

JACK KEMP
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with
JAMES E. "JIM" MORA
August 5, 2011

Interviewer
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Jack Kemp Foundation
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Kondracke: This is a Jack Kemp Foundation Oral History Project interview with Jim Mora, Jack Kemp's roommate at Occidental College and later a head coach at the New Orleans Saints and the Indianapolis Colts. Today is August 5, 2011, and I'm Morton Kondracke.

Thanks so much for doing this, Coach. When you think about Jack Kemp, what immediately comes to your mind?

Mora: I think about a guy that was totally dedicated and committed to being a professional football player. You know, when you're at Occidental College, you're not—not a lot of professional football players come out of "Oxy," and Jack didn't even start as our freshman quarterback at a small school like Oxy, or as a sophomore, he wasn't the starting quarterback. He didn't start till his junior year, but he always had the belief and the commitment that he could play quarterback as a professional football player, and he worked to that end and nobody could convince him otherwise. So I think about somebody that was dedicated, committed, believed in himself, had a great work ethic, and got it done.

Kondracke: So how did you meet Jack Kemp?

Mora: I like to tell people, see, when I went to University High School in Los Angeles, Jack went to Fairfax [High School], and we were in the same league, so I like to tell people that the first time I ever met Jack was when I sacked him a couple times when we played against each other in high school, but that really wasn't the case. But we did play

against each other, so I knew of Jack. But the first time I met Jack was when we were freshmen at Occidental and we were on the freshman football team, coached by Payton Jordan, former Olympic track coach for the USA team. Jack was a quarterback, fullback, punter. I was a tight-end-type guy, and we first met there on the football field.

Kondracke: So how did you come to be roommates? Did you pick each other or did you just get thrown together?

Mora: No, we didn't get thrown together; we picked each other. I've thought about this often, how we all of a sudden started rooming together. We just kind of started becoming good friends. Initially, as I recall, my first semester I lived in the dorm, but I think Jack lived at home, as I recall. I remember, being he was a quarterback, I was a receiver, that type of a thing, we'd work out together. I know I'd go over to his house sometimes and we'd lift weights together. Jack was an avid weightlifter and all, and we just got to be buddies.

After our freshman year, I think we both lived as roommates in the same room in the ATO [Alpha Tau Omega] house, fraternity house. On occasion a couple of times during our career there, we got an apartment together, became roommates. So were always just really close friends, roommates, classmates, teammates, co-captains our senior year, the whole deal.

Kondracke: So what was the basis of your friendship? Was it football or did it go beyond football?

Mora: Well, you know, other than football, we just liked each other. We were good friends off the field. It wasn't like we just got together and played together. I mean, we went out together, went to movies together, had good times in the fraternity house together, although neither one of us were what you would call frat rats or something like that. But we did live in the house some and were good friends there, and we just hit it off. That was the main thing. We just hit it off as good buddies.

Kondracke: Why did he go to Occidental?

Mora: That's a good question. I don't know why he went to Oxy. I don't know if I ever asked him. Neither one of us were great high school football players. I mean, we both made like the All-League team and things like that, but I don't think either one—I didn't have a chance to go to a USC or a UCLA, local universities, and I don't think Jack did either. So I don't know what steered him to Oxy. I can't tell you that.

Kondracke: I've seen it said that the coach ran a, quote, "pro football style program." Is that the case?

Mora: No, that's not the case. At Oxy?

Kondracke: Yes.

Mora: No, that's not the case. Ours was not what you would call a program that would develop you for the NFL or for professional football as a quarterback, not in any way. That was all Jack's doing. He made himself a professional football player. It wasn't the program at Occidental College. I'm not knocking Oxy's football program, but we never won a championship, conference championship.

We had another player on our team who was a good friend of ours that was one of our roommates, [Ronald L.] Ron Botchan, who played a couple years in the American Football League like Jack did and then became a longtime NFL official. So we had some pretty good football players on the team, but we never, never won a championship. We were a pretty good team, but nothing special.

Kondracke: So it's kind of amazing that Jack got to be a professional football player.

Mora: I think it's really amazing that he became—not just became a professional football player, but became an outstanding professional football player. That was all Jack's doing, all his tremendous work ethic, his commitment, his dedication, his belief that he could be one. He made himself into something special.

Kondracke: Going back to high school, playing against him, what was that like? I mean, how good was he as a passer and so on?

Mora: You know, I hate to keep saying he wasn't like an All-City quarterback or an All—you know, he wasn't. He was a good player. Like even as a freshman on a team

like we had at Oxy, which was a good freshman team, but we weren't loaded with great players by any sense, just guys, you know, and he wasn't even our starting quarterback, but he played. I mean, he played some. He played some fullback. He played some different positions, but he wasn't anybody at that point where you would say, "Man, this guy's got something special. He's going to be something special. He's got a chance to play in the pros." You didn't think that at that point. He made himself a great player.

Kondracke: And how did he make himself a great player?

Mora: With a belief that he could do it, a want to be one, play at the professional level, and a great work ethic. I mean, back in those days, lifting weights was not a big thing like it is now with athletes. I mean, all different types of sports guys, track, swimming, golf, whatever, they all lift weights to become better. Back then, people thought maybe if you lifted weights, it made you muscle-bound or something like that. Jack was a committed weightlifter. And here's a guy, he's a quarterback. I mean, quarterbacks nowadays don't like to lift. You know, you've got your linemen and people like that doing it. But Jack, he pumped that iron and was always wanting to work out and throw the ball and get better and do whatever it took to become a better player, and just was dedicated to that goal, and I think that's what made him what he was.

Kondracke: Did he use off-seasons to keep practicing and stuff?

Mora: Well, he participated in track at Occidental. He threw the javelin, so he was always doing something athletically, but he also spent a lot of time working out. I mean, he'd grab me and say, "Hey, let's go throw the ball around and get ready," during the summer and things like that. So he kept himself in shape, but not—you know, we didn't have spring practice. It was a small school. We didn't have spring practice or do anything other than during the season, so whatever he did, he did on his own.

Kondracke: What are your outstanding memories of Oxy football and Jack's play in it?

