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Bruce Burston: A Piece of WMU Running in Australia

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WMU Alum Bruce Burston

Wednesday, Feb. 15, 2023 at 5:00 PM

Virtual Meeting via Facebook Video Chat

Bruce: Hi! There we are.

Cassie: Awesome! Hi, how are you?

Bruce: I'm well. Good morning or good evening.

Cassie: Yes, good morning to you. Good evening for me.

Bruce: Yes. Are you in Kalamazoo?

Cassie: Yes, I am.

Bruce: On campus?

Cassie: I'm just off of campus, about five minutes from campus.

Bruce: Okay.

Cassie: Yes. So, thank you so much for agreeing to talk to me today and reaching out. I'm so glad that we could connect despite the distance between us right now.

Bruce: Well, as I said to you in one of my notes that I find it hard to get my head around all this after what I went through when I was at Western. One gram a week from my mum and that was it.

Cassie: Wow. Yeah. That's a big difference to where we are now, especially since COVID the advances in technology that have come up.

Bruce: Yes.

Cassie: Well, thank you so much. I'm so excited to talk to you today. And is it all right if I record our conversation today for the project?

Bruce: That's fine.

Cassie: Okay, great. All right, so I am recording. So, basically what we'll do is I'll have you introduce yourself for the recording and then we'll start talking about your connection to WMU. Then we can get into Vandercook, your time there, your time running at WMU as well, and some other memories that you might have.

Bruce: Okay, fine.

Cassie: All right. Okay, well, go ahead and introduce yourself whenever you're ready then.

Bruce: Okay, well, my name is Bruce Burston and I was attended Western from 1961 to 1965 on an athletic—sort of athletic scholarship—under George Dales, who you may have heard of, a legendary coach at the school.

And I now live in Melbourne, Australia, and have for most all of my life by the times that I was at Western and I'm married with two children and six grandchildren.



Cassie: Wow. And so you're originally from Australia as well, is that correct?

Bruce: Yes.

Cassie: Okay, so what brought you to WMU, other than the athletic scholarship, but how did you choose that?

Bruce: At the time, Australians had the reputation of being very good distance runners. We had a fellow called Herb Elliott, who was the world record holder, and another one called John Landy, who was the second man to break the four minute mile. So, we were right up there with all the rest of the world in distance running.

So, it was almost as if you were Australian, you could run fast, which wasn't necessarily true, but that was our reputation. So, quite a few of my friends at the time had scholarships to other universities in the States and so I wanted to be in that situation as well.

So, through contacts that I had over in America, other Australians, I eventually got onto Georgia and Western and the rest's history.

Cassie: Okay.

Bruce: So, I arrived in about June 1961, extremely bewildered and having no idea what I was in for. And ultimately it worked out to be a major factor in my life. But at the time, I was just totally bewildered.

Cassie: Yeah. How was that culture shock when you first got there?

Bruce: Very much a culture shock, very much the biggest factor was the winters. I just couldn't cope with the winters at all. We don't ever get snow where I live.

Never. In fact, today it'll be about 95 degrees today, we're in 35 C, which about 95. So, it's mid summer, of course, and our winters never get much below 50, 45 in Fahrenheit, so you can note the difference. But I never, ever got used to them.

Cassie: Right.

Bruce: I had three months of purgatory every year.

Cassie: Yeah, and knowing Michigan, sometimes it could last longer than three months, too.

Bruce: Exactly.

Cassie: So, you came on an athletic scholarship for running. Did you do that your entire four years?

Bruce: Yes. In those days, freshmen couldn't run on the varsity, so I had to run my first year as a freshman. So, I didn't join the main team until my sophomore year, which was a bit unfortunate because I think my freshman year we had a pretty good team, but we sort of lacked one man. And I would have been that man. But that's the way it was at the time. That was a system, so they had to work with that.

Cassie: Right. And you said you also met some of your best friends–

Bruce: Yes.

Cassie: –during your time at Western, and I believe some you ran with as well, is that right?

