

COMMISSIONER TAGLIABUE INTERVIEW

01:00:22

Q - HOW'D PETE ROZELLE HELP BUILD NFL?

01:00:30

A - WELL THE NFL HAS HAD A SERIES OF ARCHITECTS, AND I GUESS HE WAS THE LEAD ARCHITECT IN WHAT YOU MIGHT CALL THE MODERN ERA. GO BACK TO THE PRE W.W. II DAYS. YOU OBVIOUSLY HAD PEOPLE LIKE GEORGE HALAS, AND CURLY LAMBEAU, AND THEN ART ROONEY, AND THE MARA FAMILY AND OTHERS. BUT PETE CAME ALONG AFTER THE WAR, IN THE 50'S. STARTED WITH THE RAMS, AND REALLY TOOK THE LEAGUE TO ANOTHER LEVEL, AND MAYBE IT WAS TELEVISION. MAYBE IT WAS THE EMERGENCE OF NATIONAL TV BUT, BASICALLY, WHAT HAD BEEN A SERIES OF LOCAL EVENTS BECAME A NATIONAL PASSION. AND I THINK THE OTHER PART OF IT WAS THAT HE HAD A CLARITY ABOUT WHAT THE NFL STOOD FOR IN TERMS OF SPORTS COMPETITION. THE CREATION OF NFL FILMS WAS PART OF THAT.

01:01:26

Q - WHAT ABOUT HIS PERSONALITY ENABLED HIM TO GET THAT DONE?

01:01:36

A - WELL, HE WAS A GREAT LISTENER. HE FREQUENTLY SAID, "DON'T MAKE UP YOUR MIND OR AT LEAST DON'T EXPRESS YOUR OPINION UNTIL YOU'VE LISTENED TO EVERYBODY." AND I HAVE TO THINK THAT WAS A HUGE POSITIVE ALONG THE WAY. WHETHER IT WAS GETTING THE CONSENSUS ON REVENUE SHARING ON TELEVISION. GETTING THE CONSENSUS ON THE MERGER WITH THE AMERICAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE, OR MANY OF THE OTHER THINGS. HE WAS A TERRIFIC LISTENER. HE UNDERSTOOD, WAS A VERY QUICK STUDY. THEN HE WAS ABLE TO BUILD CONSENSUS BECAUSE HE KNEW WHAT EVERYONE THOUGHT; AND THE OTHER THING ABOUT PETE WAS THAT HE ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD HOW TO BE PERSUASIVE BY CONVINCING YOU THAT WHAT WAS BEING SUGGESTED WAS IN YOUR INTEREST. HE COULD WALK IN YOUR SHOES AND HE COULD SEE THE POSITIVES FROM EVERYONE'S PERSPECTIVE. THAT'S ONE OF THE REASONS HE WAS AS PERSUASIVE AS HE WAS.

01:02:36

Q - DIVERSE GROUP OF OWNERS...TOUGH BRINGING THEM TOGETHER?

01:02:43

A - WELL, SOME OF THEM I KNEW AND SOME OF THEM I DIDN'T KNOW. I KNEW GEORGE HALAS AND I KNEW ART ROONEY. I NEVER DID KNOW CURLY LAMBEAU. BUT IT WAS A DIVERSE GROUP OF PEOPLE BUT THEY HAD ONE THING THAT IS ...NOT PART OF THE NFL TODAY WHICH IS THAT THEY HAD BEEN THERE IN TOUGH TIMES, AND THEY KNEW THAT THIS MAGIC WHICH HAS BECOME THE NFL WAS NOT INSTANT MAGIC OUT OF THE SKY. IT WAS CREATED BY CONSENSUS. IT WAS CREATED BY HARD WORK, AND IT WAS CREATED BY UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LEAGUE.

01:03:20

Q - HOW IMPORTANT WAS REVENUE SHARING?

01:03:24

A - YOU WOULDN'T HAVE THE NFL WAS IT IS TODAY WITHOUT THE SHARING OF THE TV. YOU WOULDN'T HAVE IT TODAY WITHOUT THE SHARING OF THE GATE; AND YOU WOULDN'T HAVE SOME OF THE TEAMS WE HAVE; AND I DON'T THINK YOU'D HAVE THE NATIONAL DOMINANCE OF THE SPORT OF NFL FOOTBALL IF YOU HAD THE KIND OF DISPARITIES THAT OTHER SPORTS STILL LIVE WITH.

01:03:46

Q - YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH PETE?