Mora: That's a good question. Well, you know, when you ask that question, it's like I was always trying to do the best I could do. I was a receiver, Jack was a quarterback, so we termed up a lot not only during the season, but some during the off-season, during the summer, getting ready. He'd throw the ball to me, things like that. Like I say, Jack—

Kondracke: Were there any celebrated games that he threw you a ninety-yard pass or something like that?

Mora: No. No, there wasn't. I mean, it—

Kondracke: Were you his favorite receiver?

Mora: Yes.

Kondracke: He was a hard passer.

Mora: Oh, man. You mean, like threw the ball hard? Yes. I liked it. If you didn't catch it, in other words, I mean, if it hit you and it went into your body, I'd come away from a workout with Jack with kind of a sore sternum because he threw the ball so hard. He was very strong, and he worked at getting stronger. He worked at building himself up. Yes, he threw a hard pass. I mean, it was a hard pass. Well, not hard to catch, but it wasn't a soft pass or a floppy pass. I mean, he got behind it and ripped it in there. Like I say, I'd come away with a sore sternum occasionally if I'd let it hit me in the chest.

Kondracke: So he became a Little College All American, didn't he?

Mora: Well, you know, he might have been an honorable mention Little All American, and he certainly had some impressive passing statistics his senior year, but I'm not sure he was ever—I don't think he was ever like a first team or second team Little All American. I just don't think—

Kondracke: Did you have winning seasons?.

Mora: Yes, but not where we won eight or nine games. We didn't play that many games at Occidental back then. We always had winning seasons. We were competitive, we were pretty good, but I don't think we ever won a conference championship. In fact, I know we didn't.

Kondracke: Now, somebody said that as a quarterback, it was like sandlot football, that he would start diagramming plays on the ground in the huddle before a play. Is that true or not true?

Mora: No, he didn't diagram. He might have made things up. In fact, he did. I mean, he was the kind of guy, "Well, you go here, and you go here, and I'll get you the ball." We didn't have what you'd call a complicated offense. But he wouldn't get down on the ground and draw it up on the ground. I never saw him do that in a game, but he would kind of ad lib a little bit as far as the play was concerned and figure out what he thought would be the best way to move the ball down the field.

Kondracke: Those were the days when quarterbacks did all the play calling.

Mora: Right. Jack did all the play calling. Right.

Kondracke: What kind of a play caller was he?

Mora: He was a good play caller. He was a student of the game, studied the game.

Winning was important to him. He wanted to be successful. He was a good play caller.

Kondracke: When you say "studied the game," how did he study the game?

Mora: Well, back then at a small school, we would film the games, but he wouldn't come in during the week and look at films. We didn't have films of the opponents like they do nowadays and all that. But the best he could under the circumstances, he was a good student of the game.

Kondracke: What kind of a leader was he?

Mora: He was a great leader. I think this was one of his assets. Took charge. Guys looked up to him. He wasn't like a screamer and a yeller by any sense, but he was an emotional guy. He wouldn't be afraid to tell you what he thought you ought to be doing or what you shouldn't be doing, because winning was so important to him and he wanted everybody to be doing the right thing. But he was a vocal leader, good leader, positive leader. I think his leadership qualities were one of his strongest areas.

[Begin File 2]

Kondracke: Go ahead.

Mora: You know, Jack believed, always thought that he should—even when he wasn't starting, say, as a sophomore or a freshman, he didn't like this, and he didn't believe that he should—he thought that he was the best and he should have been, and sometimes he would show that. You know what I mean? Because—

Kondracke: He had a temper?

Mora: Yes, he had a little bit of a temper, and he'd get upset if he didn't feel like he was getting due process, being the best guy or the starter, and he would let people know this, and you could tell that he wasn't just going to let it be, that he was bothered by this. Not that he would be disrespectful or anything to the coach, but amongst us, his teammates, I mean, it was like, "You know, hey, I'm the best guy. I should be out there. I don't like the fact that I'm not the starter," and things like that. It would bother him. He was an emotional, competitive guy, always was.

Kondracke: And if somebody wasn't performing up to snuff, how did he—

Mora: You know, I don't remember that specifically, but just generally speaking, I would think that he would be upset with that person, would let that person know that he wasn't happy with what they were doing. I mean, that's the kind of guy he was. I mean, he was a demonstrative, outgoing, vocal person that would let you know if he didn't think you were doing what it took to be successful and to be a winner.

Kondracke: How did he get along with the coach and the other coaches?

Mora: He got along fine with the coaches. You know, we didn't have a big staff back then with a small school and all. Things were a lot different back then. But, yes, he got along fine. He was a vocal—I mean, he'd tell you what he thought, and he wasn't afraid

to question the coach or to make suggestions or to say, “Hey, I don’t think that’s the right way to do it. I think we ought to do it this way.” I mean, he was that way.

Kondracke: Do you remember any specific instances?

Mora: No, I don’t remember any specific instances. I could tell you something off camera. I don’t know if this would—we didn’t think our coach was a good coach. I don’t know if this should—and after our senior year, Jack and I went to the—I don’t know if it was the president of the college or the dean of the faculty, I don’t remember, and we expressed our feeling that we didn’t think our head coach was a good coach. He’d been there forever and a great person, great guy, but he just—we didn’t think doing what he should be doing for us to be the best we could be. This was after we were finished. And Jack and I went to the higher-ups at the school to tell them this. This was how Jack was and this is kind of how I was, too. Either he was let go as the head coach—he was still on the faculty there for a long time, but he wasn’t the head football coach anymore after our senior year.

Kondracke: What did Jack think was wrong with his coaching?

Mora: Neither one of us just didn’t feel like he put the time and effort into it to be successful that he should have, that was the main thing, or had the knowledge or the work ethic to do what it took to be successful.

Kondracke: How did Jack react if he got sacked?

Mora: [laughs] Jack didn't react very well to anything if it was bad to him or negative. Like I said, he'd get upset. He'd be emotional. He'd show it. I mean, it wasn't like, "Well, okay, I got sacked. Big deal." No, he was a guy—he might throw the ball down or something like that or get mad or block that guy or something like that. You know what I mean? That's how he was. I mean, that's how he was. That's Jack Kemp. But not in a negative way. You know what I mean? Just he expressed his emotions.

Kondracke: Did he inspire his teammates?

