Season 7 Episode 5: The Godfather of SEC Baseball: A Conversation with Coach Ron Polk

Stephanie: [00:00:00] Welcome to the Mortgage Minute with Adam Black. Adam holds the exclusive designation of real estate collaboration specialist with a focus on divorce mortgage management. Adam, our client was told that since they are not on the actual mortgage node and the mortgage program is conventional, they cannot simply assume the mortgage. Is this true?

Adam Black: That's a great question, Stephanie, and one that we get asked all the time. And it's often misunderstood in our industry. It depends on the servicer or who they're paying. More and more servicers are lying what's called a hardship assumption, so it's important to check with the servicer rather than simply assuming it's not possible due to the type of mortgage.

My team and I handle stuff like this every day. If you have any questions about your specific needs or your specific situation, please feel free to reach out to me at aBlack@firstcommercialbk.com or simply gimme a call at (601) 540-0302.[00:01:00]

Craig Robertson: Hey everybody, it's Craig, and today on the Robertson and Easter Easterling podcast, I get to do something really special. I get to sit down with a man who had a tremendous impact on my life and also on the lives of thousands of other young men. Coach Ron Polk. If you know anything about college baseball, especially in the south.

You know his name, coach Polk is the godfather of SEC baseball. He's one of the winningest coaches in college sports history. A two-time National Coach of the year, and one of the only three coaches to take three different teams to Omaha, but to those of us who played for him or grew up watching him lead teams onto the field at Duty Noble, he's so much more than stats and accolades.

The one dog was born in New England, but he grew up in Phoenix, Arizona. His dad was a semi-pro baseball player and a postal charact. He didn't have a flashy start or grand plan. He just loved the game. He played it, studied it, and eventually wrote the [00:02:00] textbook on it. And then he devoted his life to coaching it at the highest level.

He's tough, he's loyal, he's hardworking, and he's sentimental in ways you wouldn't expect. And his home in Starkville is basically a living museum to the game and the players he loved and he still loves. Today we're going to talk about where it all started and what shaped him as a man and a coach, and why.

After more than 50 years in the game, coach polt still sends handwritten letters to former players, managers, and staff every single year. It's an honor to share this conversation with you. So whether you're a lifelong bulldog, a baseball fan, or someone who just loves a great story, this one's for you. Now, without further ado, here's my conversation with legendary coach Ron Polk.

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Brent Johnston: Would you like to build self-confidence? As a life coach, that's a [00:03:00] question I can help you address. Do you struggle with self-doubt? Philippians four 13 reminds us, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. True confidence doesn't come from our abilities.

It comes from knowing we are in Christ. You are fearfully, wonderfully made. It says in Psalm 1 39 14, true confidence comes from knowing who you are in Christ. Again, being fearfully and wonderfully made replaces negative self-talk with God's truth. Here's the truth. You are loved, you are chosen. You are equipped.

Spend time in his word to remind yourself of his promises. When you step out in faith, you're not relying on your strength, but on the one who is limitless. Overcoming self-doubt is a journey that requires intentional effort and reliance on God's truth. One effective strategy is to challenge negative thoughts by replacing them with affirmations rooted in scripture.

For instance, when feelings of inadequacy arise, recall, and remember Philippians four 13, which says, I can do all things through Christ strengthens me. This verse reminds us that our abilities are not limited by our own. Strength, but are [00:04:00] empowered through Christ. By consistently affirming these truths, we can reframe our mindset and build a more confident self-image.

Another powerful approach is to reflect on past experiences where God has been faithful. Remembering times when you've overcome challenges with his help can serve as a testament to his provision and your resilience. This practice not only boosts confidence, but also strengthens faith as it reinforces the understanding that God equips us for every task he set before us.

As Hebrews 13, five assures us, God has said, never will I leave you. Never will I forsake you. This promise provides comfort and assurance, dispelling feelings of self-doubt. Additionally, surrounding yourself with a supportive community can significantly impact your competence. Engaging with fellow believers who encourage and uplift you fosters an environment where self-doubt can be addressed collectively as Proverbs 27 17 states as iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

Being a part of a community that reflects God's love and truth helps reinforce your identity in Christ and provides accountability, making it easier to overcome self-doubt and embrace the confidence that [00:05:00] comes from knowing you are in him. I hope this life lesson on building self-confidence has been helpful to you.

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Coach Ron Polk: No, baseball in Jackson has changed a lot.

Craig Robertson: It's changed everywhere, coach

Coach Ron Polk: and, oh, yeah. There's no question. Mark it.

Craig Robertson: Just to refresh your memory I finished high school in 92, was not hardly recruited at all. Coach Tom Gladney gave me an opportunity.

Coach Ron Polk: Now Tom's the one who booked me for this thing in

Craig Robertson: Oh, really?

Coach Ron Polk: Club. He lives in Texas.

Craig Robertson: I knew that,

Coach Ron Polk: I spoke for him at Midway High School in Waco, Texas, at a high school bank a long time ago. We have stayed in touch all these years.

Craig Robertson: Coach Gladys a is a really good [00:06:00] man. I actually ran into him at a Houston Astros game. It's been a while when my dad was still living.

Coach Ron Polk: He's working at a private school now over there. He was a baseball coach now. I think he's the ad.

Craig Robertson: I heard that and I heard he had a lot of I heard he had a lot of success. I think I heard he might've won a Texas State championship in high school.

Coach Ron Polk: Yeah. I don't know. I've spoken to Texas a lot at the high school.

My, my background basically would, you would not imagine how many places I've spoken in my life with the clinics and banquets and alumni association, bulldog Club. And so I gotta be protective of my voice because I smoke five or six, seven cigars a day.

Craig Robertson: I know And you got a lot of talk You do along with what brand cigar do you smoke?

Coach Ron Polk: Poya de Monterey. Yep. In fact, Roddy Jordan just called me yesterday, one of our former players.

Craig Robertson: Yeah.

Coach Ron Polk: He wanted, he was at a cigar store and wanted to buy the same ones I smoked, so I read off my, the label off my cigar.

Craig Robertson: What is a cigar?

Coach Ron Polk: Poya de Monterey Honduras. It's a Maduro rap. And I, I've, traveling with USA baseball seven times around the world.

I've traveled with the Cuban national team and the Honduras national [00:07:00] team and the Venezuelan, and they all exchanged cigars with me. But I like mine

Craig Robertson: when Didd, you smoke your first cigar.

Coach Ron Polk: Oh, about 50 years ago. I. Yeah, I

Craig Robertson: have to do the math coach. So you were early thirties.

Coach Ron Polk: I could have bought a house with us ago this time, and I could have bought my house.

Craig Robertson: I've never been, I, tobacco, chewing tobacco snuff.

Coach Ron Polk: I never, I've never chewed tobacco, never smoked a cigarette. It's just I was on the road so much recruiting and speaking that I, I had to get something going at night, getting back at two or three in the morning and typing up the practice schedule and posting 'em at four in the morning and to stay awake.

And someone said, you gotta start smoking. I said, I don't wanna smoke. I said, try a cigar. Try a cigar. And I stayed awake the whole night and I said, that's gotta be it.

Craig Robertson: So the nicotine kind of gave you the extra energy.

Coach Ron Polk: I need caffeine, drinking coffee. But no, I'm a road warrior. I've been the road forever.

Craig Robertson: Yeah. I know you have. Coach, I wanna go all the way back to the beginning.

Coach Ron Polk: Alright, let's go.

Craig Robertson: You were. Born in Boston, Massachusetts,

Coach Ron Polk: 1944 Boston, Massachusetts, Rosendale. And [00:08:00] then we stayed there seven years. My dad got a job with a plumbing company in Buffalo, New York. So we moved to Buffalo for four years.

And so I think I was 11 years old. My mom had asthma and her doctor says, you probably need to leave Buffalo because it's a lot of snow, a lot of humidity, and go out to maybe the desert. They picked Phoenix, Arizona for the move to, and dad did not have a job and got in the car. And we drove to Phoenix, Arizona through Tucson and.

Got off to Phoenix. My dad was delivering milk and, but he had, he was a mailman back in Boston, so he got a chance to join the, as a post carrier in, in in Phoenix to a stable job and minor league. Not a minor league player, but a non-pro baseball player. So me and my brother Bob. Played a lot of catch with 'em, a lot of ball.

And so moving to Arizona, probably if I were still in Buffalo, I'd probably not be sitting in this chair right now. 'cause you they don't play very much baseball in Buffalo.

Craig Robertson: Yeah.