Bruce: They were both two of my very best friends, who both, unfortunately, have died in the last 18 months, which is pretty sad.

Yeah. They were both connected through running, yes. I think it's much the same now. But when you were on the full time, it was full time activity. You virtually ate, slept, went to class, trained, and then started all over again because most weekends we traveled. So, you just didn't have time for anything else.

So, you just worked within the bubble of the team. There wasn't much time for anything else. (dog barks) I saw the little dog on your Facebook page.

Cassie: Yeah, that's her right now. I'm sorry. (to dog) Lay down.

Bruce: That's all right.

Cassie: Good girl. (to dog) All right, but keep going with what you're saying, I'm sorry.

Bruce: The whole thing was centered around the cross country team and then the track team, and it was full on. I mean being on the scholarship, you have a bit of an expectation, so

it was full on. And you'd get up, eat what you could at Vandercook, because Vandercook didn't have meals.

It had a little cafe where you could get a breakfast of sorts. But most of us kept food in our room, which we weren't supposed to, but we did. So, you had breakfast, you went to class. By four o'clock, classes mostly had finished, and then you went to practice every day of the week.

And then you'd come home, you'd be tired, and you'd study and go to bed and start all over again. So, it was full on. And then, as I said, many weekends, especially with across country, we would travel. And sometimes we'd leave Friday night and not get back till Sunday, if we had to go into state.

So it was full on and you just didn't have time for much else.

Cassie: Right.

Bruce: And of course, Vandercook was not the center of the school even then. The main campus was across the railway tracks and so you were a bit isolated. There was only one other there was a girl's dormitory there, Spindler, I think it was called, on the Hill.

And there was a student union, but nobody went to it. Everybody went to the main union on the main campus. So life was pretty full on. They didn't have much time for social things.

Cassie: Right, as for the layout, you mentioned a little bit of the physical layout of campus and such, but I'm wondering, do you remember what your dorm room looked like or what Vandercook looked like?

Since now Vander Cook is shut down, it's no longer dorms and it is sitting dormant, I'm wondering if you have some insight on what you remember about the hall.

Bruce: I was just talking to my wife recently, the rooms weren't bad. My first year, I think there were three stories, so on the third floor we were actually in a four dorm room but there was only two of us in it, which was good. I wouldn't have liked to have four in there.

But the rooms weren't too bad. I think we had a bunk. I know most of the rooms were two person. I can't remember whether they were separate. I think they were separate beds, I can't remember all bunks but I never felt that we were crowded.

There was always enough room. There were two desks, so there must have been two beds. Yeah, there were two beds, but the big difference was there were no en suites. It was a central bathroom and shower, so there were two each floor, one each end of the corridor.

And there was a big, long corridor with rooms off. And then there was a central bathroom at each end, so it was old style. A row of basins and a row of showers and a row of toilets. And first in best dressed. I think it's very different to now, I gather, where you'd probably have every room would have an en suite or you would expect it to.

Of course, all the dorms were separate then, so Vandercook was men and Spindler up the road was for women. The very different set of rules then. Pretty hard on the women cuz they had to be in and locked in by half past ten every night.

The doors shut and if you didn't get in by 10:30, you got sort of gated. You were banned from going out for a certain length of time. (chuckles)

Cassie: Wow!

Bruce: Depending a bit on the house mother or whatever she was called. But if you didn't have a decent excuse, you got gated or suspended. You couldn't go out.

Cassie: Wow.

Bruce: Very different rules to now.

Cassie: Yeah, and, of course, very different rules from what you had then, I bet, at Vander Cook there wasn't such rules for you, was there?

Bruce: No rules, boys could come and go and do whatever they like.

Cassie: Wow.

Bruce: Exactly, that was the same with all the boys dorms. They could come and go as they pleased, but the girls were locked up for their own good. It was a very different place. It was totally male dominated cuz there was no women's sport at all, only intramural no intervarsity sport for women at all.

That didn't come till later. Yeah, so it was a very different place.

Cassie: Yeah.