Mora: Oh, yes, very much so. I mean, you didn't want to come under his—I don't want to say wrath, necessarily, but, I mean, he'd let you know if he wasn't happy how things were going. I mean, it was really important for him to win, and he worked so hard at himself being good, he wanted everybody else to be the same way, and I think this was good.

Kondracke: How often did he get injured?

Mora: Well, you know, I remember him getting hurt. He got hurt, and it wasn't his senior year. I don't know if it was his sophomore year or junior year, and I think he missed some games. He didn't get hurt that much, and if he did get a little banged up or

something, he'd keep playing, I mean, if he possibly could, I know that. Tough guy. I know at the pro level he did.

Kondracke: Concussions?

Mora: I don't remember concussion in college.

Kondracke: Did his folks and his brothers always come to the games?

Mora: Yes, as I recall, his mom and dad, brothers were there, very supportive, as I recall, yes.

Kondracke: What did you think about his family life based on what you saw?

Mora: You know, I would go to his house and knew his mom and dad, what I would call be basically a, maybe, I don't know if an upper class, middle class, upper middle class, but nice area there in L.A. A Christian Science home that he grew up in, but he certainly didn't practice that phase of religion. I didn't get the feeling that he was an over-religious Christian Scientist-type person.

Kondracke: What made you think that he wasn't an overly Christian Scientist?

Mora: Well, I don't know. He just didn't seem like a real pious-type guy. He wasn't. I mean, not that he didn't seem like it; he wasn't. It's hard to say. I don't know.

Kondracke: You knew that he was Christian Scientist how?

Mora: Because he told me, and his mom and dad were, and he was raised in that environment. I'd go over to his house and they had the *Christian Science Monitor* there. You know what I mean? And I just knew he was. He told me he was. But I don't think he was a practicing Christian Scientist where they wouldn't allow medical attention or whatever it was, no. I don't think that was the case with Jack, as I recall.

Kondracke: Yes, you're not supposed to drink and smoke and stuff like that.

Mora: Well, he didn't drink or smoke. Jack did not drink or smoke. I can't recall ever seeing Jack drink a beer. He might have at a fraternity party or something like that, but I can't ever remember him with a glass or can of beer in his hand ever. We were pretty straight.

Kondracke: Was he against players drinking?

Mora: Not that I recall him being against players drinking, no. Jack liked to have his fun. I mean, he wasn't a stay-at-home sit-around guy. We'd go out and have some fun, but nothing very extravagant.

Kondracke: What [unclear]? Where would you go?

Mora: Movies. [laughs] We'd go to fraternity parties and movies. You know, practical jokes, things like that.

Kondracke: Did he pull any?

Mora: Yes. Jack wasn't averse to doing stuff like that.

Kondracke: Do you remember any?

Mora: [laughs] Well, I—

Kondracke: Get the fullest story we could possibly get.

Mora: The fullest story?

Kondracke: Yes.

Mora: We used to, like if a friend of ours, one of our other roommates or something, had a date, like one of our roommates had a convertible and he had like a cover from the end of the front seat that covered the back. What did they call it? A canvas thing that went

over the back seat that covered the back seat. He'd go out on a date, and Jack and I might be in the back seat. You know what I mean?

Kondracke: Under the cover?

Mora: Under the cover, yes, while this guy was on his date. He and the girl didn't know we were back there. So we'd be back there, you know. He might go somewhere and neck with her or something like that, but we might be in the back seat.

I know a couple times we were at kind of a little house-type apartment that we were in together in school, and it was near the Forest Lawn Mortuary, a cemetery. We hooked up some deal, and I forget exactly the details. I don't know if it was Jack's idea, but we did it. We would invite another friend over, and we had it hooked up where there would be some noise outside, you know what I mean, some eerie type of thing, and this guy would be sitting there, "What's that?"

"I don't know, man. We've got these creatures coming around here, or people," you know, and stuff. I mean, things like that, nothing bad.

Somebody rode a bike through the library one time. I don't know if it was Jack or not. It might have been. I don't know. He'd do crazy stuff like that, nothing bad, but he wasn't afraid to—

Kondracke: Did he ever get in trouble for anything?

Mora: Not that I recall.

Kondracke: There's one football incident that I've seen recorded, and that is—Whittier [College] is your main rival?

Mora: Well, the main rival, like the '[U]SC-UCLA, the main rival was Occidental-Pomona [College]. Okay? But Whittier always had maybe the best team in the league, so that was the team we wanted to beat.

Kondracke: And George [H.] Allen was the coach.

Mora: George Allen was the coach of Whittier when we were at Oxy, yes.

Kondracke: So is there this incident where George Allen is screaming at you and Jack Kemp from the sidelines?

Mora: He might have been.

Kondracke: You don't remember that?

Mora: No.

Kondracke: Okay. So was Jack Kemp, would you say, mature for his age or immature or ordinary?

Mora: Ordinary.

Kondracke: What kind of a student was he?

Mora: He wasn't a great student. We were both physical education majors, and back in those days Occidental had one of the better physical education programs around. They put a lot of physical education teachers into the high schools as physical education teachers and coaches. We had a department head by the name of Carl Trieb. He was an old German guy, not old, but he was a German guy, very disciplined, and had a great, great reputation for that department. We were both majors.

He was, I would say, not a great student. That surprised me a little. Well, even in his other classes he was, I would say, an average student. I had a lot of classes with him, and he was an average student. But I will tell you this, and I've told people this, outside of the classroom—okay, back in those days, you know, *Sports Illustrated* magazine now. They didn't have *Sports Illustrated*, but they had a magazine called *Sport* magazine. I subscribed to *Sport* magazine. Jack subscribed to *U.S. News & World Report*. So I knew right then that our careers would probably take a little different path. You know what I mean? And he had an interest in what was going on outside of sports, you know, politically, economically. I mean, it was there. Not that he did it all the time or that it was obvious, but it was there that he had more of an interest in what was going on outside of football or class or whatever than maybe some of his close friends did.

Kondracke: So what other courses did he take besides P.E.?

Mora: With physical education, there were certain courses you had to take at Occidental because it's a liberal arts school. Your first two years you had a lot of required courses, History of Civilization, things like that. We had to take biology and anatomy and things like that as a physical education major. You had to take a language. You had to take a religion course back then. We basically pretty much took the same curriculum, he and I, so we were in a lot of classes together.