Coach Ron Polk: But [00:09:00] Phoenix, is light air and you got no rain and baseball's huge. You got the spring training facilities there. So I went to junior high school and high school and and Carl Hayden High School in Phoenix and played in high school baseball.

I'm only five foot seven and a half and I had good skills, but not to the point where I was gonna have a chance to play at the next level, the pro baseball level. But went to Phoenix Junior College right down the road and got cut from the junior college baseball team.

Craig Robertson: And that was your first. Team after high school.

Coach Ron Polk: Yeah, they were very competitive. Very competitive,

Craig Robertson: I believe him.

Coach Ron Polk: But as I'm speaking to all these high school kids, which I do a lot around the country, I talk to 'em about, they look at me five, seven and a half, just an average looking guy. How did I do what I did in my career? Former president of all the baseball coaches got the leading book ever written, and coach at nine different schools, never interviewed for a job, never got fired.

Ended up in the, in SEC. How'd I do that? Basically I fell in the right place at the right [00:10:00] time and took advantage of it. So I got cut from the junior college at Phoenix College. I stayed the whole year, and then I enrolled at Arizona State in Tempe, which is a suburb of Phoenix.

And I thought maybe I'd try out for the Arizona State Sun Devils that were ranked number one in the country or two. See, it used to be. Arizona State, UCLA, Southern Cal, Stanford. Cal, Pepperdine, Cal full of, they're in Omar all

the time. They're not in Omar anymore 'cause they don't have name, image and like this money out there 'cause they don't draw our crowds.

It's now moved to the southeast. So the last five national championships in college baseball or SEC schools, us Ole Miss Tennessee, Vanderbilt and LSU because we're like the New York Yankees. We got the money. I remember my dad asked us, since I got cuffed from the junior college where I'd go to Arizona State, I said, I think I wanna try out for the best.

I think I'm pretty good. And went out there, watched him practice for a couple times before I actually. Went out and I saw how good they were and decided not to.

Craig Robertson: Oh, you did not try out,

Coach Ron Polk: did not try out, stayed there the [00:11:00] whole year. So now I'm not sure what I was gonna do. I wanted to get a degree and so I was playing summer baseball in recreation in Phoenix and just the luck of the Draw, grand Canyon University and then Grand Canyon College, about 700 students.

A Christian school right down the road from my home.

Craig Robertson: That's all it was. It's a huge school now though, isn't it?

Coach Ron Polk: It's huge because of online classes. There's about 25,000 students now, so I still remember playing Rec Ball and Red Harden. The catcher for our team, who I still stay in contact with, his dad was the coach of this recreation team. And he came up to me one day and said he just got a call from Dave Brazel, the coach of Grand Canyon, that Gary, gary oh, I can't remember his name. He ended up being the baseball coach at BYU. Former president of our association, like myself, Gary was a Mormon second baseman at grand Canyon, but he had to take his two year Mormon trip.

I. Every Mormon has to take that two year trip.

Craig Robertson: Yes.

Coach Ron Polk: Doing mission work, either all over the country or in, in [00:12:00] the states. And Dave Brazel just put the word out. We didn't have the internet or email or text, and he just called a couple of players who were playing summer ball and said, Hey, look around and see if there's a infield of the, on your team that we need another infielder.

Not the guarantee start, but to, to we are missing an infielder. Gary's gone on a mission trip, so I went and visited with him. I think he gave me a book scholarship and and I went out and made the team and was a short stop, second baseman, and didn't play all the time. A lot. And it's amazing story.

So I finished that, and of course the scouts just started the draft, and that was 1965. The draft started and I thought maybe I was good enough to get drafted, but that didn't happen. So I said I guess I'll just become a physical my major was physical education. I'd just be a physical education teacher.

And lo and behold, another break you get. Boy, Dave Brazel, who was the coach of Grand Canyon, I think he called me in a [00:13:00] couple days, said, Hey, I've got a, just got a phone call from Fred Roby down at the University of Arizona. He's got a couple of openings for graduate assistants that teach in the physical education department, the freshman classes that they required to take, handball and weightlifting.

And so he would be able to give me, with my grades that were very good. He liked to talk to me about coming down there and to get a stipend that will pay to get your master's degree while you teach these classes. So you teach classes in the morning and take night classes to get your master's degree.

And I had no, all I had nothing else to do, I said I'll go down and visit with him. And he hired me and not very much money. So I was, I went down to Tucson, Arizona, got an apartment with another guy. I didn't even know who it was. I you a very inexpensive 'cause I wasn't making very much money, so I'm down there.

Teaching classes and our University of Arizona was still another famous. Place. Frank San, old coach, [00:14:00] historic coach down there was the head coach. Never met him. Heard that was tough. An old guy from Bisbee, he was a minor's son, saw him in the paper. It looked like a fighter. And so I was my office was on the top floor of the old gymnasium and had to go up a spiral staircase to get to my office.

Kids today don't know what that is,

Craig Robertson: right?

Coach Ron Polk: And I think we were on the third floor. I shared an office with 14 other graduate assistants. Actually, I shared a table just about as big as

this with three others. That was my office. So every day I had to go up to spiral staircase to this office. And I met, ran into Eddie Su, who was a center field.

I remember these names 'cause I still stay in touch with a lot of 'em. And I knew he was an All American baseball player. And we were in, in the. Old gymnasium. And he was downstairs. I introduced myself and said, do you guys start in practice this fall? He said, yeah, we have fall practice.

And the ballpark was right next to the coliseum. The gymnasium, now it's moved to [00:15:00] high corporate field. I said, okay. And you coach Frank San, you like him. He said he is tough, he's a good coach. And I said to myself, I think what I'll do is I go in and visit with Frank Sansa.

Tell him I'm teaching classes here. I played baseball at Grand Canyon. Taking classes at night. I had my afternoon free if they like to have me come out. And I'd never fungal before 'cause I always hit, I never threw bat in practice even. I think I may have told 'em, I want me to wash the uniforms, be a manager, whatever.

Craig Robertson: How old were you coach? Like 22, 23. I was 20. 20.

Coach Ron Polk: I think I was 21, 20 going on 22. And I was scared to death. I said, Eddie, where's his office at? He said you go up the sprawl staircase in the second floor. I said, I never saw, now the baseball office have graphics and lights and strobes and everything.

He said, yeah, second floor, you'll see an arrow saying baseball office. So I went up to the second floor and there was the arrow, just an arrow. Baseball didn't even say Frank Sanon. And so I walked down [00:16:00] this hallway, concrete hallway, just like a dungeon it an old building. Now this is a really old, this spiral staircase was right behind the scores table in basketball.

That's how old this is about three or four times. I started walking down and I made a U-turn. I said, what's he want me? Frank Sanon, Arizona just played a Grand Canyon, didn't play pro ball. And I'm asking if he needs some help. I don't know what happened. I just took a deep breath one time and said, I'm gonna, I'm gonna do it.

And I walked down this hallway, so the Errol took a left. I tell this story often. And then it took a right Errol's still going to this way. And I looked down there, this old guy, I could see him way down there, only office in that floor. And he

was writing something. It had to be Frank ett. So I tiptoed down there very quietly, as you can imagine.

I was scared to death 'cause I was afraid he is gonna say, you didn't play pro ball and you didn't play at a major college. You want to be part of that Wild Can't baseball program. I thought he was gonna [00:17:00] scream at me. So I got that, got to the side of the door and I just said, okay. I probably said, eh coach Sandit.

You got a second and a gruff voice. Yeah. Come on in. All wooden chair. Sat down and I told him who I was, played at Grand Canyon. I got a stipend here. I'm teaching morning classes. I think I taught handball and weight training and and I got my afternoons free and I just thought, if you might need some help, just, and he said, yeah, I'd love to have you.

I said, really? Yeah, we start practicing a couple weeks, so get your locker and we get your uniform. And I said whoa. Wow. So I did it. I went out and, not so much coaching, it was just helping out, what I could do.

Craig Robertson: And coach, what do you think compelled you to walk, make that, walk up that spiral staircase?

Coach Ron Polk: That was basically I was bored to death a little bit, teaching

Craig Robertson: boredom

Coach Ron Polk: classes in the morning and night and going back to the apartment at night and [00:18:00] saying, Hey, I, I'm a baseball guy and I'm not doing anything in baseball right now.

Craig Robertson: What kept you coming back to baseball? Because you played in high school, obviously.

Coach Ron Polk: My dad was a mi it wasn't minor league. It was one of those. Non-pro leagues.

