

NEVADA INDIAN COMMISSION

STEWART INDIAN SCHOOL ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

STEWART BOXER TURNED PRO: AN INTERVIEW WITH BILL TURNER

Interviewed by Terri McBride

Transcribed by Barbara L. Zeigler

Funded by:



Nevada Indian Commission ©

Funded by:



Copyright 2017
Nevada Indian Commission
5366 Snyder Avenue
Carson City, Nevada 89701

Stewart Boxer Turned Pro: An Interview with Bill Turner

Bill Turner is from Bishop, California, and attended Stewart Indian School 1975-1976. He was an athletic youth, so when he lost his place on the Bishop High School football team, he dropped out of high school there. Then an older relative urged Bill to go back to school, and he chose Stewart because of the strong athletics programs there. Bill rose quickly to star status as a boxer for the school, and competed in the U.S. Olympics Boxing Team tryouts in 1976, losing in his second round of fights. He then competed as a professional boxer for a short time after graduating from Stewart. Bill has served on the Bishop Paiute Tribe's council and currently lives in Bishop.

My name is Terri McBride. It is Sunday, March 19, 2017. We are at the Carson City Library in Carson City, Nevada. The interview is with Bill Turner, a former student at Stewart Indian School. We will be discussing his experiences as a student. This interview is being conducted for the Stewart Indian School Oral History Project for the Nevada Indian Commission and will be archived in the Stewart Indian School Cultural Center, the State Library and Archives, and Special Collections at the University of Nevada, Reno.

So Bill, when were you born and where are you from?

I was born in August 8, 1956.

And, where?

Bishop, California.

How many people were in your family?

Just my mom and dad.

What language was spoken in your household growing up?

Ahhh, English, English. Like I mentioned, my mother had asked my grandmother to teach me the language, you know, but my grandmother wouldn't because she was one of those who

went to a boarding school and she was beaten for speaking the language and so she didn't want me to be beaten, I guess, so she told me, ah, she wouldn't speak it to me. So, she didn't teach me the language. I wish I had known! You know. It's something sad, one of the bad parts of history, you know.

Definitely. So did you—besides speaking English—were there other American Indian cultural things that your family participated in, like pine nut harvesting or dancing?

Yes. My earlier age, we used to get pine nuts and that was about it! (laughs) Me and my uncle would hunt a lot of jack rabbit and also, I ate a lot of fish because I stayed next to creeks and I was out in the sagebrush and there was rabbits everywhere, you know? Me and my uncle would go huntin'. We'd only get two or three rabbits because we didn't have our freezer or something to keep everything cold for a while so we just got what we needed, you know. That's one of the things I learned early, is just take what you need and that was just one of our ways, you know. And still is, mine, you know. I'm not a greedy person, that's not [what I'm from?]. I try to teach my grandkids that also.

Do you still go pine-nutting?

Yeah, oh yeah. We just went last year. Pretty good year last year.

Where do you go?

We either—a lot of times we go over to the White Mountains, the White Mountains on the eastern side, on the other side of the Sierras.

Were any of your other family members educated at Stewart?

Oh, I had a cousin going there and he had passed away in like 1975, '76. So, he was there one year that I know of and I think my uncle, my uncle might have gone, and that was probably it. The other ones probably went to Riverside.

Right.

My mother, she went to a public school. I guess they were like, allowing them to go to public school after a certain time.

So, what years did you go to Stewart and how many years?

Seventy-five, '76, half a year in '75 and the whole year in '76.

So, were you junior, senior, sophomore?

Uh, a junior when I got there and then a senior my last year.

Did you graduate?

Yes, I graduated. And I went to the UNR for a semester.

Oh!

Did really well. I was taking physical education and I took a couple of law classes because of—how would you put it? The mistreatment of my people when I was growing up and my grandmother passed away when I was ten. But I was able to see, because a lot of people would come visit and I could see the dislike in the white man, you know. Because of them, I was getting the bad end of justice in the courts and stuff, being accused of things I didn't do and spending longer times in jail. So that was—I was doing really well in school. I was getting B's, you know, I was taking P.E. because I

enjoyed physical education and I enjoyed teaching, you know, I enjoyed teaching. I also taught my son at baseball. I got like, to be a head coach and we won four baseball titles, you know? Like two minor leagues, one little league, and one senior league. And like I say, a lot of kids don't even see one championship, you know. I picked up some good teams, good players because I look at natural ability instead of just pickin' my friend's son. I go pick a team to win, you know?