Bruce: But it was 1961, so it was not that long after the war and so forth. So it was just a different time to what it is now.

Cassie: Right.

Bruce: But we didn't know any different. So to us, it was just the way it was. You work within those boundaries.

Cassie: Yeah, and do you remember where you would train then?

Bruce: When you say trained, you mean did the training?

Cassie: Yes, where was training?

Bruce: Okay, the athletic track, that was not there. And the athletic track was within on the inside of the football field, within Waldo Stadium. So that's where we trained most of the time.

Cassie: And that was just a walk down from Vandercook then, right?

Bruce: That was correct. So it was easy for us if we wanted to go to any game, and the baseball field was next door, so it was easy for us to go and see those games.

The field house was different then it's been knocked down and rebuilt. And we actually had a pretty good basketball team for a couple of years I was there. We had a fantastic player called Manny Newsom, who was I think his number has been retired, and it's the only one that has.

He was a fantastic player, and while he played, we had a pretty good team. But when he retired or left, the team wasn't as good. Manny was on the brink of the top league, whatever it's called, the basketball league. But unfortunately, in those days, there was still a color problem, and Manny was black, and most of the professional teams had quotas on how many black players they had.

Cassie: Wow.

Bruce: And Manny didn't quite... He would have made it normally, but because some teams wouldn't even play black players, but most of them had a quota, and Manny wasn't quite up to the quota, but he would have been now. He'd make it easy. So different times.

Cassie: Right, yeah and I'm wondering, over the course of your career at WMU, those four years, how would you summarize your experience?

Bruce: It's in two parts. My first two years were pretty awful. I didn't realize at the time, but I was incredibly homesick, but I didn't realize it.

I just felt as the winters were terrible, I couldn't cope with them. I didn't have many friends. Most of the guys that I started with in the first two years had been at the university for two or three years. So they had their own sort of friendship groups.

They were very welcoming to me and were friends to me, but it wasn't a deep friendship. They had their own friendships. My last two years, when that group had gone, it meant that I was with the group, that we come into Western together. And so that's where the deeper friendships evolved.

And my last two years were pretty good because I had close friends that had evolved over the two previous years. And also we started to have success as a team, which helped. And finally we went on and won the national championship in 1964, which was pretty big deal.

No other teams ever done it since. No other team has looked like doing it since in any sport. And we were pretty chuffed at the time when we did it, and then the team did it the following year as well. So pretty big deal. I don't think we realized at the time how big a deal it was to win the national championship.

Western was a little school in those days, only 10,000 of us.

Cassie: Right.

Bruce: It had only been a university for some ten or so years. It was a teacher's college prior to that. So it was very much a minnow in the scheme of things. And to pop up and beat the rest of the country was pretty amazing.

Cassie: And it's amazing, too, what a difference friends can make. To turn around your college experience from being miserable and homesick to then your later two years feeling like you do belong and you were having a good time there. I'm wondering, do you have any memories that still stick out to you or that you still remember with those friends?

Bruce: I certainly remember fondly, very vividly, the day we finally won the national championships. It was at Michigan State, and we went down the couple of days before, and they had a hotel management course there. So we all stayed in their trainee hotel, and it had snowed that week, and a lot of the teams had come from the south: Florida, Texas, Oregon, California.

We saw having the snow on the ground and the weather pretty cold as an advantage to us. We knew what it was like. We knew what it was like to run in snow, so we saw it as an advantage. So there was a team from Oregon who were red hot favorites. They had a very strong athletic tradition even then. They have a huge one now, of course, but even then it was strong and they were red hot favorites, expected to win fairly easily.

I remember very vividly, we came down for breakfast the morning of the race, and they strutted around the room as though they'd already won it. And we just sat in our corner and our coach insisted that we had this very plain breakfast of porridge and toast while Oregon strutted around and, well, what will I have for breakfast? Will I have boiled eggs or poached eggs or scrambled eggs, and they carried on and it just made us more determined than ever to beat them.