Craig Robertson: Like American Legion yeah. Semi-pro.

Coach Ron Polk: Yeah. And I, and we, I got pretty good at it. Me and my brother Bob. Bob he maxed out in high school.

Craig Robertson: Is Bob older than you or young?

Coach Ron Polk: He's, yeah, he's still living out there in Phoenix.

I have a home out there also that I rent to him. I think got caught up in that 2008 housing recession.

Craig Robertson: Heard about that.

Coach Ron Polk: So I bought him and his wife a Jo House. And I think I bought it for 196,000. It's worth about 600,000 now.

Craig Robertson: Good investment.

Coach Ron Polk: It's a good investment. So anyway, its amazing story is that.

So I go fall practice, and then I go spring practice and the season's about a week or two to start. And he called me in the office and I thought, maybe I got fired. Now how can you fire me? I'm not making any money. I'm just out there just volunteering. He said, Ron, listen Kenny Cooper and I'll always remember that name.

Our pitching coach has been my third base coach forever, but he feels like he'd be best suited during the [00:19:00] games to be in the bullpen. And I'm too old to coach third base. So you're gonna be the third base coach for the Wildcats this year. And I think I said whoa, whoa. Mean signals and making all the, you'll be all right.

You'll be all right. So I was the third base coach. The Arizona Wildcats we're playing Arizona State in front of six, 7,000 people. I had Reggie Jackson to send a fielder for Arizona State throughout two of my runners at home plate within an inning. And I thought I was gonna lose my job. And I remember San came up to me in the dugout and I was afraid he was gonna scream at me all.

He said to me, Hey Polk, you know that Jackson kid's got a pretty good arm?

Craig Robertson: He does.

Coach Ron Polk: So I stayed and I, we go to Oma, we're in College World Series, and I'm third base coach with Wildcat. I'm looking at all these fans and TV and I'm saying, Hey, look at me. Look what I am. What am I'm just a guy.

Asked for a break. So at that point in time I said to myself, we got defeated by somebody, Stanford, get back to the airport. And that was during the Vietnam War, and I was gonna be draftable. 'cause that's [00:20:00] when they had the draft and they had the ping pong balls where they, it was just like a,

Craig Robertson: like lottery.

Coach Ron Polk: Lottery. Yeah. And if your draft status was about 150, ball comes out and if you're one 11, it comes out one 11, you're going to Vietnam. And mine was really close. So I called my dad and I said, listen I'm, I don't, I got a college deferment right now. 'cause if you had a college deferment, you didn't get into the draft.

But I was, I got my master's degree and I, now I'm gonna be in Vietnam. Okay. So he called, he went to the Coast Guard, he went to the Air Force and all of 'em were four, six years Committment. The Marine Corps was the best. I didn't have to go four years, I could go six months active duty, which I did.

And then,

Craig Robertson: oh, I didn't realize that. 'cause

Coach Ron Polk: yeah, six more then. Then weekend war, every weekend you gotta go Saturday and Sunday, wherever you're living to a marine base. Then on the summer you had to go two weeks of active duty. 'cause you had to learn everything, machine guns and everything. But I was what they, [00:21:00] my, my MOS which was my military job, was basically office.

But you still have to learn everything. 'cause office work is still cool.

Craig Robertson: So you did that after grad school?

Coach Ron Polk: Yeah, because to get outta the Vietnam War.

Craig Robertson: I get it, but I guess I've never really heard you talk about your military.

Coach Ron Polk: Yeah, anyway, so I'm a, so I went six years and it was really tough 'cause I was the head coach of Georgia Southern and I had to do weekend duties.

And thankfully Augusta unit in Augusta, Georgia allowed me to come on Tuesday, Wednesdays. And that's another story. But anyway so I get out. No, I, before I went in, I had a four months before I reported, I was a substitute teacher on in the Maryville. Phoenix Union District. So I'd go to one school and teach classes and maybe sometime a week.

And I was just to make money. So then I go to Marine Corps and come out and all of a sudden Frank Sanson must have been talking to Bob Lee, the head coach at New Mexico, and Bob was looking, he had a graduate assistantship open, and Frank [00:22:00] recommended me, and this was to get a doctorate degree.

So now I go to Albuquerque, New Mexico after I get out and I'm with Bob Lee for a whole year teaching classes again to make the money stipend and helping with the baseball team. And he was, he only had one other assistant. So I got to start working with the players a little bit since he knew I was at Arizona.

So I'm working with my doctorate and I, it is gonna be a two year thing. And all of a sudden I don't know, Charlie Green, who was at Miami-Dade South Community College, just started the baseball program. The year before his assistant left, he started calling around to coaches asking, do you have a young guy that might be interested in coming to Miami-Dade and helping me out teaching classes for $7,200 a year?

Okay, so I guess, and then, so he called he through the ale, bill Stokes called me the ad and then said, no interview at all. Said, yeah, you've been highly recommended. So I became the [00:23:00] assistant coach of Miami Dade teaching five classes and, service classes just like before. But now I'm really coach third base coach and Charlie Green let me do a lot of things.

So I thought I'd be there for a long time. Three years Georgia Southern called, they, they just went from D two to D one. And the coach, bill Spieth there was struggling and they were losing, they were at like 19 and 35 the year before, but now they're going D one 'cause they basketball program going D one.

So they flew me up to Georgia, Southern Savannah Airport, looked at facility. It was atrocious. Just, atrocious. Dugouts didn't even have roofs on 'em. Press box was on a hill. No, no chair backs. The field was not well taken. I almost turned around, went back. 'cause I, Miami Dade was a nice situation for me.

Craig Robertson: Sure.

Coach Ron Polk: I was 27 at the time. I said, what the heck? You know what the heck? I. Now I had to teach five classes. I had no assistant

Craig Robertson: five classes,

Coach Ron Polk: take care of the field. And so I said this is gonna take a lot of [00:24:00] work. But when I got off the plane in Tucson I said to myself, I like this.

I think this is what I wanna be as a baseball coach. I thought maybe high school. And then I said maybe I can go at an even higher level. And I said, but if I'm gonna do this, I didn't play pro ball. We got cut from a junior college baseball team. I'm gonna have to do something different than other people.

I'm gonna have to write letters, I'm gonna have to make phone calls. I gotta go to clinics. I gotta work camps. I gotta get known. And so that work ethic really started then saying, Hey, if this is what I'm gonna do, if God has loved me in this direction, and I tell the high school kids all the time, I decided I, if I'm gonna be a coach, I wanna be, I wanna separate myself.

I wanna be called the coach, not a coach. Big difference between a thought.

Craig Robertson: Yeah.

Coach Ron Polk: Thus son, us, son the brother, us, our brother. And my work ethic started then. And so I go to Georgia Southern and I looked at the schedule. We gotta play Florida State six times, three in Tallahassee, three in Statesboro.

[00:25:00] We had to play Clemson six times. Three there. Three in our place. We had to play Georgia Tech. We just went into division two. I inherited a ball club that had no no statistics at all. So I decided to take the job. I think it was July. I. And I had no time to recruit, so I called some junior colleges 'cause I'm familiar with the coaches down there,

Craig Robertson: right?

Coach Ron Polk: I got every available junior college player that nobody else wanted and brought 'em up My second year we go to the College World Series.

Craig Robertson: Now I read that you had. Nine married players on that early team,

Coach Ron Polk: 19 73, 9 married players, which is unheard of in my house, which I have tours all the time. There's a picture of the nine boys with their wives around the mound.

That was our media guide.

Craig Robertson: And these were all JUCO players that you recruited

Coach Ron Polk: Most of were juco players, older guys. And so I brought 'em up there. And then some of them were made really good players, but just got passed over.

Craig Robertson: You probably weren't that much older than a lot of those players.

Coach Ron Polk: No. In fact when I was at Arizona, half the team was older than I was.

Craig Robertson: I bet. [00:26:00]

Coach Ron Polk: And so I'm the third base coach at the age of, I think I just turned 22 that, that spring, because that was spring.

Craig Robertson: How did that opportunity influence what you would go on to do in the future? Because you held open tryouts, you gave a lot of guys, myself included, opportunity.

Coach Ron Polk: That was Craig, that's an interesting story.

When I got cuffed from the junior college I didn't think I had a fair shot. A lot of players, a lot of good players, but I said, if I ever get coaching, I'm gonna probably make sure that no kid ever gets denied an opportunity to play. And if he doesn't feel like he got a fair chance, bring him back again.