Well, and you must be good at motivating those kids, too.

Oh, yeah! Because I was kind of motivated when I was younger and it's just ability, you know, ability, and I can teach a kid how to throw a ball but I can't teach him to throw far, you know? Or teach him how to play ball, you know; it's just like I said, a good, fast runner, a good arm, you know? For baseball, anyway, in a lot of sports. And attitude, we'll straighten out the attitude with them. (laughs)

That comes later!

Yeah!

So, how did you end up going to Stewart in the first place?

Well, I kinda dropped out of high school in my junior year and . . .

Why?

Ahhh . . .

Out of Bishop High School?

Yes, yeah. Well I . . . one of the reasons is probably because I started, what started, was I was first string at playing football and then one day I went rabbit hunting, you know, I didn't go to practice and I came back and I'm sitting on second string. So, I played second string for a little while, and played one game. I got in on a few plays and that was it. With my attitude I said, "Forget this. I'm no second string player." So, I just wound up quitting, and school started

going down after that and then I started drinking some alcohol. That's when I started finding alcohol and the school year started the next year and I just coulda gone, but I just didn't go and then it was too late to graduate with my class, so I stayed home for half a year, and then came up to Stewart and went to school up here and finished off that half year and then went to school the whole year the next year. Even though I probably could have gone half a year the next year, you know, but I wanted to stay because of the training, you know, the boxing because it was an Olympic year and I still had to go to the trials and so stayed in school, Stewart. Enjoyed it, I liked that school, you know? The people, it was probably the people, the kids, you know.

Right.

Yeah, I had good friendships up there.

So, you had heard about Stewart before, before you went there.

Yes, yeah.

Because some kids, they got there and they didn't really know, like, where they were going or what it was going to be like, but you had heard about it.

Yeah, I had already won three boxing titles up there.

Oh, okay. So, you'd been there.

Yeah, I'd been there because I was a fighter, you know, and so I knew what Stewart was like.

Well then, talk about your first impression of the school. I guess that can be when you first showed up to compete.

Yeah, I was kind of . . .

Or when you started as a student.

It's just kinda hard to say because when I first got up here, the first day I got up here I had to spar that night or box that night, in an exhibition, so it was just all kinda like, crammed in, to me.

"Hey, you're here, you're going to school," and I like, well, you know, just amazed at the school and just kinda like I said, having to box and then, boom, I was kinda like, I don't know, it was weird, you know. It's just hard for me to describe, you know.

Did you enjoy being a student at Stewart?

Yes, I enjoyed a lot of the kids, I enjoyed being around the kids. Because, you know, I was good friends with a lot of them and got to know a lot of them and that was it. Probably the main thing was the kids, the people, the kids mainly, just friendship, you know, of Indian people because we all were like from the same place and, Indian people are like, how would you say it? Not so aggressive, and in here, in Stewart, you know, we aren't all rich as to where a lot of times you see the rich white kids, they'll always try to look down upon you. But that didn't bother me, because like I said, I boxed, and I was good, and I always felt, you know, nobody better than me! You know, people are better than you, you know, a lot of it's how you were raised. I was raised by good people. Good people, you know, older people, and I got a lot of good values from them when I was growing up.

Was it hard to leave home to go up to Stewart, to go to a boarding school?

Not necessarily. For to up there, I knew I wasn't going to be there forever, you know. I knew I was only going to be a short time, and ah man, you should've saw the feeling when I got home. Right off coming to drop off, coming off that [Sugarman?] grade, phew! Man, yeah! Just, just like, man, I'm home! That's my home, because all my people been there. You know, my family, my grandmother, my uncles, friends, relatives. . .

What was the most difficult to leave behind in Bishop?

Nothing, 'cuz I knew I was coming back. You know, when you're going for a short period of time, you know, you don't really—you know you're going to come back home.

What did your family think about you living here? Did they think it was a good idea, or didn't want you to go, or . . . ?