01:03:51

A - I WOULD SAY IN THE EARLY, IN MID-80'S, AS I HAD GOTTEN TO KNOW HIM BETTER AND BETTER, I'D DONE A LOT OF WORK IN A LOT OF DIFFERENT CONTEXT. BUT IT WAS WHEN I KIND OF EMERGED AS THE NUMBER ONE GUY IN TERMS OF OUTSIDE ADVICE, LEGAL ADVICE. WE WOULD NATURALLY SPEND MORE AND MORE TIME TOGETHER, AND SOME OF THAT WOULD BE IN LESS FORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES; OVER DINNER, OVER BREAKFAST. THAT'S WHEN I REALLY STARTED TO SEE THE PERSONAL SIDE OF HIM, AND HE STARTED TO SEE MY PERSONAL SIDE. FOR THE FIRST 10, 12 YRS. FROM 1969 TO THE EARLY 80'S, IT WAS MORE OF A STRAIGHTFORWARD, PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP WHICH, ITSELF, HAD ALL OF ITS REWARDS.

01:04:39

Q - WHEN YOU GOT TO KNOW HIM PERSONALLY...ANYTHING THAT SURPRISED YOU?

01:04:47

A - WELL YOU COULD SEE THAT THERE WAS A ...A REALLY KIND OF MULTIFACETED PERSON THERE. A PERSON THAT LOVES SPORTS, WHO ALSO...YOU COULD SEE THAT THE JOB WAS VERY VERY DEMANDING. HE ALWAYS LOOKED LIKE HE WAS THE GUY RUNNING THE 400 METERS AND

WINNING THE 400 METER RACE WITHOUT BREATHING HARD. BUT WHEN YOU GOT TO KNOW HIM BETTER, YOU COULD SEE THAT IT WAS A VERY TAXING JOB. THAT SOME OF THE DECISIONS AND CHOICES WERE REALLY EXCRUCIATINGLY DIFFICULT; AND I ALSO, OBVIOUSLY, GOT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT HIS LOVE FOR ANN AND HIS PRIDE FOR ANN ROZELLE, AND THINGS ALONG THOSE LINES.

01:05:40

Q - FAMILY MAN?

01:05:44

A - WELL HE WAS, FIRST OF ALL, HE WAS VERY PRIVATE ABOUT HIS FAMILY AND HIS PERSONAL SIDE. BUT, OBVIOUSLY, ANN MARIE WAS THE APPLE OF HIS EYE; AND ONCE YOU GOT TO KNOW HIM AND LISTEN TO HIM TALK ABOUT WHEN SHE WAS A YOUNG GIRL, AND THE TIME HE SPENT WITH HER, AND THE IMPORTANCE THAT SHE...THE JOY AND THE LOVE SHE BROUGHT INTO HIS LIFE, IT WAS A VERY MOVING THING. AFTER HE RETIRED HE WOULD GET TEARY-EYED TALKING ABOUT ANN AND TALKING ABOUT THE DAYS WHEN THEY DID SO MANY THINGS TOGETHER.

01:06:23

Q - EXCRUCIATING DECISIONS, ETC.; HOW DID HE MAKE TIME FOR FAMILY?

01:06:35

A - IT'S A GOOD QUESTION. I DON'T...I CAN'T SAY BECAUSE I DIDN'T KNOW HIM WHEN SHE WAS A YOUNG GIRL. OBVIOUSLY, AND OBVIOUSLY THE 60'S WERE A TIME OF TREMENDOUS GROWTH; A TIME OF TREMENDOUS PRESSURE. SO I GUESS HE DID IT LIKE EVERYBODY DOES IT. YOU JUST DRAW THE LINE. YOU HAVE TO HAVE THE ABILITY TO LEAVE AT THE OFFICE WHAT BELONGS AT THE OFFICE; AND WHEN YOU GET HOME, YOU'VE GOT TO BE ABLE TO SAY, "O.K., THIS IS FAMILY TIME." IN THOSE DAYS, THE TELEPHONE ALWAYS COULD CONNECT YOU BACK TO THE OFFICE. TODAY IT COULD BE THE BLACKBERRY AND THE OTHER THINGS. BUT YOU REALLY NEED TO BE ABLE TO SAY, THAT'S FOR THE WORKPLACE AND THIS IS FOR THE KIDS AND THE FAMILY. SOME PEOPLE ARE BETTER AT THAT THAN OTHERS.

01:07:28

Q - LEGAL ISSUES FOR LEAGUE IN 80'S?

01:07:37

A - WELL HE WAS FACED WITH, OBVIOUSLY, THE CHALLENGE OF THE U.S. FOOTBALL LEAGUE. HE WAS FACED WITH A LEAGUE THAT HE THOUGHT WAS ILL-CONCEIVED FROM THE GET-GO, AND HAD A LOT OF PROBLEMS IN THE WAY IT WAS STRUCTURED, AND THE CONCEPT THAT THE OWNERSHIP OF THAT LEAGUE HAD; AND ALL OF A SUDDEN WHEN THEY DID START STRUGGLING, THEY ADOPTED A STRATEGY OF TRYING TO BLAME THEIR