And if you remember in our walk-on tryouts, if he didn't have. Think you had a fair shot. Come on back in, I'll bring you out again.

Craig Robertson: That's right.

Coach Ron Polk: Again. Again. And I think that goes back to me being cut from Phoenix Junior College.

Craig Robertson: You would have, you'd have a hundred guys come out.

Coach Ron Polk: They don't even have walk-ons anymore.

There's no more walk-on tryouts in college baseball at our level anymore. And now next year with a 34 roster restriction. But that's another story.

Craig Robertson: Did you continue that throughout your coaching career? The open tryouts?

Coach Ron Polk: Yeah. Georgia Southern, we just stuck whatever we [00:27:00] had.

Craig Robertson: Sure.

Coach Ron Polk: But everywhere I've been a good example, Georgia Southern, John Tudor, who became the runner up to the s Young Award at St. Louis Cardinals walked on for me at Georgia Southern from a junior college up in Massachusetts. Just picked us up. 'cause we, that was after we went to the College World Series.

He said, that's an upcoming program. I want to go to smallest school. And he just shows up in my office, John Tudor here, I'm just want to try out. And he was good. Runner up to the side to walk on Nowadays, they'd say, Hey, get up. We got the roster set. No.

Kelly Engelmann: Welcome to your Wellness Reset with Kelly Engelman. Let's dive into the fascinating world of gut help and why it's crucial for your overall wellbeing. Did you know that your gut is often referred to as your second brain? That's right. A healthy gut plays a vital role in your physical and your mental health.

When your gut is happy, it can improve your digestion, enhance your immune function, and even positively influence [00:28:00] your mood. So how can we support our gut help? Personalized nutrition is key by tailoring your diet to include whole foods, particularly rich in fiber, fresh fruits and vegetables. You can create a nourishing environment for your gut and your gut microbiome.

Think of foods like berries, leafy greens, legumes. Each bite is a step toward a healthier gut. Let's not forget about fermented foods. Incorporate items like plant-based yogurt, kimchi, sauerkraut, kombucha. These can introduce

beneficial probiotics to your gut. These friendly bacteria help maintain a diverse gut flora, which is essential for optimal digestion and immune support.

A diverse gut microbiome can also play a role in regulating your mood. Studies have shown a strong connection between gut health and mental wellbeing, suggesting that what you eat can directly impact how you feel. So as you consider your diet, think about how you can personalize it to include foods that nourish your gut.

By doing so, you're not just investing in your digestion, you're investing [00:29:00] in your overall health and happiness. Remember, small changes can lead to significant improvements. Start today by adding a few more fermented options to your meals. Watch how your gut. And your body respond. For more information, visit us online@enhancedwellness.com or give us a call, 6 0 1 3 6 4 1 1 3 2.

Craig Robertson: Coach you were, you said that you weren't highly recruited. You got cut from a team that you had the opportunity at Grand Canyon. Then you got another opportunity at Arizona. Then you got another opportunity.

Coach Ron Polk: The breaks, you just want, need a break. I tell kids all the time, once you get that break a job.

Take advantage of it because you may never get that break again.

Craig Robertson: And that, but that was what motivated you to work harder than every Everybody else.

Coach Ron Polk: I had to so when I'm speaking at all these banquets, I make sure that the resume is spelled out to these kids. 'cause I want them to look at me and said, God, he is only five, seven and a half.

He doesn't look that like a coach. Kinda like Lou Holtz,

Craig Robertson: sure. [00:30:00]

Coach Ron Polk: And that gets their attention. And then I said, no, how do I do this? Basically I eliminated all distractions. Now these kids today have a lot of distractions.

Craig Robertson: Tons of distractions.

Coach Ron Polk: I gave up golf, gave up fishing, gave whatever.

I just worked my butt off. So I'm at Georgia Southern for four years and

Craig Robertson: talk about what that looked like, coach the day in and day out of building that program.

Coach Ron Polk: It was just a little exhaustion, basically trying to get people to come out, start a radio network, the first one ever in college, baseball home and away Got Diamond girls to take care of the field and that, which I carried to Mississippi State.

'cause we didn't have any field maintenance then. Now we got six or seven guys taking Cor duty, noble Field. But I had to have a broken bat day, broken ball day, all kinds of, had to speak to the civic clubs and just getting people, I sold season tickets for $10, which you got a seat, I had chair backs made up right behind home plate.

And you get for $10, you get a season ticket, you get a [00:31:00] newsletter from me. And then I started a host family program, which was never done before where host families would've a boy have over a house for Homecooked meal just to get the people, the community involved. And all of a sudden the crowds got bigger and bigger for a terrible stadium.

Craig Robertson: What gave you the insight to do that? Because obviously

Coach Ron Polk: I had to, I just wanted, I'm a D one program and here's the deal. We go to Omaha College, Georgia Southern's at Omaha, just two years into being a D one. And you get to Omaha and I've been there many times with nine different teams. You have a meeting before the World Series starts with the pars, the NCAA officials all going over tickets and allocations, parking permits, everything.

And the last thing on the agenda was uniform first night. There's eight teams in Omaha and where the eight seat playing Texas number one seat, Georgia Southern. So they go around the table and basically it's white uniforms for the home and dark. Uniforms for the visitor. [00:32:00] It's amazing. And I was petrified 'cause I saw the last thing on the schedule was uniform and I said We only got one city uniforms.

So they get to me. I said, guys, listen I'm sorry. And Texas Cliff Gus is right next to Texas. I, we just got white. And they all looked at me like, what's he doing here? We even had to raise money so we could get to Omaha.

Craig Robertson: Sure.

Coach Ron Polk: I, we were white and we were home field with the visiting team and we made him wear burnt orange.

Craig Robertson: That's awesome.

Coach Ron Polk: A lot of stories about that. But then it's amazing. Another thing happened four years and our dugouts were half. And roof and rain. The kids had to have umbrellas. Not a good stadium. And I started trying to raise money to build a j Clement stadium. J was a long-term coach, who was my ad, and went to the Home Builders Association, went to the president and said, yeah, it was, we'll start raising money.

All of a sudden during my fourth year, we're playing very well. [00:33:00] I, I was teaching classes. I finally had an assistant coach full-time, but he had to teach classes too. Had graduate assistants too. So I had enough people, but all of a sudden I decided, I'm killing myself. I'm teaching five classes.

I've got a bad stadium. It's hard to recruit, and I've done everything I can to build this program, get to the World Series. I'm, I announced my retirement midway through the season on my radio show, but I still stayed for the whole season. I said, Hey, all I've asked for the university is just give us a dugout with a roof on it.

Okay. And they couldn't do that. I've done my job.

Craig Robertson: Were you vocal about that back then?

Coach Ron Polk: Oh yeah.

Craig Robertson: I bet

Coach Ron Polk: basically, I mean I had to, we had to take care of the field.

Craig Robertson: Sure.

Coach Ron Polk: We had slats in the outfield fence, a manual scoreboard, batting cage. Terrible. On the field, right? On the right field line.

Locker room was a half a mile away. Nothing says top class, but a lot of programs didn't have good fields at that time too. So it's amazing what's [00:34:00] happened. Ron Fraser, who I've known forever at University of Miami, coach when I was down there, got pick good friends and he knew I was now gonna be retired.

He fired his assistant coach to bring me down to University of Miami.

Craig Robertson: Oh, great.

Coach Ron Polk: Now, in the interim, Georgia Southern. Then I was coaching, went to two NCAA regionals. Then you didn't have to be a whole school. And two times we got sent to Starkville Mississippi State. We won in 73. We came in second in 74, stayed in the athletic dorm MacArthur.

Now it's not.

Craig Robertson: Oh, really?

Coach Ron Polk: Oh yeah. We ate there

Craig Robertson: back then in 74. That's the year I was born, by the way, coach.

Coach Ron Polk: Yeah. So anyway, the Charlie Shire met me and all the people and

Craig Robertson: you and your players, y'all stayed in the athletic dorm of MacArthur. Oh yeah. Really?

Coach Ron Polk: Yeah. All the teams stayed there really to save everybody's trying to save money.

Craig Robertson: Sure.

Coach Ron Polk: So basically so I went to Miami. And Ron Fraser basic,

Craig Robertson: that was 76, 75,

Coach Ron Polk: 70 my first year at 75, the fall [00:35:00] of 75 on man era at Miami. And I've been to Miami before Miami Dade for three years and bad field and all that. But Fraser was a motivational guy and he was trying to draw crowds and he was on the phone all the time.

