw this nice home, that's what he wanted to do. I had a house, a beautiful home, right up there on the hill. I was as close as from here to down there to President Roberts's place.

JE: So you were living in that compound?

KT: Yeah, and Bob lived down the streets.

JE: You decided then to take the job with Oral Roberts because he just made it real attractive, didn't he?

KT: But let me tell you, on Sunday morning, for some reason, we didn't go to church that Sunday. Because usually we went and the kids. Now I'm sitting there and I said to Peggy, "Peggy, I'm not going to do this."

JE: You're not going to go to ORU?

KT: No, no, I was going to write a—in fact, I still got that letter someplace I think. Anyway, the thing was that I wasn't going to do it.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

KT: Then all of a sudden, I said, “Peggy, I told President Roberts that I’d come.” I said, “Why don’t we go on out there and if we don’t like it we can come back home and take a job in high school or something.” You know, I just felt like that I had told him that I was going to do this.

JE: So you and Peggy come out here?

KT: Oh, yeah, and Bob Brooks. Brought Bob Brooks out there. He came back out there and that’s how Bob got there and Bob did a li—he did brochures for me.

JE: When you and Peggy come to meet with Oral Roberts, he put the charm on you, didn’t he?

KT: Well, he wasn’t something like that. President Roberts was unbelievable, and Richard will tell you, President Roberts was just around me all the time.

RF: All our practice.

KT: He’d stop by the house. All of a sudden, I could hear a car and he’d be pulled up by the curb there, just come right in. If I wasn’t there, he’d come on in and see if Peggy, what she was up to. He had more fun than he’d ever had in his life.

Now that’s what that was all about. These people didn’t understand this. I’m talking about the people there at the university. They couldn’t figure out why we came out here and, all of a sudden, President Roberts is just with me all the time.

JE: Let’s just say here, as we talk about Bob Brooks, that here we are the 7th of April, and Bob Brooks passed away on Tuesday evening, April 5, 2011, just two days ago. He was seventy-nine years old.

KT: Um-hmm, um-hmm (affirmatives).

JE: And he stayed in Tulsa and he lived here for the rest of his life.

KT: Um-hmm, um-hmm (affirmatives), yes, and he was more inclined to be there than I was. I really cared for President Roberts, but I had made up my mind that I was going to leave after the fourth year, not the fifth year.

I told Dean Clark, Dean and I went to play tennis. I said, “Dean, I’m going to tell you this because I’ve got to tell somebody. This is my fourth year but I’m going to leave next year.”

He said, “You’re not going to do that.”

And I said, “Yes I am. I’m going to get a divorce and I’m going to leave.” It had nothing to do with another woman. I just was not very happy. I wanted to do something else.

JE: When you came here then, you accepted the job with ORU, you brought a number of players with you.

KT: Um-hmm (affirmative). A ton of them.

JE: You brought along Haywood Hill.

RF: Yes.

JE: From the Paducah Junior College national championship team.

RF: Right.

JE: He brought Milton Vaughn.

KT: Yes.

RF: Vaughn.

JE: Most valuable player at Southeastern Illinois Junior College.

KT: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

JE: Brother of Cheeko Vaughn of the American Basketball Association.

KT: Yeah, yeah.

JE: Pipers.

RF: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: You brought Larry Baker.

KT: Yes.

JE: You brought Jesse Trailer.

KT: Yes.

JE: And you brought this man right here.

KT: Yes.

JE: Richard Fuqua, from the same championship Tennessee high school team of '68 and '69.

KT: These players were all buddies.

Chapter 05 - 8:15

Richard Fuqua

John Erling: Richard, tell us about that. Did it take a while for Coach Trickey to convince you guys to come out here?

Richard Fuqua: See, when I first met the coach he was coming to sign Larry Baker and Jesse Trailer. And I was still visiting universities and stuff. I met Coach and stuff and he talked to me and he changed my mind. I decided to come with them.

JE: What was that like when you came to Tulsa, that experience, at first?

RF: I mean, it was different because I had come from all black school. When I got to Oral Roberts it was 99 percent white.

JE: Was that tough for you?

RF: It was different. It wasn't tough people out there, they was wonderful.

JE: They accepted you?

RF: Yes. The best school I could have went to.

JE: Did President Roberts talk to you? To the other blacks, to make you feel comfortable?

RF: Yes. He would talk to us, like once a year, he'd have a dinner at his house. The whole team would go to his house and stuff.

JE: Coach, had to make you feel good to bring such star quality players here to Tulsa, like Tulsa had really never seen before.

Ken Trickey: [laughing] The first thing we did, we didn't have any way for them to get around.

JE: They didn't have cars?

KT: Ah, we're over here on the—

RF: South side.

KT: And they can't get over to the North side. President Roberts said, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'm going to build a dormitory."

The next thing I know, he's got them up there building places.

RF: See, when we first came here, there wasn't no blacks staying outside. We couldn't hardly find no apartments.

JE: Because they didn't have any place on campus yet for you to stay?

RF: Right. I was married.

JE: What did you do to find a place?

RF: I don't know who found the apartment but they found us out an apartment.

JE: How close was it to ORU campus?

RF: Oh, we were real close.

KT: Right there.

RF: It probably about 71st and Lewis.

JE: Then they built a dormitory.

RF: Right.

JE: For the athletes.

RF: Right.

JE: So—

KT: That thing was built in like six months. We had that thing fixed.

JE: What did you do about transportation?

RF: Coach had one of the trainers would come and pick us up and bring us to school.

JE: Was that kind of—

RF: It was of use because, see, I couldn't drive. My family never had a car. Coach learned me how to drive when I was in school.

JE: Where did you play your games?

RF: In the old gym.

JE: It was the field house.

RF: Field house, yeah.

KT: And let me tell you, you can't believe this. First thing I did, I had to build something in

between the doors because this is so darn cold and they had to stay outside, so we had things painted on there where we knew exactly how many seats we had.

You remember that, Richard?

RF: Yeah, I remember.

KT: We painted that thing and there wasn't anything in there at ORU. And the next thing you know, I've got that thing painted. President Roberts, he never said no. He'd come in there and I'd have him painting.

JE: Were you down there painting yourself?

KT: No, I had people there that would do this.

RF: See, now, when we first came they were every block about four, five hundred people and we'd sell out. I think the gym will hold about—

KT: Look at the, look at the legs where they're hanging on to.

RF: ... five thousand, six thousand.

KT: After about four or five games his first year, that thing all of a sudden is full.

RF: They had standing room only.

KT: Packed out. That all came right out of those kids. There wasn't anybody else. President Roberts, he said, "Where's my Pepsi Cola?" He'd come in, I mean, he was wonderful. He was just thrilled to death.

RF: We had people come from the North side and black and whites all together.

KT: Let me tell you, we had all of the black people. Black people weren't playing over at Tulsa.

JE: At TU, you mean?

KT: At TU.

JE: Right.

KT: All of a sudden, the black people were coming in droves.

RF: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: And we should say that was in 1969 to '73—

KT: Right.

JE: ... that you were playing there.

KT: Right.

JE: So that's the era. Well, this is kind of a new thing then. The thing that I think perhaps got the attention of the public, it was this kind of run and gun—

KT: Yes.