Was he great student? No. Was he a good student? Yes. Did he work at it? Yes. Was he bad student? No, he wasn't a bad student, but he wasn't like—I mean, back in those days I wouldn't have predicted that he did what he did politically in his career. Not because of his student—just because of his interests and just how he was being around him.

Kondracke: What would you have predicted?

Mora: I don't know. I don't know. I don't think I would have predicted him as a physical education teacher at the high school level, certainly a lot more than that, not that that was bad, but he—

Kondracke: Did you think—

Mora: —wasn't just an ordinary guy. I mean, there was something special about Jack. You know what I mean? He wasn't just like a guy. There was always—maybe it was leadership qualities or whatever, but he was always somebody that you knew that he was going to be successful at whatever he did, and it was going to be maybe beyond the ordinary. I always had that feeling about Jack.

Kondracke: Did you think he could make it in the pros?

Mora: That's a good question, because knowing his work ethic and commitment, I wouldn't say I didn't think he could make it, but I thought it would be a huge long shot. Now, I think he was lucky that the American Football League came along when it did, okay, because he bounced around for three years. The fact that he was drafted out of Occidental College, I think, was something special, because not many players get drafted out of Occidental College or schools on that level, not just Oxy, but other schools. But here's a guy that gets drafted, but he kind of bounced around for three years in the NFL, the Canadian League, I know, for a little bit. But in 1960, the American Football League started. Now it's a new league and he had an opportunity now to get to a point where he could be a full-time player and all, and then from then on his career took off. So I think he was fortunate from that standpoint that the AFL started when it did early in his career.

Kondracke: But when you were in college and he was convinced that he was going to be a pro player, you had your doubts?

Mora: Well, I don't know if I had my doubts, but I knew that it would be hard for him. I thought it would be hard for him, yes, because he wasn't like—I mean, he was a good player in college, a real good player. I don't know. But as I recall, it wasn't like “Wow!” You know what I mean? It wasn't like that. He was a good player, but it was just that dedication he had that I think was impressive to me, that, hey, if he got an opportunity, maybe he could do it. That's what I thought. And he got the opportunity, but he didn't go into the NFL and set the world on fire for three years. He didn't.

Kondracke: Was he ever interested in any other particular courses besides his Phys Ed major? I'm thinking of political science or something like that.

Mora: I don't recall that he was. I know in his political career that he was involved, he got into the economics and things like that, and I want to say that maybe when we were in college he had an interest in that area. I kind of have a feeling that he did, but I don't remember specifically. Maybe it's because of what he did later on that makes me think that way, but I still kind of think that he did. I mean, like I said, he read *U.S. News & World Report*. I read *Sport* magazine. And I wasn't a dummy. You know what I mean? So there was an interest in something that was going on in the world, yes.

Kondracke: Did he talk about that stuff?

Mora: A little bit, yes. Yes. I mean, he was a little more special than some of the other guys I hung around with. There were four of us that were kind of roommates for the four

years, and classmates and teammates. Jack's interests were a little bit out of the ordinary from a standpoint of what we were interested in.

Kondracke: Who were your other two roommates?

Mora: Ron Botchan was one. I don't know if you know that name. And Nick Rodionoff were two. He became a high school coach, teacher. Ron did, too, and then Ron went into—he was the one that played a couple years in the AFL, and then he was a coach at a junior college level, yes, and an NFL official.

Kondracke: Now, I've read that Jack was interested in classical music and ballet and sculpture and stuff like that.

Mora: Oh, boy. I don't remember that. I don't remember that now. Other people say that, and maybe it just kind of went over my head that he was, but he had, like I say, interests beyond sports and that kind of stuff. You know what I mean? He did.

Kondracke: Did he participate in any particular other activities besides football and the fraternity?

Mora: Track.

Kondracke: No campus politics or anything like that?

Mora: Not that I recall. Not that I recall, no.

Kondracke: Was he a big man on campus?

Mora: Yes, you'd call him a big man on campus because he was the quarterback of the football team, you know, good-looking guy, outgoing guy. Yes. I mean, people knew who Jack Kemp was, and it's a small school, I don't know, 1,800 people, so it wasn't hard to be a big man. But, yes, he was well thought of, popular guy, good-looking guy, football player, the whole deal, yes.

Kondracke: But he was never interested in being a class officer or anything like that?

Mora: No, he was not into leadership activities or roles other than in sports, that I recall.

No.

Kondracke: Did you ever ask him why?

Mora: No.

Kondracke: And nobody asked him to run for anything ever?

Mora: Not that I recall.

[interruption]

Mora: But Jack was only going to be coached by him his freshman year, so I don't know why. He threw the javelin for him, too, but, I mean, that wasn't what Jack was known for, although he was a good javelin thrower. If he was going there for Payton Jordan, he was only going to get him as a freshman player. You know what I mean? So I don't know. But I know Jack and Payton had a pretty close relationship but we both—

Kondracke: We're not rolling, are we?

Unidentified Male: Yes.

Kondracke: Oh, we are rolling. Okay.

Mora: Okay. So I don't know. I'm not looking at you. Okay. I didn't know we were rolling.

Kondracke: So what was the importance of Payton Jordan to Jack Kemp?

Mora: Well, I don't know what the importance was prior to Jack going to Oxy, but I know that once we got to Oxy, Payton was our freshman football coach, one of the best, one of the more outstanding men that I've ever been around, a coach, person, a guy that motivated you, that you looked up to, leader. As I said, he was also the head track coach, so Jack participated on his track team as a javelin thrower. Jack and Payton became close. I think Jack looked to Payton for advice, counsel, leadership, whatever. Payton eventually left Oxy and went to Stanford [University] as the head track coach and became the USA head track coach for one of the Olympic teams [1968], I forget exactly what year it was, but a wonderful guy.

In fact, a few years ago, Jack was in L.A. I was living in the desert where I live now, and Payton Jordan lived in Santa Barbara, and Jack came up. Jack stayed in contact with Payton Jordan through the years, and Payton Jordan was the kind of guy that would stay in touch with us, like write you a nice note or a nice letter if you did something good or he read about you in the paper, whatever. Jack got the idea for Jack and I and Ron Botchan to drive up to Santa Barbara and visit Payton and his wife. Payton had been diagnosed with cancer, which he eventually succumbed to a few years ago. But I know the three of us drove up to Santa Barbara and spent a day with Payton and his wife, Payton Jordan and his wife.