PROBLEMS ON THE NFL. SO HE FELT THAT THAT WAS KIND OF A BAIT AND SWITCH OPERATION. TO HAVE TO GO TO COURT AND TO DEFEND YOURSELF IN A SITUATION WHERE PEOPLE WERE TRYING TO LAY OFF ON YOU THE PROBLEMS THAT THEY HAD SELF-INFLICTED WAS A DIFFICULT THING. OBVIOUSLY WE HAD LITIGATION DURING THE 80'S WITH THE PLAYER'S ASSOCIATION OF VARIOUS TYPES IN THE LATE 70'S. THEN IT WAS THE RAIDERS TEAM RELOCATION ISSUE WHICH HE FELT VERY STRONGLY ABOUT THAT. I THINK PARTICULARLY BECAUSE WHEN THE MERGER HAD BEEN AGREED TO IN THE MID-60'S, IT WAS UNDERSTOOD THAT TEAMS WERE GOING TO STAY WHERE THEY WERE FOR A VERY LONG PERIOD OF TIME. THAT WAS PART OF THE COMMITMENT OF CONGRESS. THAT WAS ESPECIALLY TRUE OF TEAMS THAT WERE DOING WELL IN THEIR AREA. SO HE FELT THAT WAS AN ISSUE THAT NOT JUST INVOLVED LEAGUE POLICY BUT HAD INVOLVED REPRESENTATIONS AND COMMITMENTS THAT HE HAD MADE IN AN EARLIER POINT IN TIME.

01:09:03

Q - HOW'D HE FEEL ABOUT SPENDING SO MUCH TIME IN COURTROOM?

01:09:08

A - HE WAS ALMOST PHILOSOPHICAL. MAYBE RESIGNED IS A BETTER WORD ABOUT IT. HE KNEW THAT IF YOU WERE GOING TO BE SUCCESSFUL YOU HAD TO HAVE FIRM CONVICTIONS, AND PART OF BEING FIRM WAS DEFENDING WHAT YOU THOUGHT WAS RIGHT. AND HE TOOK THAT ATTITUDE TO CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS, ESPECIALLY IN THE EARLY 70'S ON TELEVISION ISSUES, TELEVISION BLACKOUT ISSUES. AND HE TOOK THAT ATTITUDE INTO THE COURTROOM IN THE 80'S.

01:09:40

Q - LAYMAN'S TERM OF WHAT U.S.F.L. TRIAL WAS ABOUT?

01:09:46

A - WELL IT WAS, U.S.F.L. TRIAL WAS ABOUT A LEAGUE THAT HAD STUMBLED FOR REASONS THAT WERE ITS OWN PROBLEMS; ITS OWN DIFFICULTIES; ITS OWN MISJUDGMENTS; ITS OWN MISTAKES. THEN THEY TURNED AROUND. THEY SWITCHED THEIR SEASON FROM THE SPRING TO THE FALL AND SAID, ALL OF A SUDDEN, THEIR PROBLEMS WERE DUE TO THE NFL'S SUPPOSED INTERFERENCE WITH THEIR OPERATIONS. I THINK THE JURY SAW THROUGH IT, ORDERED THEM A DOLLAR AND SENT THEM HOME.

01:10:17

Q - DID THAT VERDICT ENLIST JUBILATION OR RELIEF FROM PETE?

01:10:24

A - WELL HIS INITIAL REACTION WAS, ON THE RADIO, HE HEARD THAT THE JURY HAD COME IN FOR THE U.S.F.L. SO THERE WAS, AS HE USED TO TELL THE STORY AFTERWARDS, INSTANT SEVERE DEPRESSION. THEN A FEW MINUTES LATER, A FEW SECONDS LATER, HE LEARNED THAT WHILE THE VERDICT WAS, IN ONE SENSE, FOR THE NFL, U.S.F.L., IT WAS WORTH A DOLLAR. SO THAT WAS IMMEDIATE ELATION. WE HAD A PRETTY NICE REUNION HERE IN N.Y. AFTER THE FACT, WITH EVERYBODY WHO HAD TESTIFIED. EVERYBODY WHO WORKED ON THE CASE; WITNESSES, OWNERS AND ATTORNEYS ALIKE. THAT WAS A GREAT MOMENT AND A GREAT VINDICATION OF HIS STEWARDSHIP OF THE LEAGUE BECAUSE HE WAS ALWAYS COMMITTED TO WORRYING ABOUT THE NFL, FOCUSED ON THE NFL. WHAT OTHER PEOPLE WANTED TO DO WAS FOR THEM TO DO, WE'D BE POSITIVE ABOUT OURSELVES AND NOT NEGATIVE ABOUT OTHERS. AND HERE WAS A LEAGUE THAT WAS SAYING, IN COURT, "THE NFL WAS NEGATIVE ABOUT US." IT JUST WASN'T THE CASE. SO IT WAS A REAL MOMENT OF VINDICATION.

01:11:31

Q - DID PERSONAL ATTACKS WEAR HIM DOWN?