JE: ... that you brought to the game.

RF: Right.

KT: Oh, let me explain that to you. First of all, I didn't like it. Didn't like it at all. Bob Brooks, that was something that Bob Brooks thought of and he liked it. We run and gun.

I said, "Why don't we just say we run and shoot?"

JE: You didn't like run and gun? [all laughing]

KT: "Well, why don't we call it run and shoot?"

JE: Okay.

KT: I mean, that just sounded better to me.

JE: Okay. But the point is, your game was a very fast-paced shooting game.

RF: Yeah, we pressed nine feet, press the ball down the court.

JE: As a matter of fact, Richard, you would shoot from maybe just a few steps beyond mid court—

RF: Yeah, I had good range.

JE: If they had the three-point basket then you'd have been really—

RF: Yeah, I'm probably scoring about forty or fifty.

JE: As it was, the team, ORU, averaged 105.1 points per game during your junior year, Richard, of '71 and '72. You personally averaged 35.9 that season. Still ranked as ORU's second leading score with 3,004 points.

KT: Yeah, but they didn't get the three-point. They should have had an asterisk when they started the three-point. "All right, we're going to start having a three-point, but there's going to be an asterisk, because it's not fair, it's not fair. If he had that three-point shot, my gosh, what would he have?"

JE: Well, as I think you said, would have averaged 46 to 48 points a game with the three-point line.

RF: Yeah, yes.

JE: But the three-point basket of team on in the 1980s. The point is, you took about thirty-four, thirty-five shots a game.

RF: Yes.

JE: And what a prolific scorer, and all these people from Tulsa heard about all this.

RF: Yeah.

JE: And that's what started packing the gymnasium.

RF: Right.

KT: Yeah. The mayor came to see us play. I mean, all of a sudden, we didn't have any room. Got to give them my seats.

JE: Umm (thoughtful sound). I'm pointing out for those who are listening, Richard, your 35.9 average was the 19th highest in NCAA Division 1 history. You averaged 31.8 as a sophomore in '70 and '71; 27.1 over the course of your 111 game ORU career. You're too modest. I wanted to say that for everybody, those are the facts.

KT: Oh, yeah.

JE: That this is one fine basketball player—

KT: Yeah, yes, yes.

JE: ... we're sitting with here today.

KT: Yes, yes.

RF: Well, thank you.

JE: Yeah.

KT: Plus playing on a knee that had to have surgery and not to, because I love him, he's the best at all time, he's the best I've ever seen one.

JE: They would have added more to the NCAA scoring numbers but your junior season you finished second in the nation in scoring. But since Oral Roberts University did not gain NCAA Division 1 status until '71, and because the school was an independent, not affiliated with an athletic conference.

RF: Right, independent.

JE: Your career point time I was there.

JE: No. About Richard, then in '72, you were named the NCAA Men's Basketball All-American. You were on the consensus second team. I point this out here because the consensus first team was Henry Bibby, Dwight Lamar, Bob McAdoo, Ed Ratleff—

KT: Um- hmm (affirmative).

JE: ... Tim Riker, and Bill Walton.

KT: Um-hmm (affirmative). Big time.

RF: Right. Right.

JE: So you were on the consensus second team as a junior with Barry Parkhill, Jim Rice, Bud Stallworth, and Henry Wilmore.

KT: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: They were from Michigan, Kansas, Louisville, Virginia, and here you have Oral Roberts University in all of that.

KT: Um-hmm (affirmative).

RF: Right.

JE: So those were great honors.

KT: Um-hmm (affirmative).

RF: Yes.

JE: I also have records here of all-time records your 60 points that you scored against University of the South, February 1971. So if you look up the list, 65 points, Anthony Roberts eclipsed you 5.

RF: Yeah.

JE: But we have Pete Maravich at 61, Wayman Tisdale at 61, Elgin Baylor scored the same amount as you did, 60 points. The great company that you were in as you scored those 60 points, then we can go higher. But Pete Maravich at 59 and Rick Barry, 59, Bob "Foothills" Kurland, who I've interviewed, 58 points. That's the kind of crowd that you're in.

RF: Yeah.

JE: In the record books.

RF: Thank you.

JE: With that 60-pointer.

KT: Um-hmm (affirmative).

Chapter 06 - 4:45

Start Shooting

John Erling: Richard, talk to us about those years then, and how much fun they were for you. And what was going on because you could see, you come in and this place is crowded, it's just packed.

Richard Fuqua: When I first came here, you know, Coach called me in the office and told me, "Richard, you ain't shooting enough," because the team I played on in high school, we won back to back state championships and we were blowing teams out. I erred about 20 some points. When I came out here, I was used to playing that role, you know, just kind of balance scoring and stuff, so Coach called me in one day and told me that I wasn't shooting enough. And that's kind of when it started.

JE: So you said, "All right, I'll show you."

RF: [laughs] After that, you know, I started scoring a lot of points.

JE: What position were you playing?

RF: I played guard.

JE: And how tall were you?

RF: I'm six-four.

JE: You're still six-four?

RF: Yeah, still six-four.

JE: Coach, you told him to start shooting?

Ken Trickey: Yeah, I told him if he didn't shoot I was going to set him down. Not really, but I mean, I wanted him to shoot that ball. Because he could do it. He could take off at the half line, behind the half line. And I used to have people say, "Coach, how do you do that?" I said, "Well, you want me to have him shoot one?"

"Well, yeah, and tell Richard to shoot one." I mean, it was that kind of thing. We were trying to really develop a bigtime program.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

KT: We had twelve players; Richard's was one, the next one was two, next one was three, four wasn't doing much, five didn't do much, six didn't do too much. I mean, they were

good players, I don't mean that they weren't doing much. But he's the guy that was shooting the ball.

JE: Yeah.

KT: To this day, I don't believe the way they play.

JE: Richard, the shooting just beyond the mid court, is that something you did on playgrounds? Where did you start perfecting that?

RF: It started in the playground but shooting came easy to me. I always could shoot. But I put a lot of time into it, I played basketball seven days a week, rain, snow, my hand froze, because I loved it.

JE: In your elementary grades, you were playing ball then?

RF: I started playing basketball when I was in third grade.

JE: And that's what was always your love, it wasn't any other sport?

RF: I played nothing else. I love to watch football and baseball but I can only play basketball.

JE: As an independent then, was it easy to pick up them games?

KT: That's all a misnomer. It's a damn misnomer about it. Notre Dame, Notre Dame plays without that.

JE: But were you able to get games?

KT: Sure!

JE: Who did you play during those years?

KT: I'd have to look it up, but, Lord, I had a lot of friends. We played Wisconsin, a guy was a friend of mine. First of all, we wanted to go to New York. We wanted to go to New York. You remember?

RF: Yeah.

KT: You remember we went up there?

JE: Okay, who did you play there?

RF: The first game we played Memphis State. And then the next game we played St. Johns.

JE: Was that a tournament that was set up?

RF: It was NIT.

JE: Oh, in the NIT.

RF: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: In New York?

RF: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: All right. That would have been in your ...?

RF: My junior year.

KT: We would also play—

JE: Talk—

KT: ... other schools that would go up there and play. We could get those people up there to play us. But out here, some of them thought we weren't good enough.