They felt that I—well, my feeling was that I wanted to get out of high school. My stepfather had kind of instilled in my mind that, to graduate high school. You know so . . . I could've just stayed out of school, but he said to graduate high school, and Stewart was another option. To go to another school, to graduate, and I took it. Plus, like I said, boxing, so I was able to box up there.

Let's talk a little about campus life. What was living in the dorms like?

Ahh, I liked it, you know, like I said, anything . . . I'm a hard person to, you know, a hard person to feel bad about things. You know, I always had a positive attitude about things, and, you know, I come from not much, not having much, so it's like, you ain't got nothin', you don't really need nothin', you know, you're still getting' by, you know. That's the way I felt; that's the way I still feel, as long as you still feel good about yourself and you're good to people. To me that's one of the main things, to be good to other people.

So, hanging out in the dining hall, eating during meals, were there certain social cliques, like people that you always ate with or sat with?

Not necessarily, not necessarily. We had a bunch of, aaah, of like say, groups of people and I was with a group of kids. We weren't the jocks; we weren't tribally affiliated; we were all from different tribes, but most of us were boxers, you know. Half of us were boxers and a couple of us were others that just did other things, but there was a group of us, about six, maybe seven of us that hung pretty tight, pretty tight together and, mostly, like I said, boxers. We just had a good time. I enjoyed the life of Stewart, being with the kids.

What was the food like?

Ahh, the food, like I said, I could eat anything, you know. So the food for me was good. But when we got to town, we got some bologna; we enjoyed bologna, you know, chips, and bean dip, (laughs) and Coke. We'd buy them big, old liters of Cokes that'd we have.

Did you shop at that student store, Novake?

No, not much, no.

I think that was a favorite for younger kids because they could go and get candy there.

Yeah!

So, did you have a favorite class?

Yeah, Home Ec.

Really?

Yeah, because every time I won a fight I got to bake a cake for myself! (laughs)

Uh-huh! So, you learned how to bake! (laughs)

Yeah! I enjoyed cinnamon rolls. I used to do some cinnamon rolls. I haven't done those in forever but, yeah! Making—that was my favorite class.

Did they have vocational . . . ?

Yeah, we also had a farm, so they took a farm thing, heavy equipment. We also had heavy equipment. I did that for half a year.

Out at Jack's Valley?

Yeah, that's where it was at, Carson there.

For half year.

So, I learned how to operate a backhoe out there.

Yeah, uh-huh. So, you learned how to bake, you learned how to operate a back hoe; it sounds like a diverse education!

(Laughs)

Any other vocational stuff?

No, not that time.



Bill Turner after winning Western Regional Olympic boxing trials. Nevada Appeal, 24 May, 1976, page 6. Courtesy of Robey Willis.

And, did you have a favorite teacher?

Yeah, my Home Ec teacher. She was so—she was so happy all the time! Joyous, she was always joyous, and she was just a good lady, a good-hearted lady.

Do you remember her name?

No, I can't.

That's okay.

(Laughs)

That's alright. She's in the records!

Yeah! She was a fun lady to be around. Yeah, she was always happy. I think that's what I liked about her.

Let's talk a little bit more about that agriculture program.

Okay.

Did you—did they teach you how to farm or raise animals too, or just the equipment stuff?

It was just the equipment.

Okay, because I know that 4-H was a pretty strong program out there. The kids show up in newspapers with prize animals, yeah, that I have seen in the old newspaper articles.

Okay, yeah.

And so, you graduated in '77?

Seventy-six.

Seventy-six. Did your family come up for the ceremony or anything?

Yes.

Okay, cool. And where was the ceremony held?

In the gym at Stewart. In the Stewart gym.

In the new gym? Or the old gym?

Yes. And it was kind of odd because I had just came from Vegas. I was in a tournament in Las Vegas and I got picked up in Reno, and I got droven, driven back to Stewart, got into my dorm just in time to get dressed to get out there and the line was just going out and I just got in line for graduation.

With your robe and cap.

Yeah, with the robe and cap and so I just like came from Vegas, landed into Reno, got picked up there, and just as I got into the gym, the line started going. So, that was cool!