I basically ran the fall program. He was there occasionally, but I did basically fall and I'm still only 31 at the time now. And another break, all of a sudden Jimmy Bragan was the head baseball coach at Mississippi State, replaced Paul Gregory and Paul Graham not Paul Graham.

Alex gr, longtime Mississippi State Great, became the manager of the Milwaukee Brewers, and he wanted Jimmy Bragan to be his third base coach. Now, this was in November of Jimmy's second year where they had disaster bad teams. The locker room was in the, a dungeon underneath the football stadium. Humphrey Coliseum was being built at that time, and they asked me to come up and talk and they offered me the job on the [00:36:00] phone because they've met me.

I've been at Starkville two times,

Craig Robertson: right? Sure.

Coach Ron Polk: So if I hadn't gone to Starkville for the regional, they would've not known who Ron PO is. They might've. And I debated because it's amazing. Ron Fraser was offered an opportunity to be an assistant general manager of Chicago White Sox. He was thinking about taking it.

So Pete Elliot, the AD at the time at Miami, called me in 'cause he had heard that Mississippi State's trying to. To get me to come up. He said, Ron, don't take that job. 'cause if Fraser goes to Chicago, you're gonna be the next head baseball coach in Miami. So I went into Fraser and said, Fraser, you gotta pull the trigger here.

I can't hold Mississippi State off. I'm coming in midyear. Inherited ball clip. I looked at the stats the year before and there two catchers had to combine two rbis. Wow. I'm inheriting a bad ball club like I did at Georgia Southern. Alright. And I did at Georgia eventually when that happened, that's another story.

So anyway they bring me up there and I decided to take the job in FRAs, the state of Miami. [00:37:00] Alright. And then skip Burman, who was a good high school. Coached in the air and took my job and he became the coach at LSU. Very famous. And so he got his,

Craig Robertson: I guess I did not realize that he came,

Coach Ron Polk: he got his break when I didn't take the job. See, I told Skip, I said, skip, if I get the Miami job, you're gonna be my assistant. So I told Phrase when I decided to go to Mississippi State, get Skip, and he knew Skip. So his career just skyrocketed also. So Mississippi Stadium,

Craig Robertson: what was it like when you got there, coach?

Coach Ron Polk: At where?

Craig Robertson: At Mississippi State.

Coach Ron Polk: It was a bad ballpark, no, no restrooms. No bathrooms, no concession stand, no chair back seats.

Craig Robertson: I wanna show you a few pictures that I think I told you that my dad was an electrician who actually put the, helped put the lights on the field at duty Noble Field.

Coach Ron Polk: That's one, one thing we had that no, very few had.

Craig Robertson: What year was that coach? That the lights went on the field, you remember?

Coach Ron Polk: I don't know. It was there when I got there.

Craig Robertson: Oh, they were there when you got there, okay. When? Yeah. And that it was one of the, one of the few

Coach Ron Polk: that had lights. .

Craig Robertson: The only stadium in the SEC that had lights.

Coach Ron Polk: Yeah, our state was bad, but everybody, Alabamas was [00:38:00] bad.

Auburns bad. I remember Jim Ellis having to do the broadcast at Tuscaloosa on the top row of the bleachers. In the Vanderbilt, on the dugout roof. That's what. It was, but we had three different teams from that stadium, went to Omaha, but I had that stadium, bad stadium for 11 years and we started winning and all of a

sudden then over the left field was a, the South Farm cows were watching us play.

Craig Robertson: Yeah. Talk about, describe that for someone who might not have ever seen any of the old pictures when you stepped out onto Duty Noble Field in 1976, what did it look like?

Coach Ron Polk: To me it was better than what I had in Georgia Southern at the time. Now JI Clemens stadium's now up, I've spoken to Georgia Southern three different times, and it's a beautiful, but anyway, you know this, that's all we didn't have any money for building a new stadium and we haven't shown anybody anything, but we started winning, but over the left field fence was the south farm, and cows were, cows were right on our fence line and they'd [00:39:00] be dodging home run balls.

They didn't know what the white ball was, but all of sudden we started winning the lines. Because there was no reserve seats. So the line for a big game goes half a mile. And so after a while after we started winning and people decided I don't wanna stand in a line. There's no reserve seats, so I'm gonna take my pickup truck and go in the outfield.

It's an open area except in center where the trees were in right field. So that's where the left field lounge started. They started coming in there and watch the game and then go home. But then all of a sudden, many of 'em decided I like my spot. And so I'm just gonna leave my vehicle here and get somebody to take me home.

And then it, it got bigger and bigger. So eventually it got three levels deep. They made me take the f the trees down in the center field in the right field so they can go from pole to pole. So it's called the left field lounge, but then it became pole to pole. Had no bathrooms out there. We had to build a bathroom 'cause the people were urinating in our [00:40:00] urinating our trees.

They were killing our trees. And so that's how the outfield thing lasts. And all of a sudden, ESPN started doing a game of the week and it's amazing story that they were coming to our place almost every other game because they wanted to go. Places where there's crowds and there weren't a lot of places that had big crowds in college baseball then.

And we fed 'em, from the outfield and and all of a sudden we became somewhat famous for our left field lounge and the crowds that we had. So anyway, we're

winning, going to Omaha regionals, hosting regionals, and having a lot of success. And I'm traveling the country speaking all the time.

'cause I just wrote my book.

Craig Robertson: And this was written back in the late seventies, right?

Coach Ron Polk: The first one is 78. That's the third different edition.

Craig Robertson: Okay.

Coach Ron Polk: The first one was done by typewriter. With a ruler for the basis.

Craig Robertson: You typed it by hand.

Coach Ron Polk: That's another story in itself. In fact, I just spoke at the library at Starkville and I told 'em the story of that and the people said, that's an amazing story.

We don't have time to go in. How that developed, I'm the publisher. I was selling them billing and booking them, [00:41:00] wrote the exams for the professors. It became the number one baseball book for coaching baseball test.

Craig Robertson: But right out of the gate you typed this thing behind,

Coach Ron Polk: typed it up. Typed it up

Craig Robertson: because you typed now you had a little typewriter.

And that's what

Coach Ron Polk: I still have eight typewriters. I don't have

Craig Robertson: eight typewriters.

Coach Ron Polk: No, I have no email. No, no tech at all. I've got 22,000 Twitter follows. I don't even know how to get on Twitter.

Craig Robertson: You got GPS. You found us today.

Coach Ron Polk: I found that only I speak so much. Like I, I speak in Illinois every year, eight or nine different schools back to back to back.

'cause they don't charge anybody anything to speak.

Craig Robertson: Yes sir.

Coach Ron Polk: And if I don't have that, I can't. I can't. I used to use a map and it's tough.

Craig Robertson: Yeah, me too.

Coach Ron Polk: So basically I was traveling and selling books outta my car and all of a sudden it became the number one textbook on baseball. So I got EPSCO median to re redo it and put a coach in the cover.

But I'm, I've been the publisher that book ever since. And it still sells.

Craig Robertson: Coach, where did this work ethic come from? Because what I'm hearing about everything that you did all the way up to landing the job at Mississippi [00:42:00] State, which was, the breakthrough part of your career at least it seems from my perspective, was just built on super hard work and tenacity on your part.

Where'd that come from? What, how was that model for you think?

Coach Ron Polk: Because when I came back from Tucson, I didn't know what I was gonna do, and I just said this I was coached in third base in Omaha, and I said, that was fun. I think I might wanna do that. But I thought eventually I'd just be a high school coach or something. I tried, in fact, I wrote some job descriptions to people. Never got a bite. But I think that from that point in time, I said, again, I didn't play pro ball. I don't have a name at all. I just got to outwork everybody else in recruiting and but everything I've done is not done with any, other than the typewriter and my phone, I still have a flip top phone. I love it. No distractions. If I had distractions like these kids have now, I couldn't even begin to do what I do. What I do with a, as you get a Christmas card, a birthday card anniversary card every year, handwritten.

I do that for A lot. Almost.

Craig Robertson: I know you do

Coach Ron Polk: a lot. It's all done by hand. All in three by five [00:43:00] cards. And people are amazed when they take a tour of my house and see how the operation goes

Craig Robertson: on three by five cards.

Coach Ron Polk: Rolodex type of things,

Craig Robertson: right? Yeah, sure. Yeah.

Coach Ron Polk: And so they see my typewriter. I said, that's what I do. I type letters. I coach summer ball still, and I write five or six letters a day to minor league players who played SEC ball. 'cause nobody else does that. I've been doing that all my life. And hot idiot yet, just got to be organized. And I started doing that and I said I can't stop now.

