

Frank "Muddy" Waters

November 20, 2001

Jeff Charnley and Fred Honhart,  
interviewers

Charnley: Today is Tuesday, November 20th, the year 2001. We're in East Lansing, Michigan. I'm Jeff Charnley, along with Fred Honhart, interviewing former MSU head football coach Frank "Muddy" Waters for the MSU Oral History Project for the sesquicentennial to be commemorated in 2005.

Waters: Don't forget, I was also an ex-player.

Charnley: That's right. Coach Waters, you can see we've got a tape recorder here. Do you give us permission to record this interview?

Waters: That's right.

Charnley: I'd like to start with some questions about your personal and family background. Where were you born and raised and where did you go to school prior to coming to college?

Waters: Well, I was born in Chico, California, and I was raised basically in Bridgeport, Connecticut, although I lived several other places before I settled there. I went to the Choate Prep School in Wallingford, Connecticut, and graduated from there and went into the service, won the war, and then came to Michigan State.

Charnley: What branch of the service did you—

Waters: I was in the air corps.

Charnley: What were your duties?

Waters: I was a physical training instructor.

Charnley: What rank were you?

Waters: I was a sergeant.

Charnley: What were your years of service?

Waters: 1943 to '46.

Charnley: So all your time was in the States?

Waters: Yes.

Charnley: Did you play sports in high school?

Waters: Yes, I did. I went to two prep schools. I went to Pawling Prep in Pawling, New York, and played football and ran track, and I went to Choate School in Wallingford, Connecticut, and ran the same two sports.

Charnley: Did you play football?

Waters: Oh, yes.

Charnley: Who were your coaches in that school? Do you remember them?

Waters: Well, I had several coaches, Aaron Burr [phonetic] and—oh, boy, let's see. I had so many of them. "Carrot Top." I can't remember his—but he was a bald-headed guy, good coach. Herb Madledge [phonetic], and then I had J. J. Meyer [phonetic] at Choate. I only had one year at Choate. And then I went into the service and played service ball with the 4<sup>th</sup> Air Force, and Johnny Baker [phonetic] was the coach. And then I came to Michigan State.

Charnley: How was it that you came to choose Michigan State?

Waters: Well, I came here as an air corps student, and I just knew some people here, so I came back and decided I'd come here.

Charnley: Was there anything about the campus that appealed to you?

Waters: Well, everything about the campus appealed to me. Originally, I had an offer to see Fritz Crisler at Michigan, and we set up an appointment. When I went up there, he didn't make the appointment. [Laughter] So I got a little ticked off, and I came back to Michigan State and went in to see Charlie Bachman, and he said, "Well, why don't you come to Michigan State."

I said, "It's a deal." So I came to Michigan State, played four years here.

Charnley: What was your position?

Waters: Fullback.

Charnley: Did Coach Bachman know of you?

Waters: I think he did, yes. I think he did, because he offered me a scholarship, so I knew that he knew of me. And then, of course, Charlie later took me to Hillsdale [College] with him when he was coaching there in the state one year, and then I took over after that and stayed at Hillsdale for twenty-one years. Charlie once made the statement that I was probably the closest player that he had ever coached, which was a real honor to me.

Charnley: How would you describe his coaching style?

Waters: Charlie, unfortunately, was back in the Knute Rockne days, and I think football kind of passed him by a little bit. He was still running the whole single-wing stuff and didn't quite keep

up with the game. But he was a good coach, had a great success, the only Michigan [State] coach at that time to beat Michigan four years in a row, so he had to have something on the ball.

Charnley: Who were some of your teammates that you recall from then?

Waters: Well, they had Lynn Chandnois, [Everett] Sonny Grandelias, Don Coleman, Ed Bagdon, Don Mason, Pete Fusi. I could go on and on.

Charnley: You've remained in contact with them?

Waters: Oh, yes, yes. We still meet and enjoy the games.

Charnley: You were part of that large group of vets that came back, that came to campus. How would you describe campus life in the post-war era?