I know they had a very close relationship, and I think a lot of it was Jack's—well, Payton was good about keeping in touch with you, but I think Jack did a good job of keeping in touch with Payton Jordan, too, outstanding individual, one of the all-time greats, in my opinion.

Kondracke: Do you think that he recruited Jack to Occidental?

Mora: I don't know that. I don't know the answer. I don't know if he did or not. But I know that, again, if Jack would have wanted to play for Payton, it would only been as a freshman, and I don't think Jack was our starting quarterback as a freshman. So I don't know.

Kondracke: How did Jack not become your—this is freshman team, right?

Mora: Yes. We had about twenty guys on the team.

Kondracke: And Jack didn't start as a freshman?

Mora: Not as quarterback. Our starting quarterback, I remember, was a guy by the name of Chancy Pa [phonetic], who was from Hawaii. But Jack played. I mean, I think he played some fullback, he punted, he did things like that. He might have played some quarterback, as I recall.

Kondracke: Did you play sixty minutes?

Mora: Yes.

Kondracke: Defense [unclear]?

Mora: Back in those days, yes. He probably, as I recall, Jack might have played defense too. I was too worried about myself to— [laughs]

Kondracke: He had an MG?

Mora: Oh, man, did I love that MG. He had a little MG. I think it was red. Ever since those days, I've always wanted an MG because I loved that MG. We used to go down to Hollywood and drive down the main drag, whether it was Sunset Boulevard or Hollywood, I forget. We'd go down there like on a Friday or Saturday night, and maybe three of us would hop in that MG if we could fit, and we'd drive down, the top down and everything, on Sunset Boulevard or Hollywood Boulevard. But, yes, he'd fly around in that MG. I loved that MG.

Kondracke: How could he afford it?

Mora: Don't ask me. His parents did okay. I mean, he lived in a nice house, and I think his dad—I'm not sure exactly what he did. I mean, I was over there a lot, and I don't know, I think he worked. I don't remember exactly what he did during the summer and things like that, but I don't know, he did.

Kondracke: Did he speed in the car?

Mora: He might have, knowing Jack, yes. It wouldn't surprise me if he did, and I don't recall exactly. But Jack was the guy that would do things to the edge. I don't know if that's the right way to say it, but, yes, it wouldn't surprise me if he did, like [demonstrates]. Jack was—you know what I mean? I don't know if other people have told you this or not, but, yes. I mean, he was that way, aggressive guy.

Kondracke: But not violent.

Mora: Dangerously or something like that?

Kondracke: Yes.

Mora: Oh, violent as a person?

Kondracke: Yes.

Mora: Oh, no, no. Not the way I remember him.

Kondracke: Assertive?

Mora: Very assertive. That's good. Assertive, very much assertive, very much assertive.

Kondracke: But impatient?

Mora: Impatient? Impatient would be a good term for Jack, yes.

Kondracke: Any other adjectives that you could put on him?

Mora: Well, I've already told you some, you know, but, I don't know, give me some.

Definitely assertive and impatient. You brought these up. Yes, definitely.

Kondracke: How close could you get to him? I mean, was he somebody who confided in people?

Mora: Yes. I thought that Jack and I were very close. I could confide in him and he could confide in me, even when we got together through the years. The last time we were together, other than when Ron and I went back to see him when he was ill right before he passed away, we had our fifty-year reunion, college reunion at Oxy, and we spent quite a bit of time over a period of a couple days. Connie and I stayed at the same hotel as he and Joanne [Kemp] over in Pasadena. I know I remember we got in my room, and the girls were doing something, and we sat there and told old war stories for two or three hours.

Yes, I never felt like I couldn't get as close as I wanted to to Jack. I'm sure he felt the same way about me. We were close friends and stayed that way through the years. I remember he called me. He called me, and I remember him calling me, like it was like in

January or February of the year. He died in May, I know. I think it was May. But he called me. He said, “Jim, I got bad news.”

I said, “What’s the bad news?”

He said, “I’ve got cancer and it’s terminal. I don’t know whether it’s going to be months, a year, whatever, and here’s what it is.” I remember him calling me and telling me that. He said, “Would you tell Ron and Nick and some of these guys what’s going on?”

Kondracke: How often did you talk to him after you graduated?

Mora: Well, you know, not a lot, but he always had these Super Bowl parties, and if I went to a Super Bowl when I was coaching in the NFL, not playing in it but coaching in it, but go down there for the game and a few days before and we’d go to the parties. Sometimes Oxy might have some kind of an alumni deal or something that I would see him at. We’d get together.

We talked quite a bit on the phone. I know he had that distinctive voice. He started calling me “Coach.” I’d pick up the phone. He’d go, “Coach! Jack Kemp here,” as if I didn’t know it was Jack Kemp, you know, by his voice. “Jack Kemp.”

“Hi, Jack. How you doing?” [laughs] Anyway, we talked. We’d stay in touch.

He helped my son. My middle son’s an architect, Michael, and he lives up in Seattle. He and his partner have their own architectural business. He went to University of Washington, got his master’s there and everything in architecture.

Do you know who [Timothy L.] Tim Blixseth is? Tim Blixseth was a good friend of Jack's. He's a very wealthy person that owned Yellowstone Jack. It's a big ski area up in Montana. I don't know if you're familiar with it or not. But he and Jack were close friends. In fact, he gave Jack a lot up there or something.

But here's the kind of guy Jack was. My son Michael—and Tim Blixseth bought a—this is just a few years ago—bought a home on Lake Washington in Seattle. You're familiar with that. Okay. He was looking for an architect to do a remodel on his home, and somehow my son Michael found out that Tim was looking for an architect. My son knew that Tim knew Jack, so my son Mike called me, said, "Dad, maybe you could call Jack and maybe he could put in a good word for me."

I called Jack on the phone. I said, "Hey, Jack." I told him what was going on.

He said, "I'll call Tim." He called Tim. Tim hired my son to do the job. Now, they haven't done it yet because Tim keeps changing his mind and stuff, but they're going to do it. I mean, within a matter of days, Blixseth was talking to my son and decided to hire him to do the job. I mean, that's just how Jack was. Blixseth's a multimillionaire guy.