JE: You tried to get games with OU and OHU?

RF: They wouldn't play us.

JE: Why wouldn't they play you?

RF: We would beat them.

JE: They were afraid?

KT: Well, and I'll tell you when I at Oklahoma City University, we beat Oklahoma and Oklahoma State on Saturday and Monday. That's when I hosted Oklahoma City two years.

JE: After you left ORU?

KT: Yes.

JE: But when you were at ORU and an independent and not in a league at all, it was tough to pick up on some of these games—

KT: No.

JE: ... because they were afraid—

KT: No, no.

JE: ... that maybe—

KT: No.

JE: Well, OU and OSU wouldn't play you.

KT: No, no, they're so quiet. It didn't make Abe Lemons, never could get Abe Lemons to play. Never could get him to play.

JE: Why wouldn't he play you?

KT: Well, he just—

JE: Abe Lemons was the coach at OSU.

KT: ... I called him up and I talked to him and finally he said, "Trick, don't call us. We ain't gonna play you." But later on, he wanted to play us because he was struggling. Sure, there was some of those people. But we had people coming here to play from California, from New York, from Chicago. We didn't have any trouble. That's a misnomer, a lot of these people think that.

I'd be an independent now, if it was me. I'd want my team to go Chicago to play.

JE: How about Tulsa University, back when Richard was there?

RF: Yeah.

JE: You didn't play TU?

RF: No.

KT: Tulsa didn't want to play us, wouldn't play us. They finally played us one game there—

RF: Ten, yeah.

KT: ... and we lose by one point.

JE: When you were there, Richard?

RF: No, we never played Tulsa when I was there.

JE: Never?

RF: No.

KT: That was the fifth year.

JE: All the four years you were there, TU would not play you?

RF: No.

KT: But the fifth year, they played.

JE: After he had graduated.

KT: They played.

JE: And then they played all—

KT: We had all those good players.

JE: You still had because Anthony Roberts had come along by that time too.

KT: Yes, yes, you're right.

JE: So he was still playing.

KT: Yes.

Chapter 07 - 7:00

Anthony Roberts

John Erling: How did Anthony Roberts come to—

Ken Trickey: Because of this man.

Richard Fuqua: We were from the same high school.

JE: Okay, so you probably did the recruiting of Anthony Roberts.

RF: Yeah, me and Coach went down there and talked to him. See, he had signed with the University of Tennessee.

JE: Tell us about how you convinced him to change his mind.

RF: You know, he kind of looked up to me because back home, you know, like I said, we had won the state back to back and we were the fourth ranked team in the nation. And he had heard a lot about me. You know, I knowed his sister back home. People think a lot of me. He kind of admired me too, so it was kind of easy, you know, because I came out here, he wanted to come.

JE: So then you have Richard to thank for doing this recruiting?

KT: Um-hmm (affirmative). Yes.

RF: Me and Coach never had problems.

KT: No.

RF: I had too much respect for him.

KT: In fact, I'll tell you the thing I'm really disappointed in that I did. He was married and he had a little girl. And he was taking her to the hospital, and I didn't know that but he wasn't at practice on time. Which was stupid on my part, really. I should have found out exactly what happened.

JE: So you got on him because he was not at practice and you didn't understand the reason?

KT: Uh-huh (negative).

RF: No, we had just found out my daughter had meningitis.

KT: Yeah, but that was one of those things that I thought he did, didn't show up. But he didn't miss a time, never missed a day. I don't think he ever missed a class.

This thing with President Roberts was just unbelievable. We would be up to his house, all of us, he'd have them praying and it was a wonderful time.

RF: And time was a luxury, you know, we had our own plane, we'd fly in. Where I come from, you know, we never had nothing like that. When I came out of this school it picks up in a limousine. That's bigtime where I come from.

JE: We should point out that Oral liked basketball because he played basketball.

KT: Yeah.

RF: Right.

JE: And it was while he was playing basketball when he was sixteen that he collapsed and they discovered he had tuberculosis. He thought that basketball was good public relations for his school.

KT: Oh, yeah.

JE: Did he come to practice?

KT: Oh, Lord, yes.

RF: All the time.

KT: Yes.

RF: All the time.

JE: Did he ever offer advice?

KT: Not to me, he didn't.

RF: Not to me either.

JE: But he would just come there and watch.

RF: Yeah. He was a great basketball player.

KT: Oh, now I'll tell you what he might do, he might be saying a little something back here in the back or something, but no, that was just part of our game. It wasn't something where he was a nuisance.

RF: We'd go play, he'd be on the plane, fly out to the game with us. He was really a very down-to-earth man.

KT: Yeah. I never got on the plane and go sit down with him until I was asked. Because sometimes he would be doing some work.

JE: On the plane, you mean?

KT: On the plane.

JE: Right.

KT: Now some of them—

RF: They would hover around him, yeah.

KT: He'd strut around.

RF: Um-hmm (affirmative).

KT: And also if President Roberts wasn't there, oh, Bill Jernigan and some of them, they figured they could beat the number one guy.

I had a little manager and he had just walked by. He says, "You know, you're in the wrong seat." He said, "Coach Trickey, that's his seat. If President Roberts doesn't go, that's Coach Trickey's seat. I mean, it was that kind of thing.

Well, I didn't care where I'd sit. I had people on that plane that I didn't have a seat because they had too many people.

RF: Um-hmm, um-hmm (affirmatives).

KT: Had too many people.

JE: Did he ever join you on recruiting visits?

KT: Went right there in Nashville.

RF: David Vaughn.

KT: David Vaughn, well, Lord, yeah.

RF: He went and preached at Dave Vaughn's dad's church.

KT: Yeah.

JE: Who is David Vaughn and talk to us about that.

RF: David Vaughn was out of Nashville. He played at Cameron. They had won back to back state championship too, and everybody was trying to recruit him. Matter of fact, I think he had signed with Memphis State, and then Coach got him.

KT: Yeah, yeah.

JE: With David Vaughn, did you bring Oral?

KT: Yeah. I got a go in with David's grandfather. He really wanted David to go to ORU. David Vaughn was trying to go someplace else.

RF: And Dave Vaughn was married to Larry Finch's sister.

KT: Larry Finch's sister.

RF: Of course, at Memphis State.

JE: Okay.

KT: Yeah.

JE: So then David Vaughn committed to Oral Roberts? Was it tough recruiting players because of this code of conduct, the code of honor and all that?

KT: Never bothered me. If they didn't want to come, fine, I'll go find another one.

JE: So then was it tough? Did some people turn you down because you had to sign a statement?

RF: The honor code is just a letter of intent.

JE: A letter of intent?

RF: Okay.

KT: I really didn't even care about giving those things. If you don't want it, fine.

JE: You mean the written statements saying that you'd—

KT: Yeah. To me, that was ridiculous. If I went to Chattanooga or went someplace and didn't want to come, well, I'll go find another one.

JE: Another player?

KT: Yeah.

JE: Wouldn't Oral Roberts join you at high school games to scout a prospect?

KT: He and Richard once or twice might go to see a game. But they never interfered with anything. And I swear, I'll put my hand on the Bible, he knows what I'm saying. If they started getting in my business, I'd just disappear.