Waters: Well, it was very unusual. There will never be another time like it. The freshmen were all veterans; therefore, they were the leaders and the upperclassmen were the followers. Of course, now it's progressed to where the seniors are again the leading group.

Charnley: Were there other vets on the football team?

Waters: Oh, yes. Yes, we were almost all vets, almost entirely, practically. I think there was just one young kid, who was just a freshman, that made the team, and the rest of us were all vets.

Charnley: What did you major in?

Waters: Physical education.

Charnley: Was it teaching or—

Waters: Teaching, coaching, yes.

Charnley: Besides Charlie Bachman, was there someone else that you worked with? When Charlie was the coach, was he the coach during your entire time?

Waters: Just one year, just one year, the first year, and then I took over for twenty-one years.

Charnley: That was at Hillsdale. But I meant when you were a player.

Waters: Oh, yes. I had Charlie just one year, and then I had “Biggie” [Clarence L.] Munn his first three years.

Charnley: Could you talk a little bit about Biggie Munn?

Waters: Oh, Biggie was a great coach. I think right now he's underrated. He was my epitome of a great coach. He had the know-how, he had the psychological approach that would inspire players to win, and I think he built a great program at Michigan State.

Charnley: Was there any coaching technique in particular that you used that you first saw with him?

Waters: Well, that's a hard one to answer, but, yes, I followed his basic philosophy, which was gung-ho and give it your all. He would never come out and say this, but he made you feel it was the most important thing in college life was your football, and I subscribed to that. I gave it the best I had, and so did most of the other players.

Charnley: How would you say the students responded to the efforts of the football team at that time?

Waters: Very well. We had great support. And we had some great years, so they would naturally be with us. [Laughs]

Charnley: Were there any games in particular that stood out, that were most memorable for you or your own experience?

Waters: Yes. My most memorable game was against Santa Clara, when I set the school record for number of carries in a single game at thirty-one, which has since been broken. It had held up for twenty-one years, and I was pretty proud of that, and I enjoyed the game a lot.

Honhart: What was it like playing Michigan during that time?

Waters: It was pretty tough. We never beat Michigan. We came close, but we never beat them. We got beat the first year fifty-five to nothing, the second year fifty-five to seven, and then there was just a few points after that, but we closed the gap considerably.

Charnley: Did you have any contact with President [John A.] Hannah at that time?

Waters: Yes. Yes, I did. President Hannah knew just about everybody. He knew everybody's name, and I still marvel at, the first time I met him, I had not yet played football. I was a freshman, and I was working on Berkey Hall, digging a ditch, foundation. The job superintendent brought him around and introduced him to the football players that were working, and I reached up, I'm covered with dust, and I shook his hand. I never saw him again until right at the beginning of the football season. I was coming out of the dining hall, and he was walking across the tarmac and talking with two businessmen, obviously, in business suits and so on. And I thought, "Well, he won't know me," so I just started to walk by, and he looked up and took a glance and he said, "Hi there, Waters. How are you?" That's the kind of memory he had for names. He was a fantastic, wonderful man. I really admired him. And a great speaker, tremendous speaking voice.



Charnley: Did he support the athletic program?

Waters: Oh, absolutely. [Laughter]

Charnley: That was a stupid question.

Waters: He really got it started. I mean, he said that a good football team was the common ground for a good university, that it was a sounding board for the university, and he supported it. He never missed a game, that I can remember.

Charnley: How did you feel about your studies here at Michigan State as an undergraduate?

Waters: Well, as long as I had to go to classes, they were tolerable. [Laughter] I had a good education, and there was no hanky-panky or fixing grades or anything like that. You got what you earned, and I'm proud of that.

Honhart: Was Jack Breslin on your team any year?

Waters: I succeeded Jack. He graduated the year before I came. He was fullback, and I took over when he left, played four years. I knew Jack quite well. We were very good friends.

Honhart: You graduated in '49?

Waters: Yes. Well, I graduated in '50, but my last year was '49 as a player.

Honhart: Were you caught up in the Korean War at all the next year?