So anyway then I go 22 years of Mississippi State. I'm former president of all the coaches. That's when the NCAA was restricting our number of scholarships. We can give out 11.7. I had seven rules that no other sport had to deal with. Like I was the lead attack dog in the ncaa.

Craig Robertson: I've heard you say about, I've, I heard you talk about that in some interviews.

I watched in preparation for this, what type of restrictive rules do they have on baseball that other sports didn't have?

Coach Ron Polk: When I came in the SCC, now that in Mississippi State there was 12 rules, the SEC had, so the [00:44:00] SEC had not been to Oma except maybe we went once. I think an ole miss did non-competitive.

'cause you couldn't do this. You couldn't ize. Limited practice. They had 12 rules at other schools across the country. Arizona State, didn't have to follow recruiting rules, et cetera. I called 'em the dirty dozens. So I went on the attack and I got, some presidents upset about me because I was speaking out.

Don't like to be hearing from a baseball coach, but we got 'em all changed. I got 'em all changed. So when the NCAA restricted 11.7 and women's crew gets 20 and women's softball get more than us yet, we're the second largest producer of revenue for NCAA championships in regional supers. And now College World Series had roster restrictions.

We had seven different type of restrictions, recruiting, et cetera, than other schools. Didn't have the SEC, we're trying to compete with the A CC, the big 12, big 10, big West out the west coast. So I won the attack and I. Everybody was supporting me, but I, letter writing, [00:45:00] had kids write letters. In addition, I'm writing I'm boxing books every night.

I'm the publisher, the playbook, I'm speaking everywhere. Recruiting camps. We used to have, we have a camp, school, summer camps and winter camps. Hundreds of thousands having to put that together. So all of a sudden I'm working, my butt off. We had to handle the Sky Suite program, the Diamond Girl program, the academics travel.

Hotels, everything. And now, we got 11 full-time people in our baseball office. I kid 'em all the time. You guys got it made?

Craig Robertson: Yeah. Coach. What, or take us back to, let's say 1980. It's the baseball season an average Tuesday. What did your day look like on an average Tuesday in the height of your career?

Coach Ron Polk: It depends if we have recruit visits, et cetera, and people coming by the office, of course we had, I had a secretary and phones, then phones would be ringing off the hook. My mail every day was, stack high, answered every letter before I left the office if I was in town. I always told our coaches, you return every phone call before the day's over [00:46:00] and you answer every letter.

And I think that's important. And so I had some rules in regard to that. But a normal day is basically, putting a lineup together. And

Craig Robertson: that happens at what time? What time do you get rolling in the morning?

Coach Ron Polk: What I try to do if football, normally I didn't leave the office if I'm in town in the fall and spring around midnight and then get back around seven in the morning.

Yeah. Trying to, get at least six and a half hours sleep. But that's how we built the program. Hard work. Good kids had rules and regulations other people might not have gone.

Craig Robertson: Talk about a little bit about that coach because

Coach Ron Polk: Daily, daily haircuts.

Craig Robertson: Yeah. Back in the day, you were very careful about making sure your players had a good sha

Coach Ron Polk: Yeah.

Craig Robertson: And a good haircut. You didn't want the haircut coming out.

Coach Ron Polk: I, I, with the baseball team now and I kid all these guys, you couldn't play for me.

Craig Robertson: No

Coach Ron Polk: Paula shoes. All shoes.

Craig Robertson: Yeah. Yes, sir.

Coach Ron Polk: That I wanted to, that's how we built the program is people wanted to see nice looking all American looking players.

Who played good. And that was, and they followed it, the kids followed it.

Craig Robertson: Coach, I don't think, I. That I have [00:47:00] fully realized how much El, I mean you had to get your team ready to play and get them trained, but there was so much else from the books to the Diamond girls to the field to raising money and pregame meals to facilities host families.

Coach Ron Polk: Yeah, we had to get, we wanted to get big Dugout club going to help raise the money. 'cause I still had to raise money too. Sure. Because we didn't have that luxury. They do now.

Craig Robertson: You did that right out of the gate in, in Georgia Southern.

Coach Ron Polk: We had to build the Pal Mele Center. We had to build a baseball office.

I just raised a million and a half dollars for the new weight room we have now, which is the number one in the country. So the baseball coach at Mississippi State liked me because I provided them the pal meson of their office in the weight room. And but basically the work ethic started long, long time ago when

I felt like, Hey, I, I'm just, set five foot seven and nobody knows who I am. I get this break and I'm gonna take advantage of it. And then all of a sudden we started winning. And then after 22 years, I had enough of the ncaa, in fact, the American Baseball Coach Association, which [00:48:00] represents all amateur coaches, offered me the job to be the executive director of the associate to fight the ncaa.

But I have to move to Omaha where their office was. And I took it. This is 1991, and then everyone said, you're gonna die in that. 'cause you're gonna be fighting the ncaa, they're gonna win. You won't last. And so I decided to state remained, but by nine, let's say.

Craig Robertson: Oh, so you were gonna leave Mississippi State in the early nineties?

I didn't that,

Coach Ron Polk: yeah. 22 years. And then we were coming back from Omar and I resigned the next day. And because I was just tired of fighting the NCAA on behalf of college baseball. And everybody else was supportive, but I wasn't getting much help from the other coaches. And I understood they were all in one year contracts.

They said they can't, they always said, I can't say what you say. I can, my president will fire me. My ad would fire me. I had the support of the presidents and adsd. 'cause they

Craig Robertson: you're pretty bold too though.

Coach Ron Polk: Very bold. Yeah. I called NCAA a lot of bad names. Not. [00:49:00] Bad language, just nerds and everything, whatever, because there are, basically NCAA's college president's not a president of Mississippi State now, who's a great guy.

Craig Robertson: Did I hear you call him nerds? Is that what you said, coach?

Coach Ron Polk: I called the executive director of Miles Brown one time on my press conference. Left wing politically correct nerd because he was a sociology major. He never played sports in his life and he's running the ncaa and his wife was director of gender studies in Indiana, and who I'm battling with.

Give me a break. So anyway, I, I went full-time with USA, in, in interim, I did more tours with the USA national team than any coach in history. Seven. Two Olympics gone for five and a half months chasing phone calls and messages. And I was head coach twice with the USA team in the interim doing this and everything else.

And so people always say, how do you do it all? I didn't have any distractions. Didn't have a wife, didn't have any kids. Didn't have I flipped off phone. Now it's an iPhone, but I just outworked everybody.

Craig Robertson: [00:50:00] Coach. That's definitely true. And that, I was gonna ask you about that.

And I don't think a lot of people know that, that you were never married and didn't, now you have hundreds and hundreds of son.

Coach Ron Polk: Opportunities, when I was young, I would not wanna subject any lady to what my schedule was. You know what I mean?

Craig Robertson: I can understand.

Coach Ron Polk: It's not like I love baseball that much.

I like baseball. When I retired the first time, I retired the second time. Anyway, so I retired The first time I got an office in a Bulldog club. I raised money for the Sky Suites in the 1970s stadium. Added 500 more seats on both sides. Had a student section. Now the students have to stand 'cause the new stadium doesn't have a section for the students.

So then this is amazing story. I'm enjoying what I'm doing and Pockman, my handpick successor is running the program. And I go to Vince Dooley, the ad former football coach fired a good friend Robert Sapp. And he asked Chris Lakers, his number one guy who do, he, he is a football guy.

He didn't know. He met me a couple times. And when I was at Georgia Southern, Chris Lakel said, [00:51:00] why don't you call Ron po? He might be interested in coming to Georgia for six years. They were in last place in the SEC. Bad grades, bad attitudes, bad field. Everything. Okay. And they were building a new field.

Anyway, so he, Chris has got me a commercial flight, met Chris there, went to Vince D's office, I'm retired now at Bulldog Club. Sit down at his desk and he

looked at me and very southern gentleman and very, in fact, he just passed away unfortunately, a couple years ago. And he looked at me and said what will it take to get you here?

I said you mean you're offering me the job? He said, yeah, why do you think I brought you here? I thought you brought me here to get my advice about who to get the job, because I know everybody. He said, no, we want you to be Coach Georgia. And I said. You mean money? He said, yeah, he was paying SAP 75,000 at the time.

I said if I take this job I'm only gonna be here four or five years. I'm gonna keep my house [00:52:00] in Starkville. The stadium's named after me. I'm probably end up going back. I'll give you four or five really good years. I can't guarantee anything after. But he said, I gotta give you more than Robin. I said gimme 76,000.