01:11:40

A - WELL I THINK A LOT OF THINGS WORE PETE DOWN. I THINK THAT AFTER 20 YRS., FROM 1960 TO THE EARLY 80'S, HE WAS BEGINNING TO GET WEARY ABOUT SOME OF THE THINGS THAT WERE GOING ON. SOME OF THE INITIAL...

01:12:47

Q - YOUR THOUGHTS ON HOW HE HANDLED LABOR RELATIONS ISSUES?

01:12:52

A - WELL ON LABOR RELATIONS, I THINK THAT IN THE 60'S HE HAD FOLLOWED ONE PATTERN, ONE MOLD. IT WAS IT WAS SUITABLE FOR THAT TIME. A LOT OF IT TURNED ON INTEGRATING THE AMERICAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE AND THE NFL. CONSOLIDATING THE 2 PLAYER'S ASSOCIATIONS AND DEALING, FOR THE FIRST TIME, WITH THE PLAYER'S UNION. BY THE TIME YOU GOT TO THE 80'S, SO MUCH HAD CHANGED INCLUDING THE WAY THE LEAGUE HAD STRUCTURED ITSELF WITH THE MANAGEMENT COUNCIL BEING SEPARATE FROM THE LEAGUE OFFICE. COMMITTEES AND EXECUTIVES RUNNING THE LABOR RELATIONS WITH THE PLAYER'S ASSOCIATION, THAT DIDN'T REPORT TO THE COMMISSIONER. I THINK BY THE 80'S HE REALIZED THAT THEY HAD ALLOWED, HE HAD ALLOWED, AND THE OWNERS HAD ALLOWED A STRUCTURE TO GROW THAT WAS INCONSISTENT WITH THE REST OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE NFL. THE REST OF THE LEAGUE WAS TIGHTLY WOVEN TOGETHER. 01:13:46 - THERE WAS THE REVENUE SHARING. WE'VE ALREADY TALKED ABOUT THERE WAS THE CENTRAL CONTROL OF TELEVISION. THERE WAS NFL FILMS. THERE WAS NFL PROPERTIES. BUT

ONE AREA WHERE THEY HADN'T FOLLOWED THAT MODEL WAS LETTING LABOR RELATIONS MOVE OUT OF THE COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE. BE TAKEN OVER BY ANOTHER ORG. WHICH WAS PART OF THE LEAGUE BUT NOT REALLY INTEGRATED WITH THE REST OF IT, AND CERTAINLY NOT SUBJECT TO HIS OVERSIGHT. THAT WAS A MISTAKE AND I THINK HE KNEW IT BY THE MID TO LATE 80'S.

01:14:14

Q - DID HE REGRET STAYING ON SIDELINES AS STRIKES HAPPENED?

01:14:18

A - I THINK HE DID. I THINK HE KNEW THAT BY, CERTAINLY BY 1987, CERTAINLY AS THE BUILDUP TOWARD WHAT BECAME THE REPLACEMENT GAMES, WAS UNDERWAY; AND AFTER THE REPLACEMENT GAMES HAD OCCURRED, HE CLEARLY KNEW THAT HE HAD ALLOWED THIS DICHOTOMY IN THE LEAGUE'S ORG. TO GROW TO THE POINT THERE WAS A REAL CHASM THERE, INSTEAD OF EVERYTHING BEING ONE WITH HIM BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR OVERSIGHT. AND THAT MAY HAVE BEEN HIS BIGGEST REGRET BY THE TIME HE STEPPED DOWN. HE LET LABOR RELATIONS GET TO THE POINT THAT IT WAS, HE COULDN'T RECAPTURE IT AND GET IT ON A SOUND FOOTING.

01:15:01

Q - HIS RETIREMENT SPEECH?

01:15:03

A - WELL I REMEMBER THE EMOTION. HIS EMOTION. I GUESS I WAS A LITTLE TAKEN ABACK BY IT. I KNEW THAT HE WAS THINKING ABOUT RETIRING. I KNEW THAT HE LOOKED FORWARD TO RETIRING WITH SOME RELIEF. HE AND CARRIE WANTED TO SPEND TIME TOGETHER. YET, HE COULDN'T GET TO THAT POINT WITHOUT BEING VERY EMOTIONAL ABOUT THE 30-PLUS YEARS THAT HE'D INVESTED IN THE GAME AND THE FRIENDSHIPS HE'D BUILT; AND I THINK SOME OF THE EMOTION, MAYBE A LOT OF THE EMOTION GREW OUT OF HIS MEETING WITH THE LEAGUE OFFICE STAFF PEOPLE THAT HE HAD REALLY RELIED ON. THEY HAD COME TO HAVE A TREMENDOUS BOND. IT WAS A SMALL, TIGHTLY-KNIT ORGANIZATION BUT IT WAS AN EMOTIONAL DAY AND AN EMOTIONAL SEVERAL WEEKS AND SEVERAL MONTHS.