Waters: No, no. I didn't see any military service after my original.

Honhart: What happened after graduation?

Waters: After graduation, I got a job at Wildlake [phonetic] High School, and I stayed there for two years. Then I went to Albion High School. Then Charlie Bachman came down and said, "I'm thinking of getting back into coaching."

Well, I knew the Pittsburgh Steelers were after him, and I said, "Charlie, you're sixty-two years old. You don't need that hassle."

He said, "No, no. This is just a small college, and I can go there and coach and not teach."

I said, "Well, that's great. Are you going to take it?"

He said, "It depends on you."

I said, "It depends on me?"

He said, "Yes. If you come as backfield coach, do all the recruiting and be athletic director, I'll take the job. But if you won't, I won't come."

Well, it was a big choice for me to make, because I wanted to be the head coach. That was my main objective. But I said, "I'll give it a try."

Well, Charlie stayed one year, and then he left and I took over.

Honhart: This is at Hillsdale, right?

Waters: At Hillsdale, yes.

Honhart: What was it like to move from being a player at Michigan State to coach at a school like Hillsdale?

Waters: I don't know. It was a transition I made. I was proud to have been a player at Michigan State and played for Biggie Munn and Charlie Bachman. I utilized a lot of Biggie's philosophy as my own, and we had pretty good success, won thirty-four games in a row.

Honhart: What years?

Waters: 1953 to '57, I think it was, '56, '57.

Honhart: Were there any scholarships available at that time at Hillsdale?

Waters: When I went to Hillsdale, there were none, and I had to do it the hard way, but then I got some scholarships after a while and was able to build a real strong program. But all I could give was tuition. I couldn't give room and board until I went to Saginaw [Valley State

University], and at Saginaw I got room and board. So I was pretty proud of what I accomplished with the situation the way it was.

Honhart: What led you to go to Saginaw from Hillsdale?

Waters: The president left Hillsdale, and George Roche came in. And you know George. I couldn't stomach the guy. [Laughter] To tell you the truth, I didn't want to coach for this guy. In fact, he called me in and said, "We're going to give up all scholarships and just go to recruiting students who ordinarily would come to school."

And I said, "George, you are in left field with the sun in your eyes. You can't do that."

He said, "I can think I can."

Well, that's a big reason I left. But the alumni got so mad, they just bombasted him with complaints. So shortly after I left, they reinstated the program, with room and board in addition. [Laughter] So that shows you what the alumni can do when they get up in air. It was a sad thing to leave, but I couldn't take the guy, and he's since proved he has feet of clay.

Charnley: What year was that, that you went to Saginaw?

Waters: Oh, let's see.

Charnley: Not meant to be a quiz.

Waters: I can't remember right now.

Charnley: We can look it up.

Waters: Yes, I can look it up sometime.

Honhart: How did you find the change, when you were at Saginaw, from Hillsdale?

Waters: The change from Saginaw?

Honhart: From Hillsdale to Saginaw. What were the big changes that you noticed?

Waters: Well, I had a lot more help, I had a lot more scholarship help, and I wrote my own program. I was out here in left field, which is not usually a good thing to do, but I was over here and the faculty was over here, and I didn't really feel like I was part of the academic program like I did at Hillsdale. At Hillsdale, I was on the academic board. I was in on the planning of the programs and policies and procedures and so on. At Saginaw, I was an entity onto my own self, I guess.

Honhart: How did you like it there?

Waters: Saginaw?

Honhart: Yes.

Waters: I liked Saginaw. I had a lot of good friends there, some good kids.

Honhart: How is it that you were contacted as far as coming to Michigan State to replace Darryl Rogers?

Waters: Well, that was kind of unusual. I got a call from Doug Weaver. He had just become athletic director, and he said, "I want you to come down and see me." He offered me the job. I took it.

Honhart: So you were rather surprised, then, by that?

Waters: Yes. Yes, I was. I had the record to be well qualified for it over anybody else that I can think of. So I think, without having thought about it, I would have been very disappointed not to have at least been contacted. And then when I was offered the job, it was a big surprise. Not really, but it was a big surprise.