So the race was, as I said, running in snow. It wasn't a very demanding course, but we knew the course cuz we'd run there before. And so at the end of the race we had people like Tom Coyne had come down to watch us and others, and some of our friends had cut class and caught lifts because it wasn't that far from Kalamazoo to Michigan State. And I remember then, we were pretty buggered after racing and hoping we'd done well. And I remember that kid, one of my best friends, running around trying to collect information from other coaches as to whether how we'd finished.

And he came running up, I remember he came running up, "Bruce, we've won, we've won!" What he'd done is he'd looked over the shoulder of the Oregon coach and he'd written down his place getters, and we knew ours. And he quickly added them up and he realized that we'd beaten them.

That's when he came racing over. I'll never forget he came running down the hill, he said, "We won, we won, we've done it!" That was a moment I'll never forget. And it turned out that

in the end, yeah, we had won it. So that was a great moment. So yeah, that's one moment, it's provided me with other moments, not at Western, but as a result of being at Western.

I remember running in a big race in Chicago, an indoor race, and an American was trying to break the world record for the mile indoors, and I was asked to pace the first quarter mile. I was in my freshman year, so I couldn't run varsity races, but the coach took me along, I think, for the experience.

And so I was asked to run, be the rabbit. And I remember the man's name was Jim Beatty, and we sort of organized. They introduced me to him. I said, "I'll do the best I can at the run the first quarter mile in 60 seconds." Well, indoors it was twelve laps to the mile, so it was a bit awkward to try and pace yourself when you had to run three laps for the quarter mile.

Anyway, I'll do the best I can. So the place was packed, huge crowd, and I was introduced as an addition to the race. Bruce Burston from Australia, little bit of a clap. And anyway, the race starts and I go to the lead and I go through the quarter mile and it's dead on 60 seconds.

So I've done my job. And as Jim Beatty went past me, he said thanks, he just said thanks as he passed me, which was what he was expected to do. I was told that I could then pull out if I wanted to, or I could keep going and finish the race.

So I decided to finish the race and of course, the crowd went he didn't quite break the record, but another American gave him a great race. So the crowd got a fantastic race. And now we're going bonkers where they crossed the line. And then I came in and I got almost as bigger applause because I'd set the race up. So that was pretty big moment. And the next morning, on the back page of The New York Times and the Chicago Daily News is a great big photo of me leading them through the race. So that's a pretty big deal that I've always remembered.

I've got the cutting in a scrapbook somewhere. That was a pretty big deal.

Cassie: So as you said before, obviously with all the training that it takes for these races, plus classes and everything else, you were a very, very busy student. Do you remember where some of your classes were?

Bruce: Yes, they were scattered across the campus. And living in Vandercook, I was doing a technology course, majoring in electronics and electric, what was it called? Technology and electronics, that was it. And a lot of the classes were on my campus, which was fortunate, but any of the humanities classes that I had to take and had to do maths and so forth, notice we call it maths. You call it math. Anyway, that's just a sideline. But we had to go across to the other campus. And there was a little bus that used to run between the two campuses on a regular basis.

And I don't know whether you know, but I don't know what the name of the road is. It runs past Vandercook and then two roads come together and there's a little lane that runs off

Eddie's Lane. Well, that was named after the bus driver whose name was Eddie. Did you know that?

Cassie: Yes, I did, yeah.

Bruce: Okay, very well.

Cassie: Have you met Eddie then? So you knew Eddie?

Bruce: Yeah, well, I knew Eddie. Yeah, everybody knew Eddie. And he among other drivers, drove the bus between the two campuses. So that was one way to get, but the thing was the bus didn't run. I don't know how regular it was, didn't have a timetable, it just turned up.

So he just queued up and hoped for the best. And Eddie always often used to drive us on our long trips when we went with the track team or mainly the track team like if we went to, say, Bowling Green or one of the other universities, then Eddie would drive the bus.

So everybody knew Eddie. A lot of my electronics classes were on the old campus, and I've been back twice since I left. And I noticed now that those classes are mainly store rooms. So they were pretty old and pretty small classrooms. Some of them probably been knocked down.