01:15:50

Q - DO YOU THINK HE THOUGHT HE WAS LEAVING GAME IN GOOD SHAPE?

01:15:56

A - I THINK HE FELT HE WAS LEAVING THE GAME IN GOOD SHAPE, AND HE WAS. HE DID. I THINK HE KNEW THAT, LIKE I SAID, IN SOME AREAS, A LIMITED NUMBER OF AREAS, THINGS HAD GOTTEN OFF THE TRACK. INSTITUTIONAL ELEMENTS OF THE LEAGUE HAD GOTTEN OFF THE TRACK

BUT THEY COULD BE GOTTEN BACK ON THE TRACK. BUT THE QUALITY OF THE GAME; THE UNIQUENESS OF NFL FOOTBALL BOTH IN THE STADIUM AND ON TELEVISION, WAS CLEARLY ESTABLISHED; AND I THINK HE KNEW WITH THAT AT THE CORE, AND THE FAN BASE, WHAT IT WAS. WHATEVER'S OFF THE TRACK WOULD BE GOTTEN BACK ON THE TRACK.

01:16:38

Q - MEMORIES ABOUT RECEIVING NEWS YOU'D BEEN CHOSEN TO REPLACE HIM?

01:16:41

A - I GUESS THE FIRST ...REACTION WAS ONE OF RELIEF THAT THE PROCESS WAS OVER BECAUSE IT HAD DRAGGED ON SO LONG; AND THE SECOND ONE WAS A REACTION OF PRIDE. THAT ULTIMATELY THEY HAD COME TO A CONSENSUS THAT I SHOULD BE THE PERSON TO SUCCEED PETE ROZELLE. HE CALLED ME EARLY IN THE MORNING. I WAS GETTING READY TO GO TO WORK. I HAD REALLY NO IDEA THAT THEY WERE ON THE VERGE OF MAKING A DECISION. THERE SEEMED TO BE SO MANY PTS. IN THE PROCESS WHERE A DECISION WAS ANTICIPATED. IT TOOK ME BY SURPRISE. HE JUST SAID, "YOU'RE THE GUY. WE'VE MADE A DECISION. GET ON AN AIRPLANE AND COME TO CLEVELAND AS QUICKLY AS YOU CAN." LIKE I SAY, IT WAS PARTLY RELIEF AND A LOT OF PRIDE THAT I WAS THE PERSON SELECTED.

01:17:30

Q - DIFFERENT SITUATION FOR PETE FINDING OUT HE WAS COMMISSIONER...?

01:17:35

A - YEA, WELL I'VE HEARD HIM TELL THAT STORY, AND I READ THE STORY. THIS WAS DEFINITELY A DIFFERENT SITUATION. I, LIKE I SAY, I WAS JUST GETTING READY TO GO TO WORK. I WAS HAPPY DOING WHAT I WAS DOING. I WAS REALLY CHALLENGED IN WHAT I WAS DOING. IT WAS A GREAT CAREER IN THE PRACTICE OF LAW. BUT, NONETHELESS, TO BE SELECTED TO RUN THE NFL AS COMMISSIONER, IT WAS SOMETHING I WAS VERY PROUD OF HAVING BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE LEAGUE FOR 20 YRS.

01:18:01

Q - ANY TREPIDATION FILLING SHOES OF ROZELLE?

01:18:07

A - AT ONE LEVEL, YES. BUT ...DOWN DEEP I HAD A LOT OF CONFIDENCE. NO REAL TREPIDATION. I FELT THAT I WAS EXTREMELY WELL PREPARED TO DO THE JOB. PETE HAD ASKED ME, IN THE EARLY 80'S, TO START DOING THINGS THAT WENT WAY BEYOND THE PRACTICE OF LAW; IN WASHINGTON, IN N.Y., IN OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY. I HAD COME TO REALLY HAVE A DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF THE BUSINESS OF THE

LEAGUE, AND ALL ASPECTS OF LEAGUE OPERATIONS WAY BEYOND THE LEGAL ISSUES. SO I REALLY FELT THAT THIS WAS SOMETHING I COULD DO AND DO WELL, AND HE REASSURED ME. WE HAD SEVERAL WEEKS OF LUNCHESES AFTER I WAS SELECTED, AND THEY WERE ALL PRETTY STRAIGHTFORWARD. "YOU CAN DO THE JOB, AND I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU THE KEYS TO MY OFFICE AND GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE PRETTY QUICKLY. IT'S YOUR JOB, AND I'M AVAILABLE BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO CALL ME. I'M NOT GOING TO BOTHER YOU."

01:19:14

Q - DID YOU CALL HIM?