Honhart: What was it like when you came here to be head coach after having left as a player all those years?

Waters: Well, it was kind of tough. Let me think about this for a minute. It's a little hazy.

Let's see. I know I was very delighted to be here and to get the chance. I couldn't do everything I wanted to do and thought that I could do. I had a little interference with things that I wanted to

do and what I couldn't do. Actually, I was very pleased to be here and wanted to do a lot better than I did. We lost, my last year here, we lost, I think, eight or nine games by less than twenty points, total, and we were close in everything, and being let go under those circumstances was not a very happy experience. I was not very pleased with that. I thought I deserved a little better. But even Weaver admitted later he made a mistake letting me go, but it's too late then.

Charnley: Going back to your hiring, one of the things I remember when I was at the university was the issue that you wanted to bring your son with you, and some people didn't want you to do that.

Waters: I couldn't bring my son because of nepotism, and, boy, that was a hard blow, because he'd been with me for, I don't know, seventeen years or something like that, and was my main assistant and knew everything, and Weaver said, "You can't bring him because of nepotism." And later, in talking with Jack Breslin, he said, "Oh, you should have called me. There wouldn't have been any nepotism, because he isn't getting paid by you specifically, and there's no way he could make—."

See, they had just passed a nepotism rule because one of the professors had hired his wife and gave her some money or something like that, and so they passed the rule, and I got caught in that. But if I'd just known enough to see Jack Breslin, he could have overcome that.

Honhart: Yes, I always thought that was so unfortunate, because whether it's your son or somebody else you're used to working with, it's a difficult situation.

Waters: My wife cried all night, and Murky just quit coaching. Yes, he was a good assistant. We made a good pair.

Charnley: How was it that you got the name “Muddy”?

Waters: Well, Johnny Pingel, who was our backfield coach when I was here at Michigan State, I had a good day in the mud, and he started calling me Muddy, and it just caught on from there. Everybody started calling me Muddy.

Charnley: And how about your son? You mentioned he was called—

Waters: Murky. That’s a spin-off from Muddy, I guess.

Charnley: Where’s your son now?

Waters: He’s in Saginaw.

Charnley: He stayed at Saginaw Valley?

Waters: No, he’s in real estate, doing very well.

Charnley: Who were some of your players that you worked with while you were coaching here?



Waters: Well, probably the best one I ever had, or at least as good as any, was Howard Mudd, who was all-pro for four years. And I had—God, I had so many of them. Let's see. Nate Clark. It's funny, I don't think of them as outstanding. They're all my players.

Charnley: Yes. You mention two, and you need to mention them all.

Waters: Those were some of the most outstanding I had. I think, Nate Clark and Howard Mudd were probably the two of the best. I had Chester Marcol, a kicker. Held the work record one year for the longest field goal ever kicked, sixty-two yards, and then the very next day, Dempsey kicked one the same distance for the Lions.

Honhart: Right. Right. It sounds like we need some kickers like that.

Charnley: Yes, we do.

Waters: Oh, he was a great kicker, jeez. It's strange, but he'd come over from Poland. He played one year in high school. And Duffy [Dougherty] wanted him real bad, but he couldn't get him in because he couldn't pass the English exam. So I went to my dean and I said, "I've got to get this kid in. How can I do it?"

He said, "Well, tell me about him."

I said, "Well, he just came over from Poland and couldn't pass English."

“Well, there’s your answer. Admit him as a foreign student and let him take English as a foreign language.” And we got him in, and Duffy could have done the same thing if somebody had given him the word at it.