JE: Yeah.

KT: But it wasn't President Roberts. Did you ever know the guy that was a doctor? The guy that started hanging around with President Roberts? Had built the City of Faith? Jim Winslow.

JE: Dr. Winslow.

RF: Winslow.

KT: Oh, yeah. Boy, he really was trying, and he did, he got in. The president let him do that but he couldn't get that with me. Winslow, we were going in at the half and we get in there and they came out. And I said, "Winslow, did you give," oh, the left-handed guard that was real good. McCants.

RF: Sam McCants, Sam McCants.

KT: I said, "Did you give McCants a shot?"

And he said, "Yeah."

And I said, "You get the hell out of here and don't ever come back again. I do not give shots to anybody. I don't do it to parents and I don't do it to the doctors. If he can't play then I'm not going to put him in. That's just not part of my—"

JE: So was it a steroid, that type of thing, that shot that he was getting?

KT: Had it in the knee, he took a shot in the knee at the half. Oh, and I said, "If I lose this game, you'd better start running. I don't believe in that."

JE: Yeah.

KT: But see, they all kind of wanting to think that they were—and the kids used to laugh at them.

RF: See, you have to be around how they're trying to get closer to the president, you know. Man, you could see it.

JE: Everybody wants to be around Oral, right?

RF: Yeah, trying to get close to him.

JE: We should point out too about Anthony Roberts's record, from '73 through '77 during his four-year career, he averaged 21.7 points, 7.4 rebounds per game, including a senior season in which he averaged 34 points and 9 points to rebounds. He's only one of two players in the National College Athletic Association Division 1 history, along with Hall-of-Famer Pete Maravich, to score 60 or more points in a single game versus a Division 1 opponent more than once. Roberts scored 66 points in February 19, 1977, against North Carolina AT&T, and 65 against Oregon on March 9th of 1977. So that's the kind of player he was.

KT: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: And we had them right here in Tulsa.

KT: He could play.

JE: At ORU.

KT: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: I mean, it was an astounding talent that you originated and brought here, and obviously, Richard helped and all that.

RF: Anthony was great, he could play.

JE: Yeah.

Chapter 08 - 12:00

ORU vs. Kansas

John Erling: Then we come to this NCAA tournament where the Titans upset Louisville at the Mabee Center in Round 16. Can you comment on that game, Coach?

Ken Trickey: Yeah, we beat Louisville and we also beat, uh—

Richard Fuqua: Syracuse.

KT: Syracuse.

JE: To get to those games?

RF: Yeah, it'd be Syracuse and then it'd be Louisville.

JE: You beat Syracuse first?

RF: Right.

JE: And then at the Mabee Center you upset Louisville—

RF: Good deal.

JE: ... 96 to 93.

RF: Right.

KT: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: Then Kansas beats Crayton 55 to 54 in the semifinals. Eddie Sutton was coaching Crayton at the time, so he almost beats Kansas. But then we come to the big game—

KT: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: ... where Kansas beats ORU 93 to 90, and that was in overtime.

KT: Um-hmm, um-hmm (affirmatives).

RF: We were leading the whole game. They came back.

JE: Kansas rallied from a 9 point deficit—

KT: Yeah.

JE: ... over the final four minutes and forty-seven seconds of regulation time.

KT: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: Kansas then survived when Al Boswell for ORU missed a last second shot.

KT: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: And then won in overtime as their super sub Tommy Smith scored two baskets in the final forty-four seconds.

KT: Right.

JE: Sam McCants scored 30 points and Anthony Roberts had a key tip-in and two follow shots as ORU rallied past Louisville and the other semifinal.

RF: Yeah.

JE: Any outstanding memories of that game that came so close to beating Kansas that would have put ORU in the Final Four.

RF: Final Four.

JE: Can you remember some of those feelings?

RF: I can remember, you know, we had the lead, we thought turning the ball over we was playing great at first. Then at the end of the game we started making mistakes and then they started making shots and stuff. You know, it just was a great game.

JE: And we should point out that Ted Owens was the coach of Kansas.

RF: Right.

JE: In that major game. So close. Do you remember after the game if Oral came around and visited with the team and you and—

KT: Yeah, but I promise you, it did not affect me, that game. I mean, it was over, and I'm there the next day cleaning out my locker and everything. I wasn't unhappy.

JE: When the Titans upset, because that was an upset—

RF: Oh, yeah, big upset.

JE: To beat Louisville.

RF: Oh, yes.

JE: We don't have to talk about this but you were pulled over by police and charged with a DWI.

KT: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: If you don't want to talk about that at all—

KT: Um-hmm (affirmative), I'll tell you exactly, exactly. Jim Brenton was there.

JE: Who is Jim Brenton?

KT: He was like a brother to me, one of my teammates in high school. And he was with me. I had not eaten, I was tired because there was a lot going on. I walk out with my friend Jim Brenton and there's a police car. I couldn't lay this up. Right over here was a policeman. I mean—

JE: Highway Patrol?

KT: Highway Patrol. And I saw him there. I saw him there. And Jim said, "The Highway Patrol is there."

I said, "Hell, I ain't done nothing." And I had not been drinking, I don't give a damn what they say. The next thing I know, this guy pulls me over and just like it was today, I couldn't do this heel to toe thing.

JE: Oh, he asked you to walk the line?

RF: He did.

KT: Brenton was saying, "What's he done?"

So he takes me down to the police and he's going to give me a—

RF: Breathalyzer.

KT: Yeah. I wasn't even thinking it was anything. Well, hell, I haven't done anything. I don't know that this happened, but there are people who think that somehow it could have happened with somebody from Tulsa. Because we were about to wring Tulsa at this time. If we win that thing—

JE: The next game, you mean?

RF: Uh-huh (affirmative).

KT: Well, the whole thing, I mean—

JE: Yeah.

KT: ... it's what we were doing.

JE: So you think you were set up on this?

KT: I don't know because I wasn't even, I mean, I swear to goodness that I didn't even think about it.

JE: Yeah.

KT: I mean, how can you be that damn dumb, I guess, on my part? If I'd of just gotten in the car and Jim Brenton's—

JE: Let Jim drive.

KT: Yeah. I got on the phone and called Bobby Seacrest, who is one of my dearest friends. He called his bigtime friend and he came up there. He said, "Hell, he's not drinking."

But there was a deal going on to that. But you can't get people to believe that—

RF: Yeah, no way.

KT: ... because they laugh. There were a lot of people who thought—

JE: Are you saying you didn't drink at all or you had one drink?

KT: No, no, no, no. When I go in this place, I swear to God, I was the head of that whole thing. And I stopped in different places just to see who was there. J. P. Haney and Terry Scott, now they were drinking. Those guys were drinking, but I was not drinking. "Did you not take anything?"

"No, I didn't take anything."

JE: But then they did a breathalyzer on you?

KT: Well, let me just tell you, that ain't hard to do.

JE: But it came out with a DWI.

KT: Oh, yeah.

JE: And it had to be terribly embarrassing.

KT: No, yes, I guess, but I took that just like I've done all my life. When that thing happened I had already made my deal that I was leaving. And I ended up coaching that last game.

JE: You did. Did Oral speak to you when this all came out?

KT: Oh, yeah.