01:19:15

A - I CALLED HIM FROM TIME TO TIME. BUT NOT THAT MUCH. I REALLY, WELL, HE MADE IT CLEAR TO ME THAT YOU CAN'T SUCCEED IF IT APPEARS THAT SOMEONE ELSE IS CALLING THE SIGNALS AND YOU'RE JUST EXECUTING THE PLAYS. YOU'VE GOT TO MAKE IT CLEAR FROM THE BEGINNING THAT YOU'RE IN CHARGE. THAT YOU'RE THE ONE THAT'S DOING THE LISTENING. THAT YOU'RE THE ONE THAT'S BUILDING THE CONSENSUS. THAT YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S TEEING UP THE ALTERNATIVES. AND YOU'RE THE ONE THAT'S RECOMMENDING THE COURSE OF ACTION. AND WE IMMEDIATELY FACED SOME SERIOUS CHALLENGES. THE LABOR RELATIONS CHALLENGES WERE CLEAR. WE HAD TO START IMMEDIATELY TO NEGOTIATE NEW TELEVISION CONTRACTS. WE WERE AT THE END OF THE CONTRACTS WITH THE NETWORKS. SO I HAD TO START WORKING IMMEDIATELY WITH LEAGUE COMMITTEES, ART MODELL AND PAT BOWLEN, AND OTHERS ON THE TELEVISION COMMITTEE. I HAD TO ENGAGE THE HUGH CULVERHOUSE AND TEX SCHRAMM AND OTHERS ON THE LABOR RELATIONS COMMITTEE, AND PERSUADE THEM TO GIVE UP THEIR CARTER AND PUT IT BACK IN THE COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE. SO THERE WERE A LOT OF THINGS THAT HAD TO BE DONE, AND HE MADE IT VERY CLEAR THAT "I'M STAYING OUT OF ALL OF THAT. THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU TO MAKE YOUR MARK EARLY ON." THAT'S WHAT HE HAD THE GOOD FORTUNE OF DOING, OBVIOUSLY, BECAUSE HE HAD SUCCEEDED BERT BELL AFTER BERT BELLS DEATH. HE JUST WANTED TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT "YOU'LL DO IT BEST IF YOU DO IT YOURSELF." THAT WAS IT. YOU'RE ON THE STAGE.

01:20:56

Q - ANY OTHER LESSONS OR ADVICE FROM PETE?

01:20:59

A - WELL THERE WERE SO MANY LESSONS. I FREQUENTLY THINK OF BIG EXAMPLES AND SMALL EXAMPLES. I LEARNED A LOT FROM HIM ALONG THE WAY ABOUT ...HOW TO DEAL WITH OWNERS. HOW TO DEAL WITH THE PEOPLE PROBLEMS IN LIFE. HOW TO GET BEYOND PERSONALITY CONFLICTS; AND THEN MAKE SURE THAT WHATEVER CONFLICTS YOU HAD WERE OVER SUBSTANCE AND NOT OVER PERSONALITY. A BIG PART OF IT,

I THINK, WAS UNDERSTANDING THAT THERE WAS A BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PRIDE AND CONVICTION ON THE ONE HAND AND ARROGANCE ON THE OTHER HAND. PETE ROZELLE WAS A VERY PROUD PERSON. HE WAS VERY PROUD ABOUT THE NFL. HE ALWAYS PROJECTED A CHARISMA. HE CONVEYED THAT THE NFL WAS NUMBER ONE. HE ALSO CONVEYED FIRM CONVICTION ABOUT EVERYTHING HE WAS DOING BUT HE WAS NEVER ARROGANT. IT WAS NEVER ABOUT ME. IT WAS ALWAYS ABOUT THE LEAGUE. IT WAS NEVER ABOUT "I". IT WAS ABOUT "WE". I THINK THAT PROBABLY WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSON THAT I LEARNED, AND I THINK I LEARNED IT EARLY ON. IT'S ONE OF THE REASONS THAT WE HAD A GOOD RELATIONSHIP.

01:22:23

Q - WHAT WOULD PETE THINK OF TODAY'S NFL?

01:22:27

A - I THINK HE'D BE VERY PROUD OF THE LEAGUE TODAY BECAUSE I THINK WE'VE BEEN TRUE TO THE VALUES THAT HE THOUGHT WERE CRITICAL. JUST BEFORE HIS DEATH WE HAD A CONVERSATION IN WHICH I ASKED HIM, "WHO WAS THE GREATEST PLAYER DURING YOUR TIME?" HE SAID, "WELL THERE'S NOT ONE. THERE ARE MANY." AND...HE SAID, "THE GREAT THING ABOUT THE SPORT IS WE'VE HAD SO MANY GREAT PLAYERS THAT EVEN MORE IMPORTANT IS THAT SO MANY OF THE GREAT PLAYERS HAVE BEEN FABULOUS IN THE COMMUNITY WITH THE FANS, WITH THE PUBLIC, WITH THE "NOT FOR PROFIT" SECTOR, WITH CHARITIES; AND THEY'VE BEEN CONTRIBUTORS IN THAT AREA AND NOT JUST ON THE FOOTBALL FIELD. I THINK WE'VE BEEN TRUE TO THAT. I THINK TODAY'S ATHLETES UNDERSTAND THAT; AND WE'VE GOT SO MANY PLAYERS TODAY, ACROSS THE BOARD, WHO STILL HAVE THAT ATTITUDE. IF ANYTHING, IT MAY BE DEEPER TODAY AND MORE INSTITUTIONALIZED TODAY THAN IT WAS 25 YRS. AGO.