Good! So, let's talk about the sports at Stewart. I think that meant a lot to you. First, did you play any other sports besides boxing?

No, but we did play intermural basketball and baseball—softball?—baseball?—softball. Our team would usually take first place. (laughs) We'd get to go to the Nugget to eat at the buffet. That'd be for, you know, the champions or whoever won. They'd take us down to the

Nugget and we'd get the buffet and just pig out!
(laughs)

Like teenage boys like to do! Did you go to any of the games, like to cheer on the Braves?

The basketball. Not so much football, but I did make most of—a few of the basketball games.

Pretty rowdy? Those games, were they raucous?

Not necessarily. They just had a different style when I was there. They did a lot of rolling the ball, you know, because they weren't really tall. So, the taller guys would have a hard time to reach down to grab the ball; big tall guys couldn't reach. Yeah, so they did a lot of rolling ball, which was different, you know. A lot of people, the way they passed the ball.

Was that legal?

Yeah, oh yeah! They did it!

Alright! So, I'm curious about the auditorium.

The old one? You talking about the old?

Yeah. Did you attend any events in there?

Uh, I boxed there before they removed it.

On the stage? No, not the gym, the auditorium, with all the seats.

Okay yeah, okay. No, we never . . .

No movies, nothing?

Yeah, I guess we did have movies there, had movies there. That was about it, really. Maybe some assemblies.

Okay, so student assemblies.

Yeah. Other than that, there wasn't much in the auditorium.

Okay. Any other social or entertainment-type things on campus that you went to? Dances?

Just go listen, you know. A lot of guys, a lot of Indian guys don't really get out and dance. We

just kind of stand and hold up the wall, you know.

Right, yeah!

(Laughs) We just ashamed guys we didn't know how to dance so, we'd just hold up the wall!

Right. Well, I know some tribal groups had . . . the Hopi, there was the Hopi Club and the Apache Club, and were you in anything like that?

Ahh, I was into a, what was it, a Lettermen's Club. It was a fun initiation, being initiated into that. It was pretty fun. Lot of things we done different, (laughs) we'd have never done.

Can you talk a little bit about the initiation rites? What'd they make you do?

Ahh, it was—they chopped our hair up anyway they wanted and they kind of put some diapers on us. So, we had to wear diapers sometimes. The last day was fairly fun. We ran ten miles after drinking a gallon of milk. (laughs) And some people, it don't agree with some people. I don't agree with milk anyway, but yeah. So, we'd have to drink a gallon of milk and run ten miles. That was the end of it, you know. We were Lettermen's after that. It was fun, yeah.

Good. And regarding the other buildings on campus, do you have any, you know, memories in a particular building that stand out for you?

None other than the old gym that they had because it had a balcony and when I boxed there it was just like, wow, it was loud! Let's put it that way.

Because they stomped their feet or . . . ?

(Laughs) Well, yeah, that, and just the gym was small, you know, and it had a balcony around there and it was just loud.

Did you ever get sick at Stewart and need to go to the clinic?

Ahh, broke a finger in '75, and I missed a tournament. I missed fighting the Russians. I

could have fought the Russians, but I had broke my hand and I didn't get the opportunity and I think that would have been a great opportunity. I would have gave that guy a good go. I'd a beat him. I'd a beat him.

Oh! Let's talk about some of your bouts. So, you missed, so, let's go back. Talk about the Olympic trials: how did you guys qualify? Or did individuals qualify for the Olympics, not necessarily the school?

I was the only one from Stewart to qualify. No, Adrian Dennis, I'm sorry. Adrian, yeah. He qualified, both of us in Stewart.

Okay, so what's the first tier of that? Like what happens then? Where was the first qualifying round or . . . ?