JE: What did he say to you?

KT: Oh, well, he was wanting me to stay, he didn't want me to leave. And he'd give anything for me not to go. And I'm not so sure that may have been part of all this. Because I had already, that had already been told.

JE: There was no drinking in the honor code and so I'm just wondering if Oral came to you and said, "Hey, don't worry about it, you've got a big game coming up and let's just move on to that game."

KT: Okay. Right. All right, but, hell, I wasn't drinking. I wouldn't do that there at the school. There was some shenanigans about that there. But, boy, they like to jump on that and, I mean, real quick.

RF: Y'all was in the NCAA tournament.

KT: Oh, yeah.

RF: And getting ready to play Kansas.

KT: Yeah.

RF: It's, you know, big press.

KT: Yeah.

JE: Right. That was a big, big story.

KT: Yeah.

JE: And you were caught in the midst of all of that.

KT: Yeah.

JE: It had to be tough.

KT: I just, I just handled it just like I would do anything else.

JE: You just had to put that out of your mind as you went to coach the team for this big game with Kansas.

KT: When that happened, I walked up to President Roberts's house and knocked on the door. And I said, "I want to talk to you." I said, "You know, this is not going to be the right thing because Jack Sutter is going to get caught up in all this." That was my assistant and a good one. I said, "I need to coach this team tomorrow."

So we were talking and that was all it was.

JE: So you went to Oral's house?

KT: Sure. Just walked up there.

JE: You told him right away what happened.

KT: Well, yeah.

JE: He never questioned whether you should—

KT: No, no, no.

JE: ... the game?

KT: No, no. Why would Oral ever want me to come back and coach at ORU again?

JE: Right.

KT: Why?

JE: You left for Iowa State.

KT: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: Was there any pressure for you to leave ORU?

KT: Oh, I had already resigned there. I was resigned there with ten or twelve games left I was going to finish with.

JE: Why would you leave when you were so successful? I mean, you were almost into the Final Four, why—

KT: I wanted out.

JE: Why would—

KT: John, I wanted out. When you do what I had to do, all this stuff, I wanted just to be a basketball coach. And not have to do all of this other stuff. I was wore out, I mean, I loved President Roberts, I never done anything but call him President Roberts. I've never called him Oral, but he tried every way in the world.

Ruth Rooks told me later he just liked to never got over that.

JE: That you left?

KT: Yeah.

JE: Yeah.

KT: Yeah, he and I were unbelievable.

JE: You had a close relationship with him, didn't you?

KT: Yeah, he would have taken me back. They were calling me. I was at the NCAA and Bill Connors called, he said, "The word is that you're going to come back after all this."

I said, "I don't know where that's coming from but I'm not coming back. If I don't get a job, that's not what I want to do.

JE: You go to Iowa State, and then over the next thirteen seasons, ORU went through five coaches, bad publicity. The team was placed under a one-year NCAA ban in '80, '81, under Coach Ken Hayes for recruiting and other violations. Ken Hayes was fired at Christmas time. Bad public relations in '82. I, of course, remember that.

KT: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: It would seem to me that in the eyes of the public the program never, ever came back to what it was in the days when you two were there. That firing of Hayes at Christmas time just put a nail in the coffin of ORU basketball in this town.

I came in '76, that was Anthony Roberts time.

RF: Right.

JE: And I suppose it was with you too, the place to be seen was at the Mabee Center for your games.

RF: Yes.

JE: Everybody would come up for that buffeted lunch—

RF: Um-hmm (affirmative). Everybody.

JE: ... or dinner in the evening.

RF: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: And everybody in town, if you wanted to be seen, that's where you'd be.

RF: Would be, at Oral Roberts games.

JE: And I got in on some of that. And hardly anybody—

RF: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: ... was going to the TU games or anything else.

RF: Right. Everybody was coming to Oral Roberts games.

JE: And they all came there. But when Ken Hayes was fired, that all went away.

RF: Yeah.

JE: Then Ted Owens, he had two scandalous March seasons. ORU gets rid of Owens. So we have all of this going.

So you returned, and there's more on this, but you came back in 1987. Why did you—

KT: I didn't particularly want to come.

JE: Where were you coaching? Where were you—

KT: I was coaching there at the, at the, uh—

JE: Were you at OCU then?

KT: ... the junior college. And President Roberts, you know, that's that stuff again, he wasn't going to let it go. I told Ted, "He's not going to let it go." I wasn't trying to get Ted Owens's job, I didn't want his job. I could have helped Ted Owens a great deal, that wasn't me trying to be the head basketball coach or anything else.

JE: No. But they wanted Ted Owens to move on. And it wasn't because of you, it was because of these violations.

KT: That's right.

JE: Then Oral wanted you to come in as a coach. So did that take a long time to convince you to come back?

KT: Yeah. First of all, I knew that it wasn't going to be like it was. Because the thing that hurt, I think, is when they tried to go into these conferences. I would of never let that happen. I would of never let it happen.

JE: But wasn't it a way for them then that if they win their conference they get an automatic bid to the NCAA?

KT: No, no, no, that's what people say. You say, "Well, why would you want to go back and be the coach?"

Because I could get those twelve or fourteen bigtime games, and then I could have some local teams. Maybe you could play around, but no, this summit league?

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

KT: Oh, no, no, that's not what this is all about.

JE: But isn't that because if they win that summit league tournament then they get automatically bid.

RF: Yes.

JE: And that's what drove them.

RF: They wanted to get the automatic bid, yeah.

JE: Right.

KT: They all say that—

RF: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: But it's true though, it is.

KT: No, I don't think it's true. How often have they got it?

JE: Well, that's their fault, but the opportunity—

RF: Opportunity is there.

JE: The opportunity is there.

KT: But you've got a rinky-dink schedule. Why would you want that? We wanted to play big. Always play big. Brooks, I love Brooks, but that would be the kind of thing that he'd like.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

KT: I mean, why would you want to be one of those rinky-dink conferences? I mean, just think about it.

JE: It's only because if they win that conference then they get automatic bid to the NCAA, and that's what drives that. And it's tougher probably to get recognized or ranked if you're an independent.

RF: Right. Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: I believe. You guys would know better than I. But that's got to be the reason that they go into that.

KT: Well, I've never believed in it. I just think there's enough good teams, they need teams.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

KT: Honest to goodness, they need teams.

Chapter 09 - 4:35

Anthony Roberts Killed

John Erling: Richard, what did it mean to you to be able to be around Ken and play for him and how he influenced your life?

Richard Fuqua: He let me be me. You know, I'm not a real outgoing guy but me and Coach connect. You know, he understood me, I understood what he wanted from me, and he understood what I wanted from him. He's one of the finest mens I ever been around. My mother liked him, all the players liked him because he's down-to-earth too. You know, he can relate.

JE: Was he able to push you, like in games and encourage you to play better?

RF: Oh, yeah, like he, yeah.

Ken Trickey: Yeah.

RF: 'Cause he always just tell me. And the guys I played with wanted me to shoot the balls. Wasn't no jealousy. The guys would love to give me the ball, you know. We came from a game and I didn't get the ball enough and Coach Trickey called a meeting and told them that if I didn't get the ball more that he's going to ship a lot of them out of here.