01:23:26

Q - SO EVEN IN HIS FINAL DAYS, STILL THINKING LIKE A P.R. GUY?

01:23:30

A - WELL IT WAS MORE THAN P.R. HE KNEW THAT HAVING COME FROM COLLEGE FOOTBALL; HAVING COME FROM COLLEGE SPORTS; HE KNEW THAT PEOPLE RESPECTED ATHLETES THAT THEY COULD CONNECT WITH. HAVING BEEN AT U.S.F. AND SEEING HOW BILL RUSSELL HAD GROWN INTO THE BIGGEST STORY IN COLLEGE BASKETBALL, THEN OLYMPIC BASKETBALL, THEN WITH THE CELTICS AND PROFESSIONAL BASKETBALL. HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE ATHLETE COULD HAVE A TREMENDOUS IMPACT ON THE FAN FOR THE GOOD, IF HE WAS RESPECTED; AND FOR THE WORSE IF HE WAS NOT RESPECTED. AND THAT WAS A BIG PART OF HIS PHILOSOPHY.

01:24:10

Q - WOULD HE BE SHOCKED AT HOW BIG THE SUPER BOWL IS?

01:24:13

A - I DON'T THINK SO. I THINK PETE ROZELLE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE NFL WAS ON A TRAJECTORY UPWARD, AND THAT IF THE OWNERS HUNG TOGETHER, IF THE LEAGUE COULD WORK WELL WITH THE PLAYER'S ASSOCIATION, THAT IT COULD CONTINUE TO GO UP. THAT SPORTS AND NFL, IN PARTICULAR, HELD A UNIQUE PLACE IN AMERICAN LIFE; AND THAT IF THE STEWARDS OF THE GAME, OWNERS, COMMISSIONERS, PLAYERS ALIKE, RECOGNIZED THAT AND MANAGED IT WELL, IT WOULD CONTINUE GOING UP, AND I THINK THAT'S BEEN THE CASE.

01:24:48

Q - WHAT DO YOU MISS MOST ABOUT PETE?

01:24:50

A - WELL I MISS JUST THE PERSPECTIVE AND THE, WHAT I MENTIONED EARLIER. THIS FEELING THAT WHEN YOU WERE WITH HIM THERE WAS CLASS. THERE WAS CLARITY ABOUT PURPOSE. THERE WAS A FEELING OF TEAM. A FEELING OF WE. ALL THAT WOULD MAKE FOR SOME VERY SPECIAL TIMES. WHETHER IT WAS A PROFESSIONAL OBLIGATION OR A PERSONAL OPPORTUNITY. THERE WAS, THOSE WERE GOOD TIMES, AND THAT WAS A VERY INVIGORATING PERSONALITY TO BE ABLE TO ENGAGE WITH AND TO GROW WITH, AND TO ENJOY.

01:25:42

Q - IMAGE OF THE LEAGUE...?

01:25:55

A - WELL IT'S DONE A LOT FOR THE LEAGUE'S IMAGE AND IT'S DONE A LOT FOR THE REALITY OF THE LEAGUE. I THINK PEOPLE UNDERSTAND THAT IF YOU PARTICIPATE IN THE NFL YOU'RE EXPECTED TO BE THE BEST; AND THAT IF YOU DON'T ADHERE TO THOSE STANDARDS, IF YOU ARE NOT ONE OF THE BEST, YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE A SHORT STAY IN THE LEAGUE. I THINK THAT THE ATTITUDE OF OUR COACHES TODAY; BILL COWHER, MARTY SCHOTTENHEIMER, MARVIN LEWIS, HERMAN EDWARDS. YOU STILL SEE THAT SAME PHILOSOPHY. WHAT YOU'VE DONE BEFORE HAS GOT YOU IN THE DOOR. WHAT YOU DO NOW WILL DETERMINE HOW LONG YOU STAY. WHAT YOU DO NOW IS MEASURED AGAINST THE STANDARD THAT PETE ROZELLE ESTABLISHED IN THE 60'S. IT'S STILL THE STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE IN SPORTS.

01:26:46

Q - ANY OTHER PERSONAL STORIES OF PETE?