Gimme a, and he told the press conference. I still remember, never did I negotiate with a coach. That money was not a factor. Money wasn't a factor. I was drawing my pension plan also, so I was double dipping a little bit. So I go two years there. Guess what? Second year College World Series. Then Pat McMahon ended up going to Florida.

They wanted me to come back to Mississippi State. Took me a while 'cause I had the Hope Scholarship free tuition and books for in-state kids that helped 11 point a lot. It was a gold mine. Took me three and a half days. They convinced me Larry Templeton and Dr. Patera flew me back in the private plane and trying to re-recruit me back to Mississippi State.

And finally I decided, hey, that's my home. And so when seven more years, I'm still dealing with NCAA issues. And I retired again. [00:53:00] First time I retired, the players gave me this $18,000 Rolex second.

Craig Robertson: Beautiful.

Coach Ron Polk: Second time I retired, the Alumni Association drove a car in the field. I should have come back for another third to turn and got a house.

So then now I'm retired again. And Brian Schu was one of my assistant coaches, the head coach of Birmingham at the University of a Arizona in Birmingham said. What will it take for you to come over and be my volunteer coach? I said, yeah. So I go over there 12 years. I didn't charge 'em anything and paid for my apartment.

Drove back from Starkville to Mississippi State every Birmingham to Starkville every Sunday night and back on Monday. 'cause I was building my new home. I. And so for 12 years then I started coaching summer baseball, nine years in the Cape Cod, now three in the Prospect League. 'cause I still enjoy the coaching of the top after doing seven tours on the national team and being the cape where all these high, I love working with the best.

Sure. And so now the prospect league is not the best, but I get the coach there. [00:54:00] The cape has changed a lot because of different things that draft being moved back and roster manipulation. So then basically 12 and then John Cohen, who I played for me the athletic director when I retired Brian Schu retired announced the retirement and I told him everybody he's not gonna be there.

I'm coming. Back home. And then John Cohen asked me to be a special assistant of the athletic director and I said, yeah, I'd be happy to come back. I have nothing to do, but I'm, if you, if I do something, then I'm not gonna charge you anything. 'cause he said, why wouldn't you charge us? He said, because I like to coach every summer.

I'm gone all summer. Then they wanted me to do the radio too. Then I'll be gone in the spring and on January, February I'm booked. Solid speaking. Various high school, junior college, college, preseasons, dentist, baseball clinics, alumni, bulldog Club, just about every day. I'm speaking somewhere, so I basically am special assistant in the ad for nothing.

LaJesca Woodward: My name is Loges Woodard [00:55:00] realtor with Keller Williams Realty. Having spent nine years in the real estate industry, bringing experience in over 130 transactions, including one unique niche of divorce case transactions. To hone my skill in handling such sensitive cases, I've obtained the accreditation of certified divorce real estate expert, also known as CDRE.

This allows me to specialize in divorce cases and listings within family law. No matter what's going on in the market, divorce is happening daily. As A-C-D-R-E, I can bridge the gap between real estate and family law as the expert in helping resolve challenging cases. I serve as a neutral, unbiased agent using my training and communications.

Skills to manage the conflict and different personalities. In divorce cases, I'm able to provide clients with a resource for valuable real estate information and research. I have a passion for helping people. It's emotional to buy real

[00:56:00] estate and it's extra emotional when people are going through a divorce.

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Craig Robertson: Hey everybody. This is Craig Robertson and I want to take a moment to thank you for listening to the Robertson Easterling podcast. We know if you're tuning in, you might be looking for information, insight, and potentially a little encouragement as you navigate a difficult season in life. Thank you for investing this time with us.

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coach. What do you want when people hear about your life and your story? What do you [00:58:00] want young people to learn about your legacy and life?

Coach Ron Polk: That's why I do a lot of speaking. 'cause I want these high school kids, they hear examples of people that have carved out a legacy, let's say. And my legacy is basically a guy that got cut from a baseball team didn't play pro ball.

And how did I do all that? That's why I want the people who introduced me. I'm not doing it self-serving. It's a two page resume. I've got a statue now. I got this,

Craig Robertson: I've seen that. I've seen in cuffs.

Coach Ron Polk: I get cigar shirts, I get cigar caps. How did he do that? I tell 'em the story and they're looking at me like, wow, you guys can do the same thing.

You might be a kid right now listening to me and you're saying I'm not very smart. I'm not very handsome, not very tall. I don't have a lot of money. And you heard this a lot. You can be anything you can want to be, if you work your hard, hard at eliminate distractions. These kids have so many distractions now.

They can't even begin to do what I did. But I, we didn't have iPhone when I was growing up. We didn't have internet, we didn't have cell phone, [00:59:00] we had nothing. And basically that is what I basically, and all the parents will come up to me after and say, I'm glad you're here. My boy needed to hear that.

Craig Robertson: Yeah.

Coach, there, there are so many men who have been shepherded by you. What is it that. That you want people to remember about you the most 20, 30 years when you're gone?

Coach Ron Polk: They have the statue there looking at me.

Craig Robertson: I've seen it coach. And it's tall too. It's bigger. It's,

Coach Ron Polk: I made feet tall. It's, yeah, I know it's an honor.

The stadium's named out to me. I've been blessed and I've given a lot of my life to doing that. And so it's been blessing. But when I pass away all my house, my land, my furniture. The boat dock that I'm gonna build is gonna go to the university. My will. So basically, thank you.

Mississippi State provide me opportunity. Yes, I provided you a great baseball situation. We got two new fields built. 90 87, and then we built the Palace. Now full house, sold out for the next seven years. Waiting list for everything [01:00:00] like Florida was in this weekend. And Kevin O'Sullivan a good friend of mine they only have two stations in the network.

We got 26 stations. He said he told his players before they got on the plane to come here. This would be the best environment by far that you've ever played in your life. The music, the everything. We have so many people that make that go that that makes me feel good that everyone says, you started, that's why they call me the godfather of the SEC, which I don't feel I am a godfather.

Craig Robertson: Yeah. I've heard father in God. I like Godfather a little bit. Coach.

Coach Ron Polk: I feel like a great godfather sometimes. Because I'm 81 now going in 82, I'm still coaching summer ball, still working for the university. I'm not charging, I still put a full days in. I go the, when I'm in town, I go to the office every day.

Yeah,

Craig Robertson: that's right.

Coach Ron Polk: Because I have a lot of phone calls and a lot of things I gotta do. And I, I shake a lot of hands, sign a lot of autographs, and so I've been blessed. And so what they think of me when I pass away is, Hey, if there's a statue stadium's named after me, God bless 'em.

Craig Robertson: Coach, who are the men in [01:01:00] your life that have shaped who you are?

Coach Ron Polk: Really the coaches of, Frank Sanon, Bob Lee, Charlie Green. Charlie Green blessed me with a Naman as his first son, his God son, who's now the bench coach from Milwaukee Brewers. So I've been around a lot of baseball people on the USA team with Skip Berman and all the ones, 'cause I do things a little different than others in regard to what the playbook, the Player Coach evaluation fundamental drill series.

Everybody is picked up on it. And so the people will say, Hey, this guy didn't invent college baseball, but the book, and it's all the speaking engagements he'd done in clinics. He's the guy that we. We look to if we need some information about what we need to do as a baseball program.

Craig Robertson: You systematized it for sure.

Coach Ron Polk: Oh yeah,

Craig Robertson: that's what I experienced from this.

Coach Ron Polk: Yeah. And there's no books out all, they're all videos. Now it's only book left and we're still selling. I don't sell individual copies. I have two people up in Nashville do that, but I bring 'em with me when I speak and I tell 'em, Hey, it's a $40 B for you kids.

It's [01:02:00] $20. I have to pre autograph about a thousand before I go on the road. Best wishes is always Ron Po. So all I gotta do is put the boy's name on the back, but get 'em out the door.

Craig Robertson: Yes sir.

Coach Ron Polk: I just charge 'em 20 bucks.

Craig Robertson: If you could go back and talk to Ron Polk in 1976 when he was taking on the assignment at Mississippi State what would you tell him?

Coach Ron Polk: You got a lot of work to you. Got a lot of work at, but at Georgia Southern was a lot of work. Mississippi State, SEC, a lot of work. Geo Georgia. A lot of work.

Craig Robertson: C coach, you see me like you've done it with a lot of joy though. It,

Coach Ron Polk: yeah. I don't know if you remember, but you, I don't think the players would never know after a game if we won or lost.