Kondracke: He was a political backer of Jack's?

Mora: Might have been, yes.

Kondracke: So, now, look. You are probably the closest person to witness the courtship of Jack Kemp and Joanne Main. So tell me about how that unfolded.

Mora: Joanne was one of the better-looking—Oxy wasn't known for its beautiful coeds; still isn't, probably. A lot of smart ones. But Joanne was an attractive gal. Jack certainly was one that wasn't going to go out with anybody that wasn't good-looking, attractive. I mean, that's how he was. He wasn't going to settle for anything less than something pretty darn good, which Joanne was. She was in a sorority there. Jack wasn't a big ladies' guy by any sense, but he liked to go out. In fact, I was going with a girl from my high school, and Jack and I double-dated with one of her friends from my high school when they were still in high school.

He was aggressive, hard to get along with sometimes, Jack was. I think about some of these things as you ask me these questions. Assertive, impatient, those are great terms for Jack Kemp, trust me, in a positive way.

Kondracke: In what way was he hard to get along with?

Mora: It's just he was particular. If he wanted something and he couldn't get it, it would upset him. He was aggressive. I mean, all these things.

Kondracke: Did he slam things around?

Mora: I don't remember him doing that. But, like, okay, say if he saw a girl that he wanted, I mean, he's going to go after her. He's not going to sit back and wait for her to come to him. He's going to, "Let's go, man. I'm going to take her out," or, "I'm going

to get a date with her.” Not a big ladies’ guy by any sense. None of us were. But I guess he just saw something in Joanne that he liked, and, “I’m going to go after her. I’m going to go take her out,” and he started dating her. She was, I think, a year behind us. And that’s how it happened.

Kondracke: What year did they start dating?

Mora: Boy, it wasn’t—well, man, that’s a good question. I don’t know if it wasn’t until his senior year that he started dating Joanne. I know it wasn’t before his junior year, and it might have been his senior year that they started going out and hit it off.

Kondracke: Had he had any serious relationships before that?

Mora: No, not that I recall, he did not. No, nothing serious.

Kondracke: Supposedly, she dated a bunch of other athletes.

Mora: I don’t know that. I don’t know that. I don’t recall that.

Kondracke: So do you know how they met?

Mora: Well, I don’t know the particular incident where they first met. I’m assuming that Jack just saw her on campus or maybe it was at a party or function or something. She

was an attractive gal and a sharp gal. He says, “Hey, this is somebody I would like to meet and date.” That’s what I would assume happened, as I recall. I don’t remember any particular incident where they met or hooked up or something like that. Just started taking her out.

Kondracke: So he must have reported to you on how it was going.

Mora: [laughs] Well, I don’t remember that.

Kondracke: You’re his roommate.

Mora: I know. I don’t remember any discussion about Joanne. I really don’t.

Kondracke: So at what point is it obvious that they’re going to get married?

Mora: I don’t think that happened till after we got out of school. I went in the Marine Corps, stationed back at Quantico in North Carolina [sic], and Jack was involved with his professional football and all. All of a sudden, I found out they were going to get married.

He was in my wedding as an usher. I wasn’t in his wedding because I was in the service and all that, and we couldn’t do that. But I know he was in my wedding. He was one of the ushers. I wasn’t able to go to his wedding because of my commitment to the Marines.

Kondracke: So they went together steady his senior year?

Mora: I think so. I don't remember exactly.

Kondracke: This is the year when fraternity guys gave their girlfriends pins and stuff.

Mora: I can't see Jack doing something like that, giving her his pin. I don't even know if he had a pin.

Kondracke: He wasn't much of a frat boy?

Mora: He wasn't a frat guy, no. He was not. Although we lived there on occasion, he was not a frat guy, not in any way.

Kondracke: Do you remember him ever having any doubts about his connection to Joanne or think that this is going too far too fast or something like that?

Mora: I do not recall that. I don't know if it went too far too fast, you know.

Kondracke: Did it go too slow? [laughs]

Mora: I don't know. I don't remember.

Kondracke: So do you remember who pursued who?

Mora: Knowing Jack, I'm sure Jack pursued her. Yes. Just knowing Joanne, I wouldn't think Joanne went after Jack, although I'm sure, obviously, Jack appealed to her. But knowing Jack, I would think that he was the aggressor.

Kondracke: Anything else that you remember about that courtship?

Mora: No.

Kondracke: So we've discussed character traits. Another one is focused. Jack is famously regarded as being totally focused on whatever he wanted to accomplish.

Mora: Definitely. Again, my recollection of Jack, when you talk about focus, would be his athletic career, his football career, the focus of being the best he could be and the focus of eventually playing at the professional level. He just always believed that he could do that, even though he was a quarterback from Occidental in an average football program, small school. "I'm going to focus on doing what it takes to become one."

Kondracke: Did he model himself on any particular football hero?

Mora: That's a good question. I don't know.

Kondracke: What kind of changes could you see over the years in Jack?

Mora: The change I saw in Jack was he became more of what I would call a politician. Now, this might be a little bit negative, okay, but I'm going to say it anyway. Jack became more image-conscious than when I knew him in college. Sometimes Jack—say if Jack and I are talking like you and I standing there, “Oh, yeah, you know.” [laughs] Say we were at a function or something, I'd get the impression that Jack wasn't just focused in on me. If he saw somebody and he might be talking to me, but he's looking over here. He was concerned more about his image, and, to me, talked more like a politician might talk, not just buddy to buddy or friend to friend. You know what I mean? I don't know if I'm making a point here.

And it bothered me a little bit, but I'm thinking, “Ah, that's Jack, no big deal.” And Ron, our friend Ron Botchan, I mean, he felt the same way, that it wasn't like we were back in college and shooting the bull with each other. Jack was worried about other things, you know. I don't want that to be too negative. I don't know if I'm making a good point here what I'm talking about, but we always said, “Yeah, now he's a politician.”

Kondracke: So did he become more distant?

Mora: No.

Kondracke: More careful?