JE: [laughs] So there was "Feed the ball to Richard," right?

RF: Yes.

JE: And let him shoot.

RF: Yes.

KT: Your best player, why would you not want your best player, and I watch those guys, I don't pay them near the attention anymore, but you've got five guys and your fifth guy ends up with the ball about half the time.

JE: But because you were such a prolific scorer, Richard, wasn't there a lot of double-teaming on you?

RF: I got double-teamed, triple-teamed, sometimes they had three men and they leave grass on the goal just to stop me.

KT: Yeah. I've got my arm around Richard Fuqua and I'm on walking on the gymnasium, the—

JE: The floor?

KT: Yes, and I said, "Richard, do you know what the record is in this building and what that would mean to us?"

And he said, "Yes."

I said, "But 50 points, he got 48."

JE: You mean in another location?

RF: Yeah.

KT: Yeah.

JE: You'd walk into a gymnasium and say, "Do you know what the record is in this place?"

KT: Yes!

JE: "Okay, now go beat it."

KT: Yes.

JE: Anthony Roberts never played on the same team you did?

RF: No, no, I'm four years ahead of where he was.

JE: You're four years ahead?

RF: When I got through playing, he was a freshman.

KT: He played one year for me. And he spent the rest of those three years at my house. He just—

RF: He died, like when you left.

KT: Yes. Yes. I loved Anthony. I tried every way in the world to keep him off of that stuff. But when they got it that night, he wasn't doing anything.

JE: We should say, first of all, Anthony was selected in the first round in 1977 of the NBA draft.

KT: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: Denver Nuggets selected him—

KT: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: With the twenty-first overall pick. And he spent his first three NBA seasons with Denver. Eventually, weighed by the Nuggets and signed by the Bullets. And so he played for a number of years in the NBA.

KT: Um-hmm, um-hmm (affirmatives).

RF: Yes.

KT: But he couldn't—

JE: But then he—

KT: ... take care of his money and stuff.

JE: Anthony was shot and killed while he was arguing with two men.

RF: Right.

JE: In the parking lot outside his apartment complex on March 29, 1997, in Tulsa. He was forty-two years old at the time. Do you know if that argument was about money or what that was all about?

RF: I don't know.

KT: I think I know about it. I don't think that he was involved in anything. Those guys, they were coming this way. He wasn't trying to push over somebody. But these two or three guys, they were running their mouth. And those two guys pulled out a gun and killed him.

JE: Tragic. After your career here at ORU, did you try for the NBA?

RF: No, I went to camp but my knee was tore up. I left, came back, had knee surgery, and then just gave it up.

JE: So then what did you do?

RF: I started working for the Tulsa House Authority and I ran their rec program, I was the director of one of their rec centers.

JE: What are you doing today?

RF: I work for Tulsa County, I'm a detention counselor.

JE: Who do you deal with?

RF: Kids come in, you know, we book them.

JE: What kind of cases are you dealing with?

RF: Oh, we do everything, okay, like stolen cars, gun charges, attacking their parents, just about anything that had to do with the youth, we deal with all of it.

JE: So these are kids that have been charged with these crimes?

RF: Right. Some of them be on drugs, and some of them just ain't going to school, some of them just skip court. We counsel them, you know, and we do paperwork, and just deal with them.

JE: I imagine some of that is rewarding.

RF: Yes—

JE: Do you see a difference—

RF: Because I see a lot of kids to come in there, a lot of my friends have that same kind of background when I was coming up, you know, so that I can relate a lot to it.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative). You're able to help them, I'm sure, in many ways.

RF: Yes, yes.

JE: And at this point, they don't know who a Richard Fuqua was or is.

RF: Oh, no, they probably wasn't even born.

JE: Right, no, they weren't born, that's for sure.

RF: Right.

JE: But these kids need that kind of counsel that you're able to give them.

RF: Yes. And a lot of kids come in the gym and have heard of me and stuff and I go out there and mess around with them. And they'd be surprised at how I can shoot and stuff, you know.

JE: So how old are you today?

RF: Sixty.

JE: Sixty, and can you still shoot from mid court?

RF: I still can shoot.

JE: From mid court?

RF: I still can shoot, I guess you don't lost that.

JE: Yeah, that's something, that's amazing.

Chapter 10 - 8:10

Basketball Today

John Erling: Let's talk about both of you, basketball today and we've just finished an NCAA tournament. We just had a game between Butler and University of Connecticut. Butler was an underdog and University of Connecticut, they win. But the basketball of today, has it changed any? What are your comments on it?

Richard Fuqua: We played one of those shot clock, gotta get the shot clock in. You know, 'cause I guess, people want to see a faster game, people didn't want to see that pass the ball for five minutes and stuff. People don't want to pay that kind of money to come and just watch them just pass the ball. People want to see you dipping down the court, block shots, want to see fantastic play, shooting, ducking, you know, you want to see the exciting games.

JE: Do you agree with that?

RF: Oh, yes. When I first came here they would pass and throw down balls, pass the ball four or five minutes. People would go to sleep in the stands. I think people liked how we played because we was—

JE: You played as if there was a shot clock.

RF: Right, it was exciting to come.

JE: You didn't need one.

RF: Like our first year at the Mabee Center, it was packed. All our games was packed because people loved the way we played, how we got down the court, they come to see how many points on the score. But it was exciting.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative). Coach, do you have any comments about basketball today from what it was before?

Ken Trickey: [laughs] I personally just, I don't go to the games. I don't like the way it's played. Just don't like the way it's played. I mean, you know, that's fine because it's changed and that's the way they want to do it. And this thing of salaries. You tell me that it's worth a million, two million, that's crazy, John.

JE: OU has just hired Lon Kruger for two point something million dollars. But if the money's there, Coach, why not take it?

KT: Well, I'm going to tell you why, because the players are the ones that are screwed. The players are the ones that are screwed.

JE: Why are they screwed?

KT: Kids get nothing.

JE: You think players perhaps should be paid some days?

KT: Well, I don't know, I would think probably football or all of them, I mean, there's enough money. I don't care what they get but I'd like to see it played, that the scholarships were good.

When I was in college, I was in the ROTC, and I got, I think, twenty-five dollars my two years. And that really helped. All of these guys wearing these suits, they got the suits on, they got about eight, nine guys sitting on the bench. There's not room for them.

JE: You're talking about five, six suited up assistants sitting there and—

KT: My God, more than that.

RF: More than that. More than that now.

JE: Yeah.

KT: It's terrible.

RF: More than that. When you was doing, you had three.

KT: Head coach and assistant coach and might have a couple kids that are working on their master's. We had a hard time finding and getting the players. Because it's out in this part of the country and everything. But my goodness, you let me get up to Chicago or let me get up and see these plays—

RF: See these plays.