And then the other classes were, I know there was a bit of a hall. There was a new building way out the back. It's all different now because there's a golf course where the Miller Hall is. That was a golf course in my day, but there was a building out there, I think it was mainly for history. I can't even remember the name of it. But that was a really long hall from Vandercook.

I remember I had a math class first thing in the morning, I think, at 9 o'clock. And of course you had to leave at 8 o'clock to get there on time because I'd have to catch the bus and that would drop you off near the library, where the library is. There is sort of a central area. They're outside the Admin building. And then you have to walk all the way up the hill to this new building and then all the way up to the top floor, and then all the way along the top floor to the far corner.

So it took me about half an hour to get that there. So that was the furthest. So mainly humanities classes are on what I call the new campus, and all my maths classes and science classes on the new campus and the technical stuff, electronics and stuff on the old campus.

So it's split. I don't think there's any classes on the old campus now, is there?

Cassie: I don't think so now because, what was formerly East Hall and it's now called Heritage Hall is where the alumni association is. And then Wallwood Union is now home to the graduate studies and medieval studies.

And then West Hall is gone, North Hall is gone. So yeah, there's no classes over there, really.

Bruce: Yeah, there used to be a high school tucked in there too.

Cassie: Yes, and I had the pleasure of interviewing a few of the alums from the old university high as well.

Bruce: It was pretty small, but I don't know exactly where they had their classes, but I know it was tucked in there somewhere.

Cassie: And speaking of the classes, do you remember any of your professors during your time at WMU?

Bruce: Not a lot of them. I remember Goldfarb, she taught humanities and English, I think. I think her name was Goldfarb. She was one of the very first teachers I had. We had to take basic studies. You had to take half a dozen, what they call basic studies. And she taught my, I think it was called communications, which was really basic English. And I remember that, and I'm pretty sure that was her name.

Who else? No, not really. None of them stood out to me other than her for some reason.

Cassie: But obviously, another faculty member at WMU that you had connection with would be your coach at the time, right? Yes, do you have any memories with him or do you remember what he was like?

Bruce: George was an interesting character. He certainly was fixated on winning the cross country championship. There's no question of that. That was one of his main... He'd been trying for over 10 years to win it, but he never showed much emotion, George. He was very self contained, but I know, I'm sure underneath he was being absolutely thrilled to bits because he'd been trying for years to do it.

He'd come very close a couple of times and that was one of the reasons I was happy to go to Michigan. I had other offers, actually, and I chose to go to Western because of the reputation and the longevity of his program, he'd been very good for quite a long time.

And it happened that we were the culmination after the '65 team won it. It really slipped away, and George, I think, within a year, was gone as coach, so it was all over by then. So I know he was thrilled a bit. He was very hard to get through to, he was very self contained.

I think if you can get in touch with a guy called John Bauk, he's in California. He would know more about George than I would. He was a bit of a pioneer, George, because he had the team in the 50s, and he used to take the team. He had a mixed team, mixed race team, and that was pretty unusual.

And he goes south, and I know there were times and Bauk would be able to tell you more than me. There were times when he was asked to put his Native American teammates in different rooms to the whites, and he refused. I know that John Bauk can tell you stories of that, if you wanna get in touch, he's in California.

Cassie: Okay.

Bruce: It'd be worth getting in touch with, cuz he also won a national championship, an individual one. So he's another rarity at the school in that he was a national track champion, so individual.

Cassie: Okay, yeah, do you have his contact information, by chance?

Bruce: I've got his email.

Cassie: If you wanna email that over to me.

Bruce: I'll send it on to you, yes.

Cassie: Yeah, perfect, okay.

Bruce: So George was very much including as many people as he could on his team, very much, that was his great strength. Anybody who wanted to come along and join his team, he would let them come along.

And he never gave out, I had a partial scholarship, and he never gave out full scholarships, he always spread it out. So his idea was to have a lot rather than a few individuals.