Mora: No. No, not more distant or more careful, no. No. I would say no. Just worldly? Would that be a good word? I don't know. And maybe that just came with the job, with the territory. That's what I thought. "Yeah, that's how he is now." But he was always fun to be around and good. I mean, it wasn't like he was not pleasant to be with or I didn't enjoy being with him. I just felt like he had a lot going on in his life, and it was important for him to have a good image and all that kind of stuff, and people, how he felt about people. I never felt like sometimes when we were together that he was just locked into talk. I mean, he had other things on his mind. You know what I mean? Other people that he was wanting to talk to or if we were at a function with people around. He was a politician.

Kondracke: This is like at these Super Bowl gatherings, your—

Mora: Yes, but he was friendly, and we were friends, and he was hospitable and caring and all these kind of things, but he was going to talk to everybody, which is okay. Yes. It didn't bother me.

Kondracke: One other question about how conscious was he of his personal appearance, physical appearance?

Mora: Very. Oh, very vain. Jack was very vain, again, in a way where I could kid him about it. This is, I think, one of the reasons his hair, he always wanted it—he had a nice

hairdo anyway, but that was important to him. But I think this is one of the reasons he lifted weights, to make himself look good. We'd be walking down the street, and if we passed a window in a store, he's going to check himself out. I mean, this was noticeable. Okay?

One time during spring break, when you were living around southern California during spring break, you'd either go to Balboa—are you familiar with down there in Newport Beach? Or you go to Palm Springs. In fact, one year we did both. We hopped in his car. I forget whose car it was. It wasn't the MG. There was three or four of us, and we went to Palm Springs for a couple of days, and then we went to Balboa.

But we went to Palm Springs, and we were staying at a motel where some of the girls that we knew were also staying there, and it was in the late afternoon, evening. The girls were out at the pool, and we just got there and we were going to put our bathing suits on and go out. Well, Jack hops down on the floor and does some pushups because he wanted to pump himself up seriously and look good for the girls. He was down there doing the pushups and stuff like that. Now he's all—now we'd go out to the pool. I mean, he was a vain guy. [laughs] That's one thing I remember about Jack Kemp. I mean it was important for him. Yes, his appearance was important to him.

Kondracke: Did he stay vain his whole life?

Mora: I think so, but I wasn't around him enough his whole life to know that, but I think that was always important to him.

Kondracke: Were you surprised? He had a crewcut for much of his football career. Then he becomes a politician and all of a sudden he grows his hair long.

Mora: I mean, that's how he changed. He became a politician. Not many politicians with crewcuts. [laughs]

Kondracke: So did you talk to him during these days? Let's walk through his career a little bit. In those days when he was getting cut from team after team after team, did you talk to him?

Mora: A little bit.

Kondracke: How did he take that?

Mora: I don't remember exactly, exactly how he took it, whether it bothered him. I'm sure it bothered him. I really can't answer that question.

Kondracke: So he gets to the Chargers, and he's working for [Sidney] Sid Gilman. How did he get along with Gilman?

Mora: I think he got along great with Sid Gilman, as far as I know, because Sid was a true professional and, I think, a knowledgeable guy, offensive guy, innovator, a passing game, and, of course, Jack being a quarterback and the leader of their team. I knew Sid a

little bit. Sid was, again, an assertive-type guy, an emotional guy. Jack's the same way. I think they might have clashed some, not that I know for sure, but I think in a positive way. I would say that those two guys, knowing Sid the little bit that I did, and knowing Jack, I would think that they would get along great, a good match.

Kondracke: What about [Allen] Al Davis?

Mora: Oh, man. I don't know what kind of a connection they had with that.

Kondracke: He was offensive coordinator.

Mora: Oh, was he the offensive? Well, I'll bet the real offensive coordinator was Sid Gilman. I mean, that's the way it is nowadays. They name a guy as offensive coordinator, but a lot of times it's the head coach that's the—I would think that that was the case back in those days too. I don't know how he got along with Al. I have no idea. But I would think that any coach would have a great respect for Jack because of how badly he wanted to play and how important it was for him and the work ethic that he had, but also a guy that would not be afraid to question you, come up with new ideas on his own, that type of thing. I would think that most coaches would like Jack. But maybe sometimes there'd be a little conflict, because Jack was that kind of a guy, you know.

I coached Peyton [W.] Manning for his first four years. Peyton, as good as there is, with a fabulous work ethic, with a guy totally committed to being the best he could be. So I've known Peyton since he was a little kid, because he grew up in New Orleans when

I was with the Saints. But we battled a little bit because he was an emotional guy, like I was, too, and I would think Jack and his coaches would be kind of the same way, in a positive way.

Kondracke: Now, in 1965 before the Bills played the Chargers in an AFL championship game, Gilman was quoted as saying, “Jack Kemp has all the maturity of a ten-year-old girl.” Now, does that surprise you?

Mora: No. No, I mean, it does surprise me. Yes, yes, it does surprise me. Of a ten-year-old girl?

Kondracke: It's on paper. I can't vouch for it. I wasn't there.

Mora: Yes, that surprises me. Jack was an emotional guy, you know, but he wasn't an immature guy, no. No. That surprises me, yes. That might be just Sid saying something.

Kondracke: How did Kemp take the fact that he got waived and ended up with the Bills for \$100?

Mora: Well, I don't remember talking to him when that occurred, but I would guess that it would have bothered him, because I think he had some good things going here in San Diego. I know he got to be good friends with—was it [Herbert G.] Herb Klein, who—yes. Probably was starting to do some things outside of football here in San Diego. I

would assume that. I kind of got that impression. So I would think that going from San Diego to Buffalo was not something he really was looking forward to, but he certainly took advantage of that opportunity and made the most of it.

Kondracke: How did he avoid the draft, the military draft?

Mora: That's a good question. I do not know.

Kondracke: Because he was a reservist when there was a big call-up after the Berlin crisis. There was a Berlin crisis.

Mora: I don't know. That's a good question. I probably wondered that at some time. I joined the Marine Corps. I went into an officer program when I was in college, spent three years afterwards. I sometimes wondered about that, how he didn't have to go in the service. But he wasn't the only one. I don't know.

Kondracke: How did professional football players avoid the draft in those days? I mean, you'd think that they'd be naturals for military service.

Mora: I know. I don't know.

Kondracke: Still do, as a matter of fact.

Mora: I don't know.

Kondracke: Political influence?

Mora: No, I don't think so. I don't think so.