KT: I think the three of us can go coach them as good as they're coaching them. We can just coach them. [laughing]

- JE:** Well, I want you to know that you two brought a whole lot of excitement to this town. There is no question about that and you talked earlier about teams not wanting to play you because they were afraid of being defeated. There's no question that that happened, OSU, OU, and TU, but you had the run and shoot offense and—
- KT:** That's great because that says it right there, see. Run and gun through.
- JE:** [all laughing] Right.
- KT:** Run and gun? No, we run and shoot.
- RF:** Uh-huh (affirmative).
- JE:** Yeah, it was a great time in basketball.
- KT:** Oh, yeah.
- RF:** And you know, it was proven because we was outdrawing them. So you know people came to watch us play instead of them.
- JE:** Yeah. And that's why everybody wanted to be seen at the Mabee Center. And Oral Roberts must have been just ecstatic with you.
- KT:** I really feel good about the Mabee Center.
- JE:** Let me just stop you for a minute because about the Mabee Center, when it was being designed, you had an input into the way it was designed.
- KT:** Okay, Frank Wallace, he—
- JE:** Frank Wallace is the architect.
- KT:** He is the architect. So I didn't have anything to do with the architect. But everything that went in that, the dressing rooms, those seats up there, those clocks up there came out of my head. President Roberts listened to me.
- The dressing rooms, that color up there, that blue, how do you think that blue got up there?
- JE:** When you say, "Up there," what do you mean? In the higher, you mean, the whole—
- KT:** Yes, because now if you turn those lights that blue hides up there and they're gold downstairs, but all of those—
- JE:** Okay.
- RF:** The seats are blue.
- JE:** Right. We should point out that we've got gold seats on the lower level.
- RF:** Gold seats, gold seats.
- KT:** Yes.
- JE:** And blue in the higher level, is what we have.
- RF:** Um-hmm (affirmative).
- KT:** But we can have all of the blue hidden up there. Say we got six thousand downstairs and it's all full. But upstairs we don't have anything.
- JE:** Um-hmm (affirmative). But you had sellouts in the Mabee Center many times, didn't you? I think it ran nine, ten thousand people.

RF: Yeah, when we played, yeah. And they never have since we left.

KT: That red carpet, all of that stuff, I'm just telling you, came out of my head.

JE: Well, it makes sense for a basketball coach to have input into a basketball arena.

RF: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: Which more than an arena, it's an event center, is what it is.

KT: I would of never let them put that little bitty thing, in that little—

JE: Baby Mabee.

RF: Yeah.

KT: Yeah.

JE: That they added on.

RF: Yeah.

KT: Yeah, I would have set it over to—

JE: That was used for production for television and all. The Baby Mabee, wasn't it?

KT: Well, but you could still do it. I just wouldn't have had it where it's—

JE: Attached to the Mabee Center.

KT: Attached, yeah. But they've made some nice things now. They've also cut them back some, but I think they've done some good things.

JE: Well, the Green family has come in and has done a great job out there now.

KT: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: That they've agreed with family, Hobby Lobby, they've infused a lot of money—

KT: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: ... into this.

KT: Bob Brooks was an awful lot of help. I really hated 'cause he's gone.

JE: That's too bad. We didn't comment about the gathering of Eagles.

KT: Well, that's—

JE: So they've been known as the Titans and then they switched their name to the Eagles.

KT: Right, yeah.

JE: Why did they do that?

KT: Here's the deal, President Roberts never did like the Titans. I said, "Well, why don't do this?" I swear to you, I said, "Why don't we do this?" I said, "Why don't we call them Titan/Eagles because we still keep the Titans in there." And I started using this, "A gathering of eagles."

JE: That was a great slogan though, the gathering of eagles.

KT: Well, I've got those things that I had them put up there before they were all out there.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

KT: And that's kind of aggravating when you've done something that made it good—

RF: [Indecipherable]

KT: And the thing like uniforms, the uniforms should remain the same. They can be longer.

RF: Um-hmm (affirmative).

KT: They ought to be loose, I mean, they ought to be big.

RF: Um-hmm (affirmative), okay.

JE: Out of the *Tulsa World* in 2008, August 31st, Jimmy Trammel said, “Neighboring programs were more or less guilted into keeping up. If Trickey hadn’t caught lightning in a bottle, would Tulsa have hired Nolan Richardson? Would Oklahoma have hired Billy Tubbs? Bill Connors once wrote that ORU’s success inspired Tulsa, Arkansas, OU, and OSU to commit to better things.” Because of what you did, and Richard, of course, performing as a player. That’s a lot of credit that goes to you two. You should feel good about that.

There’s a famous sport magazine article that’s titled, “Praise the Lord and Pass the Ball to Fuqua.”

KT: Now I’m not sure that I had anything to do with that because I didn’t think that was real good.

RF: [laughing] I was—

JE: Oh, it’s fun, Ken, it’s just fun.

KT: Oh, okay. I understand but that was not one of my—

JE: Well, it says here, “Trickey said he never liked the title but it paid dividends.” When you first met your wife, Judy, she recognized his face from a photograph and said, “Hey, praise the Lord, and pass the ball to Fuqua.”

[laughing]

KT: That right there, get those uniforms on my man there.

RF: And they’re hot pants now, Coach.

KT: Huh?

RF: They call them hot pants.

JE: They’re hot pants now, right?

RF: Hot pants now.

KT: Yeah, I know.

JE: So you don’t like these big droopy uniforms?

KT: What? No, it wouldn’t be for me. These are so darn baggy and everything, why would you want to do it?

RF: They say it was the Fab Five started that.

JE: Yeah.

RF: The state board started that.

Chapter 11 - 5:08**Henry Iba**

John Erling: I forgot to ask you, did Henry Iba affect your coaching in any way?

Ken Trickey: Well, I think so. I'll tell you what he did. A lot of people didn't know anything about me and Mr. Iba, but Mr. Iba and I had some visits. After a game one night, I'm talking to Bill Connors and somebody mentions, said, "Mr. Iba wants to talk to you."

And I said, "Well, he's not here, he's down in Texas someplace."

He said, "No, he's here."

And I said, "Well, golly." So I jumped up and went upstairs to see Mr. Iba. He really was nice to me, Mr. Iba was.

Now a lot of them weren't too nice to me. I don't think Eddie Southern was too nice to me, I mean, over the years. You know, he's all right, he speaks to me. Billy Tubbs, hell I did more for Billy Tubbs, I did a lot for Billy Tubbs.

JE: Yeah, and what did you do?

KT: Well, I got him some uniforms and I did some stuff for Billy Tubbs.

JE: Your first year at ORU was the last year at Oklahoma State for Henry Iba. You enjoyed talking to him and—

KT: Oh, yes, yes. Yeah, I thought the world of him.

JE: But he was more into defense, wasn't he? He wasn't a shooter.

Richard Fuqua: More into defense than to slow down.

JE: In a newspaper article later you give three individuals credit for launching ORU's glory years. You give President Roberts credit. You give Dorsey Simms, who was coaching at Middle Tennessee credit. You became his friend. And number three, Richard Fuqua. And if there's anybody as good as Fuqua, Trickey hasn't seen him yet.

RF: Well, thank you, Coach.

KT: Well, he pays me to do that.

RF: Thank you, Coach.

KT: Well, he's the best I've ever been around.

JE: Yeah.

KT: Now there's another one, Willie Brown, my God, what a player he was.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

KT: He got killed, Willie Brown. He could do things and was not any effort. We were playing one night and there were some guys, they said, "Does he shoot the ball this far out?"

I'm sitting there on the sideline, and I said, "You don't think he's shooting too far out?" I'm talking and the game's going on.