Cassie: Right.

Bruce: That was the philosophy. And he also, I've since learned, he would stretch the rules a bit in terms of participation, and he had a great connection with Mike Gary.

Who Gary, I think it's a scholarship trust or something. Well, Mike Gary was the head of athletics, yeah, head of athletics or whatever you call it at the time, and he and George got on really well. I think they learned how to move the rules a little bit. You didn't hear that from me. (Both laugh)

Cassie: Okay, so what was it like then, being on his winning team? And how did he react to you guys winning?

Bruce: He kept very much to himself, he was obviously delighted. But he didn't jump up and down or throw his hands in the air or he was very much within himself.

I found George really difficult to read, and yet you never quite knew whether he was with you or against you. He was very kind to me, at times I got a bit down. And while he mightn't have done it, he'd organized something or someone to talk to me or...

At one place I was a bit short on money and he organized a loan through the school for me, so he did things like that, but he never made a fuss of it. He was very contained, that's the way I describe him. But underneath, he must have been absolutely delighted, no question.

Cuz it was a big deal for him and a huge thing. As I said, I don't think the school or us realize what we've done. Amongst the group, quite a few of us have gone, unfortunately. But

amongst the group of us that were on those two teams, it's vivid in our memory of what we did.

As I said, that moment when one of my best friends came running down to tell us we won, that will live with me forever. And George was thrilled, there's a couple, I've got a photo here, I don't know whether you can see it. Can you see that?

Cassie: Yes.

Bruce: Well, that's taken after we'd officially been told we've won it. So we've got the two trophies there.

Cassie: Yeah.

Bruce: And you can tell George is pretty happy.

Cassie: Yeah, wow.

Bruce: So that's us. And I've got another photo I'll show you, I have to get up and get it just hang on.

Cassie: Okay.

Bruce: This is the one when I told you we'd rush down and you can see the snow on the ground, can you see the snow?

Cassie: Yeah.



Bruce: And there's George, and that's just after when I said my mates had come down and told us that we'd won.

And we sorta got together and had a photo taken. So I really like this photo better than the others, because it shows what we ran in and it's more or less we're still in our blade grabs a bit. We're in our track suits, so that's my favorite photo.

Cassie: Wow, could you take a picture of that photo and email it to me too? I'd love to include it with your story.

Bruce: Okay, yeah, we can do that.

Cassie: Okay, perfect.

Bruce: That's my favorite one, yeah.

Cassie: Yeah, it's a great photo.

Bruce: And you can see George is distracted, obviously, but he's still pretty happy.

Cassie: Yeah, you're very in the moment.

Bruce: Yeah, that's very much the moment, that's the moment.

Cassie: Yeah, wow. So, we're coming to the end of our time right now and I just wanted to ask, were there any last memories or stories you wanted to share? Were there any topics that we didn't touch on that you wanted to end with?

Bruce: I don't wanna get on to the politics of today in terms of men's and women's sport. I have very strong views about that, but I think I better hold them into myself because I have some odd views about that, but I don't know whether you wanna.

The interesting thing is that, women's sport over here, sport over here is completely different to sport in America. They sorta... day to day sport over here is completely club based. It's all based on volunteers running suburban clubs. In just about every sport there is, from the top football codes right through to the very minor sports. It's all run by volunteers with suburban clubs. And the growth of women's sport over here has been phenomenal in the last five to ten years.

But the point I try to make is that I know women's sport over in America is trying to push to be equal with the men in terms of money spent and so forth. But the difference is that virtually every sport that's played in Australia, whether it's the winter football codes or the summer sports, which is a lot of it's cricket, bit of baseball, but not much, but they all have men's and women's teams.

Every sport has men's and women's teams, especially the football codes. They've now got women's teams. We have about three main or four main football codes. Over here you have one, which is your NFL, we have four. And they've all got strong women's competitions, very strong. And my point is that if the women in America want to be equal, then why don't they push for women's football teams?