We went back to Cincinnati for the finals. This was—they had the east and the west, okay? The Olympic trials, they got the western regional Olympic trial winners and the eastern trial winners. You had eight going back for the finals. You had four servicemen, okay four service—Air Force, Army, Navy and the Marines or whatever. And then you had the two from the east and the west, then you had the national Golden Gloves champion, and the national AAU champion. So, it made up eight fighters that went back to—and I made it to the semifinals. First fight was Roger Stafford. He was all-service champion. Well, he knocked out the Navy guy, the Army guy, and the Air Force guy and I worked him over pretty good, you know? Then I boxed Howard Davis in the semifinals and, if you know, he won the Standing Boxer Award in the 1976 Olympics and he ran from me, he ran from me. He outpointed me. Actually, they stopped it in the third round. They claimed I was takin' too many head shots. I might have been gettin' hit but he didn't hurt me. There's a difference between getting hit in the head and the difference between gettin' hit and getting hurt. This guy wasn't hurtin' me at all and I was comin' on him. That was that third round; I was

gettin' to him and I just kinda think it was political because they stopped it before it should've been stopped.

So, they called it in his favor then?

Yeah. Well, yeah, they called it and stopped it in his favor. Because, you know, he was hitting me and I gotta admit he was outpointing me but the fight wasn't over yet. The fight ain't over 'til the bell rings and then it still ain't over because there was a lot of guys that had beaten me and when I fought them again, they were way easy. I usually, they knew they were lucky the first time because they were gettin' beat up in that third round and I took the heart away from them and that's the first thing I do. I'd go out there and take a man's heart away and you got him beat. And I like to stop people because you leave them out there and they can cut you, hurt you, you know, and you're out for a while. So, that's why I always took them out as soon as I could. I'd hurt someone, jump on them, take them out. That's what I was taught. Get it over with.

So, you made it into the second round of the Olympic trials then?

Yes, semifinals.

Right, and because of that, because that match was called early.

Yeah, that was it, well, the third round. At least that's why I felt it was called.

Right. We'll get into what you ended up doing after Stewart in a little bit. Did you go to church when you were at Stewart? Did they make you guys go?

I think I went once, just to go with a couple of friends. That was it.

Okay, do you remember which one?

No.

Okay. And so, you guys didn't have cars . . .

No.



Bill Turner speaking with former coach Robey Willis, Carson City, March 19, 2017.

. . . But you left campus on weekends. What did you guys . . . ?

On weekends you could go down, walk down, or catch a taxi or whatever.

Into town?

Yeah, into town.

So, for shopping or to get some food?

Ahh, mainly, like I said, we'd walk to the corner store to get some food, you know, and go back.

Did you work during school?

We did, in the Lettermen's Club. We did some work, not much. We'd go out, I remember going out to one of these tract homes and putting down sod for the houses, you know? That's about the only time, I think, for Lettermen's Club.

Did you get paid for that or was it like a donation to the Lettermen's Club?

Ahh, I think it was a donation, yeah.

Okay. So, did you go home during the summer?

Not too often, maybe once or twice.

So, did you stay up here for the summer?

Yes, well . . . yeah. I went home that first summer. I stayed later, like I said, the following year because of the Olympic trials so that's why I stayed at Stewart at the end of that year.

Okay, okay. Any memories of your classmates, any one you want to mention specifically? You mentioned Adrian.

Yeah, yeah, he was Hopi and he was a good runner, you know, and he had good condition, you know. He was a strong kid, you know. That's why he was able to be the way he was. He started out—he wasn't really, how would you say it? An experienced boxer, you know? I think he started a couple years before that and for him to get there was really good because, like I said, he was strong, a strong person. A strong-minded kid. I had already had years of boxing experience when I went but, like I said, a lot of heart and determination, that's what got him where he was at because, like I said, he didn't have the experience that I had had in those years of boxing. Yeah, Adrian was a young, strong kid. Yeah, there was so many kids that left impressions on me, good friends of mine.

Uh-huh. Were there friends from home that also went to Stewart?

Not many, not many. There was only a couple people from Bishop. A girl, I think, was there at the time, and my cousin was there. Other than that—oh, yeah, I had another friend from Bishop that was there. There wasn't too many people.

Okay.

And then school shut down shortly after that.

Right. Have you kept in touch with the classmates or . . . ?

Not necessarily, no.

What about Coach Willis? You guys saw each other today . . .

Yeah!

. . . Have you kept in touch over the years?

No, I haven't ever talked to him since then, since the last time. Probably since school.

Really? So, did he go with you guys to the Olympic tryouts?

I think so, yeah. Well, that was like—fast. I think he did, I think he did.