Charnley: What was your relationship with Duffy? Did you have contact with him before you—

Waters: Oh, yes. Duffy and I are great friends. Yes, we were just good friends. He wasn’t nearly the coach Biggie Munn was, but he had a great staff and he let them do most of the coaching. He took the credit as head man, which nothing wrong with that. But he couldn’t hold a candle to Biggie. Biggie was a complete coach. I mean, he did everything that a coach should be doing. And Duffy was a storyteller, tell humorous stories and everybody loved them. And then he had a good—well, look at the guys he had. He had Edward Shevsky [phonetic]. He had—who was the guy that went out to Arizona, Frank Kush. Chuck Fairbanks. He had some great coaches working for him, but he was smart enough to let them to the coaching. But he wasn’t, he couldn’t compare with Biggie, just wasn’t in the same league, although he got probably more credit than Biggie. Those of us who played for him will all agree he wasn’t Biggie’s caliber.

Honhart: What would you consider the high points of your being coach here at MSU?

Waters: My being coach at MSU?

Honhart: The high points.

Waters: Getting fired. [Laughs]

Honhart: I consider that a low point. [Laughs] Maybe it's a matter of perspective.

Waters: The high point, I don't know if there ever was one. Well, we came close to beating Michigan, didn't do it. The high point, I guess, was just getting there.

Honhart: Going back to your playing days, when you started playing right after the war at Michigan State, how integrated was the team at that time and what sort of change did you see as far as African American and minority students on the football team?

Waters: No problem. We were well integrated. Didn't have very many black players, but Don Coleman was well accepted, and there wasn't any suggestion of resentment or whatever the word is I'm looking for.

Honhart: What about when you went to play some other schools? Did you have any problems at all with—

Waters: Play other schools?

Honhart: Play other schools.

Waters: Just once. We had Horace Smith. Somebody called him a nigger, and that created a stir of resentment from our team. Other than that, there was no real animosity either way.

Honhart: What was going on on campus at that time? Was the campus becoming more integrated as far as the general—

Waters: I can't recall any problems at all.

Honhart: I just wondered about the role of the football team and if that served as any type of model.

Waters: I don't recall any problems. There may have been some, but I don't recall them.

Charnley: What was your approach toward recruiting?

Waters: Recruiting? Get all you can get. [Laughter] I went after kids who had academic talent as well as athletic. You don't win with dumbbells, and I always tried to get the smart kid.

Charnley: Would you say that your tenure as head coach was affected by the probation and some of the things that happened in the—

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

Charnley: When the tape ended, we were talking about the 1970s, the mid-1970s and probation, and I asked whether or not it affected your tenure as head coach.

Waters: Yes, he probably did, but I didn't give it much thought. As I said, it's something I didn't have any control over, so I just did the best I could do. I tried to recruit the smart kids and stayed away from the dummies.

Honhart: One of the things we hear a lot about is the pressure on coaches as far as recruiting and sometimes the over-enthusiastic contributions by alumni or others to support kids going to one school or another school. Did you have much of that?

Waters: Not that I know of. Well, I know some schools, the coach never knew a lot that went on. The alumni would come in and recruit for him, and he wouldn't even know it. And it may have happened to me, but I don't think so. I thought I had pretty good rein over what went on, and I tried to keep as honest a program as I could keep. That's the best policy, by far. So everything I did was on the up-and-up. I never took any shortcuts. That doesn't pay off, anyway.

Honhart: Did you have much contact with President [M. Cecil] Mackey?

Waters: President Mackey? Yes.

Honhart: When you were a coach.

Waters: Sure.

Honhart: How was he? Was he a supporter of the program?

Waters: Well, yes. Yes. He wasn't a great supporter of mine, though. In fact, I think he was the guy that went along with my firing. But we have a great relationship. We're good friends, and that's it. And he told me once, he said later to Doug Weaver, "I think I made a mistake," because I think they were having some trouble with Perles. I'm not sure what it was, but he was pretty high-handed and did things exactly the way he wanted to do them, one way or the other. And I think they were maybe a little unhappy with some of the things that were going on, but I have no proof of that. I'm just assuming it.

Honhart: In your relationship with the alumni, how did you approach—

Waters: Well, I did everything I could to keep them happy. I went to all their functions and never turned down an invitation. I'd speak at the alumni meetings. I think I had a good rapport.

Honhart: How closely do you follow the football program these days?