01:26:55

A - YOU KNOW I THINK THAT ...PETE ROZELLE WAS SO FIRM IN HIS CONVICTIONS THAT SOMETIMES PEOPLE LOOKING AT HIM FROM THE OUTSIDE THOUGHT THAT HE WAS A ...A REAL HARDHEADED S.O.B. THEN WHEN THEY GOT TO KNOW HIM, THEY REALIZED THAT WHAT HE STOOD FOR WAS INTEGRITY AND CLARITY. BUT THAT HE ALSO COULD WALK IN THE OTHER PERSON'S SHOES, AND THAT THERE WAS THIS DICHOTOMY BETWEEN WHAT HE PROJECTED ON THE ONE HAND AND WHAT HE REALLY WAS ON THE OTHER HAND. HE WAS AN OPEN-MINDED LEADER BUT ONE WHO HAD CLEAR VISION AND CLEAR CONVICTIONS.

01:27:48

Q - YOU DON'T THINK HE PROJECTED AS OPEN-MINDED LEADER?

01:27:51

A - NOT ALWAYS. I THINK THAT IN DEALING WITH CONGRESS FROM TIME TO TIME, AND MAYBE A CLASSIC EXAMPLE WAS ONE THAT I EXPERIENCED EARLY ON IN MY WORK AS A YOUNG OUTSIDE ATTORNEY ON THE BLACKOUT ISSUE IN 1972. HERE WAS THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES SAYING THE NFL SHOULD CHANGE ITS TELEVISION POLICY AND TELEVIEW ALL GAMES WHEN THEY'RE SOLD-OUT. ATTORNEY GENERAL CALLING PETE TO WASHINGTON SAYING, "YOU GOT TO CHANGE YOUR POLICY." THE LEAGUE AND PETE SAYING, "WE CAN'T. IT'S NOT FAIR TO THE PUBLIC WHO ARE BUYING THE TICKETS. IT'S GOING TO BE DESTRUCTIVE OF A LOT OF OUR INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS OVER TIME. IT CAN PRODUCE EMPTY STADIUMS OVER TIME. THERE WAS A ASSERTIVENESS AND A HARDHEADEDNESS IN THAT CONTEXT THAT SOMETIMES LED PEOPLE TO MISUNDERSTAND WHAT PETE ROZELLE WAS REALLY ALL ABOUT. SO THERE WAS THAT KIND OF AN ANOMALY I THINK IN THE PERCEPTION THAT PEOPLE SOMETIMES HAD OF PETE ROZELLE.

01:29:02

Q - TAKES CONVICTION TO STAND UP TO PRESIDENT OF U.S.?

01:29:05

A - WELL, IT TOOK A LOT OF CONVICTION AND HE HAD IT. I THINK THAT THERE WAS NOT JUST THE QUALITY THAT HE BROUGHT TO THE JOB. IT WAS A QUALITY THAT WAS REINFORCED BY THE OWNERS AND THE LEAGUE AT THAT TIME BY THE GEORGE HALAS' AND THE ART ROONEY'S, AND OTHERS. THE MARA FAMILY. THEY HAD A LOT OF CONVICTION BECAUSE THEY HAD BEEN THERE WHEN THE LEAGUE WAS STRUGGLING, AND THEY KNEW THAT YOU ONLY GOT TO WHERE YOU WERE IN THE 60'S AND 70'S BY BEING FIRM ABOUT WHAT YOU REPRESENTED AND WHAT YOU STOOD FOR.

01:29:44

Q - WHAT MADE HIM TICK?

01:29:53

A - WELL I THINK, FIRST OF ALL, IT WAS HIS LOVE FOR WHAT HE WAS DOING. IT WAS HIS LOVE FOR PRO FOOTBALL. HIS LOVE FOR SPORTS. AND HIS LOVE FOR THE CHALLENGE OF TAKING AN INSTITUTION THAT WAS... GROWING, EXPERIENCING GROWING PAINS, AND MOLDING INTO SOMETHING VERY SPECIAL AND SOMETHING THAT WAS VERY COHESIVE.

01:30:20

Q - DID HE MAKE NFL OR DID THE NFL MAKE HIM?

01:30:22

A - I THINK IT WAS A LITTLE OF EACH. HE HAD...AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE WHAT THE LEAGUE WAS. HE, AS I MENTIONED EARLIER. HE HAD BEEN A GENERAL MANAGER IN L.A. HE KNEW THE TANK YOUNGER'S OF THE TIME. HE KNEW WHAT OTTO GRAHAM AND THAT CLEVELAND BROWNS TEAM MEANT TO PRO FOOTBALL. HE HAD BEEN ON THE WEST COAST AS A YOUNG GUY WHEN THE 49ERS CAME TO TOWN AND WHEN THE RAMS WERE ESTABLISHED ON THE WEST COAST. SO HE COULD SEE WHAT THE NFL WAS BUT HE CLEARLY HAD A VISION THAT IT COULD BE SOMETHING EVEN MORE SPECIAL. SO I THINK HE BENEFITED FROM WHAT HE HAD INHERITED, AND EVERYONE ELSE HAS BENEFITED FROM WHAT HE LEFT AND WHAT WE INHERITED.

(01:31:21 – END OF INTERVIEW)