

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Robert (Bruce) Firchau

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Sports Stories - *IHSA* Oral History project

Interview # SIH-A-L-2017-021

Robert (Bruce) Firchau, a teacher who also coached high school basketball for over forty years, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Sports Stories – Illinois High School Association* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Mar 20, 2017 Location: Santori Public Library, Aurora, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 2:12 / 2.2 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on June 23, 2017.

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

Transcript
being processed

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Abstract

Robert (Bruce) Firchau, Sports Stories – IHSA, SIH-A-L-2017-021

Biographical Information Overview of Interview Bruce Firchau was born on February 15, 1949 in Chicago, Illinois. He grew up on the southeast side of Chicago, graduating from George Washington High School in 1967. He then attended Illinois State University and earned a BS degree in history with a minor in physical education in 1971. In 1973, Bruce earned a Master's degree in history from Illinois State University. Firchau's first teaching and coaching position was in the small Iroquois County school district of Stockland, which had eighty students. Leaving Stockland in 1974, Bruce found a succession of teaching and coaching positions: in Tower Hill (1974-75), Leland (1975-1977), Assumption (1977-1979), Plainfield, Indiana (1979-1981), Harvard (1981-1989), Oswego, (1989-1997) and Dundee-Crown (1997-2005). After retiring from public school teaching, Bruce spent ten years at Westminster Christian School in Elgin, retiring in 2015. Bruce has been active with the Illinois Basketball Coaches Association (IBCA), and is in charge of the annual Hall of Fame awards held at Illinois State University. He was also a leader in the creation of an Illinois Basketball Hall of Fame.

Firchau discusses his life as a basketball coach over a forty-plus year period. He talks about the challenges and duties facing a basketball coach in small high schools (Tower Hill, Leland, and Assumption), Indiana High schools (Plainfield), mid-size high schools (Harvard), suburban high schools (Oswego and Dundee-Crown), and a private high school (Westminster Christian). He also discusses school funding, student participation, facilities, practice schedules, offensive/defensive strategies, videotaping and conference affiliation. The impact of failed referendums was also reviewed. Firchau also talks about taking the Harvard basketball team to the state basketball finals, and the significant basketball rule changes, such as creating the three point shot, eliminating the jump ball, installing the coaching box, and going to three game officials. Toward the end of the interview, Firchau reflects on his experiences with the Illinois Basketball Coaches Association and the development of an Illinois Basketball Museum .

Subject Headings/Key Words: high school basketball coach in Illinois; high school basketball rules changes; Illinois Basketball Coaches Association; Illinois High School Association; changing strategies for basketball offense and defense, coach Paul Judson;

Note to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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