Kondracke: You don't think Baron Hilton would have used his influence to keep his quarterback or something like that?

Mora: I don't think so, but it's possible, I guess.

Kondracke: What do you know about his relationship with [Louis H.] Lou Saban?

Mora: I didn't know Lou. Lou was another aggressive-type coach, speak his mind, emotional guy. I'm just assuming now that they might have clashed on some things, knowing Jack, maybe similar-type personalities, but probably great respect for one another.

Kondracke: Did you and Jack communicate about his football career [unclear]?

Mora: Not too much. Not too much. No.

Kondracke: Did he ever talk to you about his rivalry with [Daryle] Lamonica?

Mora: No.

Kondracke: What about race? This is the fifties, sixties, and Jack in Buffalo actually integrated roommates and stuff like that. Did you know about that?

Mora: Yes, and that didn't surprise me that he would do something like that. I mean, I knew about it and I'm thinking, hey, I respect Jack. I admire Jack for that, but it wasn't like, "Wow, I can't believe he's doing that." No way. I'd be more like, yeah, that sounds like something Jack would do.

Kondracke: What about the AFL Players Association?

Mora: Again, Jack was always a leader, but I saw him more as a leader on the football field than off the football field. So when he started doing things like this, it wasn't like a surprise to me, because I knew he was capable of the leadership qualities, but it wasn't like, "Wow, I can't believe Jack's the head of the AFL players union." It was like, "Good for Jack. He's taking charge of something." He always was that type of person.

In college where he and I were the closest and spent the most time together, other than on the football field, I don't remember him—like you asked me about things on campus, you know, he didn't do that. It was more just as a football player where I saw his leadership. But he was always an aggressive, assertive, "Let's get after it" type guy.

Kondracke: So you're an NFL coach. He won a lot of games. He was an MVP several times in the AFL, but he's not a candidate for the Hall of Fame. So what's the difference between a Hall of Fame quarterback and a Jack Kemp? Why wouldn't Jack Kemp be a Hall of Famer?

Mora: Because he didn't do it in the National Football League. He did it in the American Football League. I'm trying to think of how many AFL guys are in the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Kondracke: Do you think he was good enough?

Mora: He certainly had the stats and the records to be in the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Some of that is political, too, getting in the Pro Football Hall of Fame. I mean, there's people that I think maybe deserve it, coaches and players, that aren't in it, and maybe some that are in it that maybe don't deserve it as much as somebody that's not in it. I think there's some of that in, as far as the Pro Football Hall of Fame is concerned, some.

But Jack would definitely be a candidate, in my opinion. I don't know. I think it's the fact that he did everything as an AFL player and never as an NFL player. Had the AFL-NFL would have merged during Jack's, say, the height of his career and he would have gone into the NFL and done some of the stuff he did in the AFL, he'd probably be in the Hall of Fame. But I think the fact that it was all done in the AFL, that's why he's not.

Kondracke: But he was a great quarterback.

[interruption]

Mora: —get along with him, I could say that. He wasn't the easiest guy to get along with.

Kondracke: Okay. Go.

Mora: Well, Jack, you know, and, again, we were closest in college, but he wasn't the easiest guy to get along with because of his, I want to say, maybe aggressive personality or impatient personality. He could be a—I mean, he wasn't the most cordial, easygoing. He wasn't that. That's not Jack Kemp.

Kondracke: What were the issues?

Mora: I don't know. I don't remember the issues, you know.

Kondracke: Not moving fast enough, or what?

Mora: I don't know. Sometimes Jack had his own agenda about things, you know, and he was going to do things his way and do what he wanted to do, and if you didn't do

them, okay. But he was a good guy. Don't get me wrong. We were best friends and a good guy, nothing bad, just his aggressive personality.

Kondracke: Just back to the quarterback issue. Do you think he was a great quarterback as a pro?

Mora: What's great? Was he a Joe Montana or a Terry Bradshaw or a Dan Fouts? I think as far as the American Football League—and I had a great amount of respect for the American Football League. I think it was better than people gave it credit for. He was great for them. Would he have been great? Say you take the Jack Kemp then and put him in the NFL today as a quarterback, would he be great? I don't know. I don't want to say yes or no. But he was a great quarterback in the American Football League, yes.

Kondracke: Can you see anything that he took from sports into politics, any characteristics?

Mora: Yes, I think the leadership qualities, the work ethic, the study, the intensity, leadership, all those things, I think, definitely were. I could see the carryover from what I knew about him as a football player and as a politician.

Kondracke: What part did you play in his political career?

Mora: None. No. I had nothing to do with it. I voted for him. [laughs]

Kondracke: Did you ever campaign for him?

Mora: No, never campaigned for him.

Kondracke: Did you support him?

Mora: Oh, yes, very much so.

Kondracke: Do you think he would have been a good President?

Mora: Yes, I think he would have been a great President. I really believe that. Yes. I was disappointed that he never got that opportunity.

Kondracke: Why do you think he would have been a good President?

Mora: Just because of all the things we've talked about, I mean all the qualities that he possessed. Tough. He was tough. You've got to be tough. He had strong beliefs in what he believed in. I mean, he wasn't wishy-washy. That's the last thing you'd say about Jack Kemp, that he was wishy-washy. "Hey, this is the way I think it should be," and he committed himself to this. I think you've got to be strong, got to be tough, got to be knowledgeable, got to believe in things, got to be a leader. Jack had all these qualities.

Kondracke: Thank you very much.

Mora: I hope it was okay.

Kondracke: We appreciate it, Coach. Yes, it was great. Thank you.

[interruption]

Williams: I might have asked. What is the relationship between a javelin thrower and a quarterback? Is it the same skill? I mean, was he as hard hitting because he threw the javelin? It's just a comment, really. Did that ever occur to you?

Mora: I think he threw the javelin because he was hard hitting, hard throwing. You know what I mean? But he was strong.

William: [unclear] arm when he put a football [unclear].

Mora: I'm not sure the javelin helped him develop his arm. I'm not so sure that it wasn't the other way around. The fact that he worked hard to become a stronger passer made him a better javelin thrower.

Kondracke: I would guess that the coach, for heaven's sakes, knew that he had this arm and wanted him to throw the javelin, don't you think?

Mora: Right. Right. Payton Jordon.

[End of interview]