RF: Um-hmm (affirmative).

KT: And I turned around and I said, and I don't whether he remembers this or not—

RF: Yeah, I remember, Coach, I remember.

KT: I said, "Richard, put one out there." You know...

RF: Yeah, I remember, Coach.

KT: Well, he takes off on the other side and his feet come down on this side. So he turned it loose [laughs] on this other side.

One time there was some people yelling at me. Tony Hinkle was a great coach in Indianapolis. They're all sitting down there and I'm sitting close and I hear them yelling at me. The game's going on. I walk down and sit down beside them, there's three of them. You could tell they didn't know what to do, I'm now sitting down here on their bench. [laughing] They said, "Coach," and they were stuttering like I stutter, said, "Don't you think you ought to go back to your team?"

RF: [laughs]

KT: I said, "What's the score?"

They said, "You're up 8."

I said, "Well, you know, we're up 8, I don't need to be bothering them now. I'll just go ahead and let them play.

JE: I do remember that about you, you would kind of leave and just walk off and let them play.

RF: Yeah, a lot.

JE: You did that a lot.

KT: Oh.

JE: As a matter of fact.

RF: And would talk to the crowd.

JE: Yeah, people were thinking he was supposed to be coaching.

RF: And um-hmm (affirmative), and talk to the crowd, talk to the crowd.

JE: And then because you guys were already ahead.

RF: Talk to the crowd, talk to the crowd.

KT: I had a great friend, he's an elderly guy, and I'm not even sure he's still alive, in East Tennessee. He was a lot older. I was younger but I was playing it this time. And I looked over there and wanted to know where the coach was, and he said, "Well, he'll be in here in a minute."

And all of a sudden, I seen across the gym floor, I jumped over the bench and went across and walked up. My friend came down and put his arms around me and hugged me because I knew him. And everybody in the place looked at it.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

KT: He was a great friend and a great coach and stopped the game and talked to my buddy. Now that's kind of what I'm talking about. How can you get mad?

JE: You were, you were kind of a showman, weren't you, Coach?

KT: Well, it was kind of fun. All right, we're in Wisconsin, we're working out. John Palace is my buddy and known him for years. He stuck his head—I said, "Come on in here." And we're getting ready to practice, we're going to have a game that night. Well, I got John Palace in there with me. But it's a game.

JE: Richard, sometimes at halftime, if you were behind, would Coach give a real powerful, inspirational speech? Or was he really mad, or come down on your hard?

RF: It, it all depends, you know, if we ain't hustling or not playing defense, it just depends on the situation what he'll say to us.

KT: But you know what else I used to do? I used to get up and go outside and I'd leave Moose Roland and them in there to do some talking, because I knew Moose and them would just drive them crazy.

JE: Who is Moose?

RF: He was—

KT: One of my assistants.

JE: So you let them do the talking?

KT: Well—

RF: And he'd talk to you, go on and on and on for about—

KT: So I'd go outside and get me a Coke. One of the announcers one time, he said, "Coach, don't you need to be with your team?"

I said, "Well, I don't know, I think we're all right. But I'll just wait until the game starts." It's just a game.

Chapter 12 - 3:20

Water Fight

John Erling: Do you remember the time—this has nothing to do with basketball now, but the water out of the so-called River of Life out here? Oral Roberts was saying, "We're sending you water from the River of Life."

Ken Trickey: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: We went out and took a PH sample of that water. And it wasn't the same as came from ORU, as they claimed.

Richard Fuqua: It wasn't? Okay.

JE: And then we discovered that it actually was being bottled in Dallas, Texas. So there was the day then that Richard Roberts was going to come up to the studio and confront me

about this. And you, Ken, came with him. You drove him there, probably. Richard Roberts was there and he came into the studio to confront me about the water.

Do you remember the water issue?

KT: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

JE: And the PH factor and all that kind of thing? He got frustrated with me and it was about five minutes before the end of the hour and he says, "Well, I have other places to go," and he got up and walked out.

I'll always remember seeing you walking out after him. I was told years ago by somebody who was close to the program, "John," he said, "you caught them in a flat lie that was terribly embarrassing to them and that's what happened." We just stumbled on to the whole thing.

KT: Okay.

JE: We just had fun, we just stumbled on to it.

RF: Okay, all right.

JE: Anyway, we caught them. That's years ago and we're way past all that now, but I didn't know if you remembered that. Because you came and probably brought him and I think he wanted an in-person face-to-face with me. So maybe I would have treated him differently.

KT: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: But I said, "Richard, this is what we did. We went out and we had that water tested and it's not the same water." And I forget what his response was.

KT: Yeah. Well, that was good.

JE: It was great for me.

KT: Sure. That was good.

JE: It was great.

KT: Well, it was good.

JE: Oh, man, it was on the front page of the *Tulsa World* that Richard Roberts was going to come and be with me in studio. Yeah. And you brought him there.

KT: I listened to you every morning, all those years.

JE: We had fun at Oral's expense.

KT: Oh, yes.

JE: And we did a lot of things, but I never doubted his message. I never doubted his preaching, because he was a talented man and I agreed with his spiritual concepts. But he had a style of the things he did that was easy.

RF: Okay—

KT: What do you think of Richard?

JE: Right now, I think probably he's, he's certainly not the man his father was.

RF: No.

JE: And that's a difficult situation to be put into.

RF: It's hard to with Daddy.

JE: It is, of anybody.

RF: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: And when you have a one of a kind man come along—

RF: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: ... to transfer that to your son or daughter—

RF: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: ... is highly unusual.

RF: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: Richard, did you have children?

RF: Yeah, three girls and one boy.

JE: All right, are they able to play athletics like you?

RF: My son, at his age, I was a lot better. He's all right but he wasn't as good as me.

JE: You see, that's kind of the thing we're talking about here.

RF: Um-hmm, um-hmm (affirmatives).

JE: For Richard to be another Oral Roberts, there isn't anybody who came along—

RF: Yeah, he couldn't.

JE: Franklin Graham is not what a Billy Graham was.

RF: No, um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: So it's tough—

RF: It's hard, um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: ... to expect that Richard Roberts was going to be Oral Roberts.

RF: Um-hmm, um-hmm (affirmatives).

JE: That's really tough to see.

RF: It is.

JE: How old is your son?

RF: He's eleven.

JE: What school does he go to?

RF: Carver.

JE: Is he playing ball there?

RF: Yeah, he plays at Carver.

JE: Is he a shooter too?

RF: He can shoot, yeah.

KT: You never know—

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

KT: ... that he might turn out to be a good one.

RF: Oh, yeah. He's pretty good now—

KT: Yeah.

RF: ... 'cause he's pretty good—

KT: Yeah, yeah.

RF: He's pretty good now.

KT: Yeah.

JE: Well, I want to thank both of you for doing this.

RF: Well, we thank you for inviting us.

JE: Thank you, Ken.

KT: Well, you're my buddy, John.

Chapter 13 - 0:33

Conclusion

Announcer: This oral history presentation is made possible through the support of our generous foundation-funders. We encourage you to join them by making your donation, which will allow us to record future stories. Students, teachers, and librarians are using this website for research and the general public is listening every day to these great Oklahomans share their life experience.

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