Waters: Oh, I go to every game, every home game anyway. I follow it very closely. Been doing a good job, in my opinion. A tough job. That's really a tough job. I think he's going to have some problems, but what coach doesn't?

Honhart: That's right. What did you think about the fact that when Nick Saban left, the entire coaching staff decided to stay and one went with him?

Waters: I didn't think too much of it. I felt they made a good decision. Who wants to leave Michigan State? Personally, I was surprised that he left. I thought he gave up a real good position.

Honhart: Yes, I would agree with that, and, of course, it was nice that the rest of the staff stayed and they actually won the ball game.

Waters: Yes. Well, he got a lot of money, too.

Honhart: That, too. [Laughs] That, too.

Charnley: What do you see as the role that football's played since the time when you first walked on campus?

Waters: At Michigan State?

Charnley: Yes.

Waters: Oh, I think it played a big role. It's a showcase for the whole university. And as the football team does, the university's happy or sad, and I think it's a great morale-builder or tearer-downer, whichever way you want to look at it. But I think it's a good thing for the university to have a football team that they can look up to with pride, or any university.

Honhart: Did you have much direct contact with Judd Heathcote or Ron Mason?

Waters: Yes, we were good friends, still are. He's an excellent coach, and we were, you know, we were friendly. We weren't buddy-buddy, but we were good friends, and I think had a good relationship. He's an excellent coach.

Honhart: One of the most difficult things that we hear about as far as coaching is the conflict between the player working to develop the skills for playing the game, and at the same time going to school and getting the education. How do you balance that?

Waters: Oh, you balance that simply by a guy going to school. School's his first responsibility, and what's the sense of going to college if you don't get an education? But I think it's easily balanced. You can do both. The thing is, you've got to discourage the guy that thinks football is the only thing there is and doesn't go to classes. That's the thing I really insisted on, going to class. If a guy didn't go to class, he didn't play, and I don't know of any other coach that does that. I had one guy who was an end. What the heck was his name? I can't think of it right now. He wouldn't go to class. I'd call him in and chew him out. He'd say, "I'll go to class," and he'd



go right and deliberately miss another class. Finally I told him, “One more class, you don’t play,” and he didn’t miss any more. [Laughter]

I think that’s one of the coach’s main responsibilities is to make sure that his players go to class. That’s what they go to college for, and they got to realize that. Some just think they can go to class to play football, and that’s a big mistake, unless he’s going to become a professional player and coach, and I don’t know anybody who can count on that.

Honhart: No, not at all.

Charnley: How about some of your assistants that, while you were head coach?

Waters: Well, I think I had some good assistants. They’re all, I think, very loyal and competent and added a great deal, their own philosophy and experience and knowledge. I was very happy with my assistants.

Honhart: You talked a little bit about your last year. What are some of the things that were surprising to you?

Waters: Well, the way we lose games, was extremely disappointing, by such low scores, and we just, the breaks didn’t go our way, which they could have done very easily. It’s one of those things. I’ve had the good ones, good years, and that just happened to be a bad one. But I won a lot of good, close games, and last year I didn’t.

Honhart: You had your offensive coordinator, if I remember correctly, leave just before the start of the season.

Waters: Yes. Yes, he went to—where did he go to?

Honhart: Wasn't it one of the pro teams?

Waters: Pittsburgh, was it?

Honhart: Pittsburgh or Philadelphia.

Waters: Yes, Philadelphia. Yes, that was kind of tough. I brought in a guy that had been his assistant, he was the nearest thing I could think of to make the continuity of what we were doing. I didn't know it at the time, but he had a mental problem, and he didn't work out at all. He was very disappointing, actually. He was a religious nut, and he spend most of the time praying instead of teaching the fundamentals, and I had to work on that somehow.

Well, we managed to get through it, but it was very disconcerting. He was a nice guy, but I didn't realize he was [unclear], or at least fanatic. Yeah, most of his coaching time was spent praying, preaching, which I didn't really find out until about halfway through the season, when I just happened to attend one of their meetings, and here he is talking religion and so on. I told him, "Why don't you save that for Sunday and get working on what we have to do?" That was a problem I had, yes.