Then you could argue that it's equal. I find it very difficult to accept that there's ten or twelve women's sports in Western and there's seven men's sports. That's not fair. And that's the way I look at it. And the reason you see why aren't the women in Western pushing for a football team and an ice hockey team? They don't have them. In Australia, the women would be pushing like hell to have them.

That's the difference. Why should there be a women's track team and not a men's track team? Why should there be a women's cross country team and not a men's cross country team? The argument can go both ways. If you've got a men's football team, why can't you have a women's football team?

And but you've got a men's hockey team, why can't you have a women's hockey team? That's the point that I try to make. And people, I don't think Americans think that the same way, because they just think I'm crazy when I say, you should have a women's football team.

Every football code in Australia has got women's competition and they're national competitions. And the women just expect that. They love playing our football teams. Man, do they hit each other hard. It's amazing. They love it. So, that's my little bit. But I'm really upset that there's no track and cross country at Western.

I mean, under George, we were nationally ranked, we were nationally recognized. The only bit of Western that was nationally recognized was track and cross country.

Cassie: Right.

Bruce: And now that's gone. So Western is just back in the pack. Whereas when I was there, everybody knew Western was strong in track and cross country nationally.

Cassie: It put Western more on the map.

Bruce: Yeah, really. Definitely. No question.

Cassie: Wow. Yeah.

Bruce: Anyway, that's my little beef.

Cassie: Okay, well, thank you so much for sharing and thank you again for meeting with me today and sharing some of these stories.

Bruce: Now, if you want any now we've got a contact. If you want any more information, please tell please contact me. There's no problem. We were hoping to come back two years ago, but COVID interfered.

Cassie: Yes. Right.

Bruce: So I don't think I'll be back. I'm over 80 now, so that's a long time and travels that fast. Just too much.

Cassie: Yeah, well, maybe I'll send you a photo of Vandercook, how it looks today, so you can see how it looks, because I know it probably won't last much longer.

Bruce: I think they'll demolish it. They might.

Cassie: It looks like they might. And it's been quite a few years since anybody's been in Vandercook. I think it's been like, 20-30 years.

Bruce: Yeah. Last time I was there, I asked Tom if I could go through it, and apparently it's riddled with asbestos.

Cassie: Yes, it is. Yes. So it's boarded up right now and the vines have grown, but it's still a beautiful building.

Bruce: Yeah, that old campus was beautiful building since the main union and everything.

Cassie: Very collegiate feel. East campus. But thankfully they've done a great renovation with what was East Hall and is now Heritage Hall, and that was the original building of Western. And it's a good thing that they have kept it. And it's in a lot better use now, too, and better maintained, thankfully.

Bruce: Yeah, but it was hardly used at all when I was there, except, as I said, some of the little classrooms that were used for us said they're store rooms now, or they're not there at all.

Cassie: Yeah, right.

Bruce: One last thing I'll show you I'm very proud of, and I've still got one of this. I was three time All American.

Cassie: Oh wow! Yeah, that's very cool. Yeah. If you could just take a picture of these and send them, I'll make sure to include them with your story, too, on the project website, that would be great.

Bruce: I'm very proud of that. And I was three times, so, again, not too many people have achieved that level.

Cassie: Yeah, that's great. Yeah, you can send them to me on messenger or via email as well.

Bruce: Okay, I'll see what I can do.



Cassie: Okay, great. All right. And then once your story is up, too, I'll make sure to send you the link so that you can go take a look at yours. And there's a bunch of other people that will be on there, but I know, you'll know, Tom Coyne's will be up there, too.

Bruce: Tom and I are great friends. He's been a great he would know as much about that day when we won in '61 as anybody. So if you get another chance to talk to him about that moment he was part of that group that ran around counting numbers to see if we'd won or not.

Cassie: I'll be sure to bring it up with them then.

Bruce: Yeah. Okay!

Cassie: Thank you so much. It was a pleasure talking with you today.

Bruce: Thanks, Cassie. See you.

Cassie: Thank you. Bye.

Bruce: Bye.