To support you guys, I imagine.

Or, you know, I think he did. I can't really remember. It like, happened so fast.

So, that was maybe the last time you saw him?

Yeah, I think so.

Wow.

Or in school. In school was the last time I saw him. It was good to see him! Really good to see him. He looks good. Yeah, Robey.

So, were you a shy student, mischievous, quiet, happy?

I was quiet, a quiet person.

But you spent a lot of time working out and training, didn't you? So, I mean every day after school, after classes were done, did you just go into training or . . . ?

We would—there was set up—because we had so many students, you know, students! So many boxers, we would have to take a group, cut like, split the group. One day we would work out in the gym, hittin' the bag, sparrin', and the other group would go run that day, you know. And then the next day they would come in and we would go run that day, so it wasn't just gym every day. I mean, we would go through our mini-workout, and then we'd all go run, and then the others would stay and spar. So, it was like sparring, running, but we'd all kinda like hit the bags and stuff, not hit the bag, but work out, do our exercises together then hittin' the bag and sparrin' was separate from the running. Like I say, one group, other group, would do this. So, it was good. It kept me in good shape, pretty good shape. Just being young, too!

Some sports are just part of a year, like they have specific seasons.

Yeah.

Was boxing all year long?

No, it was seasonal.

Okay, so spring? Fall?

I can't remember. I'd just know it was time to box!

Okay, so, thinking back, your senior year at Stewart, you were really in the thick of boxing and everything, what were your goals or your plans? What were you going to do next, did you think?

I wanted to go to the UNR and become a physical education teacher and a lawyer to help my people and, the other one was to become champion of the world, which I didn't quite do, but . . .

Golly!

Oh, man, yeah, I even, oh, I had a fight with someone who had become champion of the world . . . and if I fought him again, I would have beat him. I wish I would have, you know? Elmer Genty. Yeah, he beat me in, I think it was Louisiana. And if I fought him again I know I woulda beat him. Like I said, I don't think there was a person that I fought the second time, that I lost to.

Is that because you figured their psyche out?

Uh-huh, I figured them out. I figured them out and they knew how determined and like I said, lucky the first fight, yeah, if they had beaten me. Because I'm a person that once I lose, I go back and I figure out why I lost and I change it.

Yeah.

Successful, very successful at doing that. It's just determination, you know?

Uh-huh! Sheer determination and will! So, do you think there's a sense of connection between people who went to Stewart, like, "Oh! You went to Stewart! Or, I went to Stewart!" you know, out in the bigger world.

Well, I really don't . . . haven't met a lot of people who kinda like, understand that because, like I said, there was just a couple people that I know from Bishop. A friend of mine, we were in the same school grade. We don't really talk about that necessarily. Just, you know, got our lives and that was just a short time in our life, you know? Yeah, Stewart won, what, a football game after two seasons of no winnings or somethin'. That year I was there, which was kinda cool.

Poor guys!

Yeah.

You talked a little bit about this. What was it like for so many kids from different places to all be together there? I mean, was that a good thing? Not a bad thing?

It was a good thing, I think, because you had different people, you know, different cultures. You just gotta learn to live with it, I guess, you know? But just being good to people, you know, and they be good back to you, you know, and that's what I liked about the people there. They were always kind, you know. I never really had any problems with anybody, you know.

So, where did you go after leaving Stewart?

Ooh, I boxed for about . . . almost a year. I quit when I was 12 and 3 and I was supposed to come back in about five years because I had just lost to a fighter who I think fought for two world championships and he was a mature veteran. He was like, 36 years old and I was 20 and I was able to see the power in the maturity of the man, and I was still a young kid. So, I told myself after that fight—and then I fought one more fight and I lost the decision that I thought I won. Anyway, I just felt that I'd come back in about five years, build some strength up, go home and become stronger. And that didn't happen. (laughs) I wound up drinking and drinking and I did come back and try it again when I was 34 years old and I lost six in a row, but I never lost the world tour. Even though I lost six fights, to me, they weren't really losses because I had bad footing. I hate to make excuses, but, you know, the footing, when you don't have footing as a puncher, you can't punch, you know. Because of my shoes. I had some hard rubber-soled, hard leather-soled shoes that after two rounds, they just—no traction. And, so, that's the reason I lost the six fights. But the last fight I had . . .