I don't know, maybe I wasn't tough enough in some cases, but I always tried to give the benefit of the doubt through whoever was in opposition.

Honhart: What are your fondest memories of your times at Michigan State?

Waters: Well, my fondest memory was getting the job. [Laughter] I was absolutely delighted. I was just happy as hell. There were so many things I enjoyed about it. I enjoyed the ability to do a lot of things I couldn't do in a smaller college. I don't know, generally it was a pleasant experience to be in charge of a big program and do things you couldn't do in a smaller one, at least much, most of the time. No, it was a good experience.

Honhart: What did you do after you left as head coach?

Waters: After I left as head coach, I didn't do much of anything. I was pretty much dismayed. I was really hurt. Actually, the thing that consumed most of my time was I built that boat over there. See it in the case?

Honhart: Yes.

Waters: I just tried to keep myself busy doing that. That was quite a job, I'll tell you. But I did that to keep my mind off things. But it was a pretty tough time for me emotionally. I felt it was a very unfair situation. I felt I could have done much better. But I guess that's just normal you always feel that way.

Honhart: The time, it was too short a time to develop [unclear].

Waters: Yes, I didn't get a chance to get my players in here. I just didn't get enough of my own recruits. I had to go with somebody else's recruits, and I only had two years, really, to get started.

Honhart: Right.

Waters: We got guys like [Carl] Banks and some people like that, but it wasn't enough, and I think they could have done a lot better if I'd been given a little more time to recruit. That's one thing I think I could do pretty well is recruit, and my best recruiting came from the recruits, the guys that were here already. New players would come in, the recruits would come in and say, "What's this guy like? Does he keep his promises?" I always kept my promise. I never broke my word to any player. I had a policy that, if we didn't have any scholarships, that if you came in and could make either the first or second string, you would get the first available scholarship, which I did, I gave. That was a good program, a good policy, but I never got a chance to bring it to fruition.

Oh, there were a lot of things I wanted to do, just never got the chance to do it. But I built programs. Every place else I'd been, the same, basically the same way, and I don't think this would have been any different. Been a little harder maybe, but I don't think it would have been any different. If you treat kids well, they become your best recruiters, and this is what I always counted on. I'd bring a guy in and assign him to a player and say, "Ask him anything

you want.” Of course, they’d ask, “Does the coach keep his word? Does he do this? Does he do that?” The players would tell them, and I think most the players were happy with the way I treated them, and that always led guys to say, “Well, I think I’ll go there,” because they’d go someplace else and the coach was trying to play games and doesn’t live up to what he says he’s going to do and so on.

But I always did exactly what I said I would do, without any shortcuts, including giving scholarships to guys that didn’t really deserve it after they got here. I never cut a scholarship, and I think that’s the best policy. You may get a couple of debts that way, but I think you’ll gain more than you lose.

Charnley: Is there any aspect of your coaching philosophy that you felt, or feel most proud about?

Waters: My coaching philosophy? Well, I always played to win, according to the ethics. I took it very seriously. I gave it the best I could give. We always tried and never gave up.

Honhart: Would you say that you’ve left any legacy at Michigan State?

Waters: I left a legacy? I don’t know.

Honhart: As a player, as an alum yourself, as a coach?

Waters: Oh, as an alum, I'm 100 percent Michigan State, support them every which way, win or lose. I'm not a second-guesser. I don't tell them what they should have done, although that's easy to do.

Honhart: Isn't that?

Waters: Yes. The best quarterbacks usually show up on Sunday. But I just did the best I could do, and I don't think I embarrassed Michigan State in any way by any of my actions. I'm still a Michigan State supporter.

Charnley: I want to thank you on behalf of the project for the time you spent.

Waters: You're welcome.

Charnley: For the project, and appreciate your insight. Thank you.

Waters: Well, I hope it helped a little bit.

Honhart: It certainly did.

Charnley: Thank you.

[End of interview]

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