Couldn't you have gotten some new shoes?

I did. My last fight, I won with a brawl up in Caldwell, Idaho. And I—well, the guy beat me. The only, one good thing was, his relatives, he was Mexican; he had a lot of his relatives, young kids, coming over getting my autograph, and they were telling me I was the toughest. Their uncle was saying that I was the toughest guy he ever fought. So, you know, that was a little bit of help! Here I'm 36 years old, I'm on my way

out and I was able to give this guy the toughest fight he had ever had out of, from twelve guys that he had fought already. Yeah, that's a little bit but, you know . . . After that I just kinda like, lost the desire a little bit and that was it, I just kinda quit. But I still like to fight! (laughs)

So, you went to UNR for a year, half a year, a year?

Half a year.

Half a year, and then you boxed. So, you were competing while being a student at UNR.

Yes.

Okay. And so, what did you do for a living after that?

After boxing?

Uh-huh.

I went home and I started working in a mine, Union Carbide. Then I started doing some construction work, a lot of underground, water, sewer, and built roads, started building some roads, and the after that I got into some carpentry. Some house maintenance, I started working for a maintenance company. You learn a lot about electrical, you learn about plumbing, you learn how to install windows, just a wide variety of construction. Right now, I could do a lot of jobs but I would mainly rather do electrical work because it pays a little bit more and I've got a good idea what I'm doing.

Did you go steady with somebody in school? You didn't get married in school.

No.

Did you get married right after school?

No, it was a few years later.

A few years later?

Yeah, five, six years, I think, later.

So, do you think, did attending Stewart affect your life in some way? I mean, maybe the boxing.

It's hard to say, you know. I've just been living, you know. I haven't really looked back at, but, the people, you know, like Robey. Good seeing him now, you know. And there was a lot of good people that were with boxing. Another man was Earl Gentry, Bud Allen, you know, good people.

Bud Allen. Was he another coach?

Yes, he was. He was head coach.

Coach for all athletics?

I think so, I think, yeah.

So, the athletic director.

And big Earl Gentry. He was another boxing—you know, he helped out with the boxing program. And there was another guy named Roger Sam. I think he's around this area.

Oh, yeah! He's at Pyramid Lake.

Yeah, I really know Roger Sam, he was another one that hung around. Yeah, like I say, a lot of good people from Stewart.

Tell me, what was one of your worst memories of Stewart? Something terrible that happened there.

(Laughs)

You broke your finger so you couldn't box for a little bit.

Yeah. That was probably the worst. (laughs)

Really?

Yeah. Not being able to fight the Russians.

Okay. Oh, yeah. Big disappointment.

Yeah.

What about the best?

The what?

The best memories? Some of your best memories?

Oh, I won my last title at Stewart Indian School, the Golden Gloves title.

Do you talk about your memories of Stewart with your kids or your family?

Not necessarily . . . yeah, some. I talk to my son about going there, attending there, and some fights, you know. But not a whole lot. My life's pretty full as it is. You know, with my kids and things that I do. So, I got no time to sit back and memorize yet. And I'm still very active. I like cleaning the yard if I'm not working, you know.

You're busy creating new memories.

Yes, yeah, that's it! Yeah! My grandkids, kids, you know. And I hopefully be coaching my grandson here soon.

Yeah!

He's five, so I got a few years to go! (laughs)

Oh! Gotta start 'em young! And, so you've been back to the campus. You said you've been there a few months ago.

Yes.

That's good! Just a couple more questions, Bill. What, more than anything, needs to be told to outside visitors to the site who aren't familiar with Stewart, or the boarding school system, or anything that we need to make sure that we express to them?

I would say there's a lot of Indian students, Indian kids out there that would enjoy to be in an atmosphere with other Indian kids and cultures, because I felt it was comfortable for me to learn and . . .

For today's . . . ?

Yes, today's kids, because some of us, I guess you could say, have a hard time in public schools, you know, because of the way some of the other kids are, you know.

Any other thoughts?

No, not right now.

Thank you very much for sharing your memories with me!

Thank you.