I kept an even keel..

Craig Robertson: I do remember that coach. I can remember telling because, I was fortunate to be on your team. I wouldn't call myself a player because I didn't get on the field very much, but I remember how business, like it was win or loss. You went to shake hands, you shook hands. You went and did the radio show and would talk about it.

Practice the next day. Yeah. It's very business-like.

Coach Ron Polk: Yeah. Now, of course coaches make a lot more [01:03:00] money than I made, so they gotta, they probably gotta do a few more different

things than I did, but I just felt like baseball is my profession. I retired three different times and so I could give it up.

I could give it up right now and not miss it. It keeps me busy. That's the thing, being around these kids, like the Mississippi State team, I'm with 'em all the, I don't go to every practice. I'm at every game in the locker room, go up to do the radio, and then afterwards go in the locker room, shake their hands, and so they, they know who I am and I know who they are and be around these 19, 20, 21, 22, 20 3-year-old players kids.

Really? I call 'em keeps me young.

Craig Robertson: Yes sir.

Coach Ron Polk: And then doing summer baseball and and then I tell people the old 5, 6, 7 cigars a day keeps me healthy.

Craig Robertson: Sure. Of course.

Coach Ron Polk: I got a tobacco shield. Never had the flu, never had a headache. Not that I don't have aches and pains right now as I get older, but that's basically what it's all about is the work ethic.

Craig Robertson: What do you think is the difference between a player when you first started back in [01:04:00] the eighties and nineties and players. Current players.

Coach Ron Polk: I think they're the same. They don't have much structure as much in high school and junior college and even the home life that some of us pretty self-serving and they're spoiled at times.

But I, I always felt like when I took the Georgia job, Vince Dooley told me in that office, now, if you take the job, you have the okay to dump anybody on this team. They're not doing well academically, not playing well. I said, no I don't believe in that. I'll just, I'll inherit it. I'm gonna put a dude plan in academic plan practice plan, and we'll see what happens.

Craig Robertson: Is there anything about your mindset as a coach that you think would translate better to today? Some of the things that you did?

Coach Ron Polk: I still think kids love discipline. They love structure as long as it's fair. They know exactly what the rules are when they can have the cell

phone with you and when you can't have the cell phone with you, as long as everybody's in the same boat.

Kids today have got these performance trophies you get. They're handed different things. I go Dominican Republic every year, 12 years down there, and those [01:05:00] kids have no. No, no uniforms, share gloves. No. No trophies. No, no leagues. They're just playing all the time and they the pure enjoyment of playing baseball and that's why they're dominating the American National League now.

But no, every time we win, I feel good for the players and every time we lose, I feel sad for the players. I'm just the kind of, the guy exchanged the lineup at home plate, but I wanted them to keep that even keel because this is not the end of the world. This is just baseball is a game. That's what they played on.

Par says don't start the game play ball.

Craig Robertson: Yeah.

Coach Ron Polk: It's not life.

Craig Robertson: Yeah. Sure. Coach. What your famous, everybody knows how dedicated you are to your players. And I've heard you say many times that the reason that you send birthday cards and anniversary cards Christmas cards is because it's the right thing to do.

What developed in you the sense for what's right and what's not?

Coach Ron Polk: When I tell these high school kids, and again, sometimes the large auditoriums, sometimes it's just a team. Parents [01:06:00] and I tell 'em that I do birthday, Christmas and anniversary cards and I look at 'em. You, any of you guys do that? Do you have anybody ever write to grandma Thank you for this gift and he, how many of you guys have never been in the post office?

How many of you ever put a stamp on an envelope? So one boy would raise their hand. I put a stamp. What side do you put it on? He said, the left side. I said, wrong. It's the right side. That's the difference. The kids today, it's all iPhones. It's all mess. That's the difference between then and now.

But they were part of my life and I'm just staying a part of their life. And basically that's what I've done. Now, other people probably said that's waste of time. It's not playing golf. A waste of five hours.

Craig Robertson: It could be sure,

Coach Ron Polk: right? Say what? It's recreation. Basically, I've never had my only.

Vice is I do play, I play blackjack and things.

Craig Robertson: I wanted to ask you about that coach, because I told a story, I wrote an article about you that I sent to you, and there was a rumor I can't vouch for whether or not it's true or not, that in the back of the bus some of the guys were trying [01:07:00] to beckon you to the back to play blackjack with them, and you told them I'd come back, but I only play with hundreds,

Coach Ron Polk: right?

Craig Robertson: That true or not true?

Coach Ron Polk: I always told the guys pennies, no more pennies. If I see nickels and dimes on the table, the blackjack is over. I didn't want them having enemies on the bus. Okay. No, I, that's what I do at Christmas time. I go out to Phoenix, visit my two brothers, go to Vegas for about four days.

I used to go a lot more, but I just don't have time. But and then I occasionally go down the coast. I just down drive down and gamble for about eight or nine hours and drive back. I can hang with 'em. Black Jack's the only game that you can hang with 'em if you know what you're doing.

Craig Robertson: You didn't answer the question about the hundreds coach, about whether or not that's a true statement.

Coach Ron Polk: All I know is when we had our old stadium. The kids had to walk across the road between the stadium and the Humphrey Coliseum to the locker room. Maybe that's the locker room when you were there. Yes sir. Yeah. And they were no.

Craig Robertson: The locker room was at the stadium when I was there. It wasn't Okay.

Coach Ron Polk: The old stadium, you had to go across the field [01:08:00] the roadway.

Craig Robertson: Yes, sir.

Coach Ron Polk: And hundreds of people after a game, big wins. And I was hearing about my guys getting $20 handshakes pal Murrow getting a hundred dollars handshakes. And I had to cover my eyes. And but no kids is the same, basically it is just a matter of this, the different era and the thing.

I think I'm pretty good. I can relate to the kids now. 'cause I understand and I don't criticize 'em at all. And I basically fit in with 'em well. Even at my age, I can go in the locker room and kids were coming up, Hey, coach, how you doing? How you doing? If I was adamant and know, Hey, why are you doing that cell phone?

If why are you doing this? Why are you doing that? I can adapt to anything, I think.

Craig Robertson: Yeah. You're more like the grandfather figure at this point.

Coach Ron Polk: Somewhat, yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Craig Robertson: Coach, the you've coached so many amazing players through the years, but is there any one particular player moment thing that stands out?

I'm not talking about, everybody knows about the amazing players that [01:09:00] you've coached, but a player that was more like you, someone who, like a Rudy type of player, someone who was more, you know who. Who did more with their ability than the average player? What, who are some of the players like that?

That

Coach Ron Polk: with USA baseball, seven tours, three Olympic teams. The Olympics then used to be college kids now as pros. Yeah. But I was with Olympics. I mean like the 88 team. There were 20 guys in that roster. 19 ended up in the big leagues. Yeah. Wow. Okay. But maybe at Mississippi State, one guy would just jump out at you be a Burke Masters.

Craig Robertson: Yes.

Coach Ron Polk: Burke Jesuit priest.

Craig Robertson: Who's now a priest.

Coach Ron Polk: Priest, yeah. Every time I speak up in Illinois, he always makes a point to come by. He came down, we did a book signing last year. He was a straight A student red shirt his freshman year, which I don't do much anymore because of the the portal. But I convinced him Red shirt, you your fifth year, you're gonna be a lot better.

And he was a star his fifth year. He wouldn't have played much his first year, but he could have been anything. He wanted to be straight, a student, bright as can be. Went off to worked in pro ball [01:10:00] and. Selling tickets 'cause he wanted to stay in baseball. All of a sudden he's got two books out now.

He's got a book out. Really? The new one's really good.

Craig Robertson: Yeah, I have it. I haven't read it yet.

Coach Ron Polk: What's the name? It, grand Slam for God.

Craig Robertson: That's right,

Coach Ron Polk: because he hit the Grand Slam against Florida State.

Craig Robertson: I remember that call. I could almost recite it.

Coach Ron Polk: It's an amazing story. I'm in San Francisco 'cause Will Clark's number was retired at the Candlestick and he wanted me to come out.

So I go out there staying in a hotel next to the stadium and in the elevator, one of the broadcasters who hit a line drive back at Bobby Reed, and we doubled him up at first. Who's that famous Florida State guy? Broadcaster saw me. Coach book. How you doing? I said, Bobby Reed. See, Bobby Reed was the one, he hit it off at line, drive back, hit him.

We doubled up. And he remembers that to this day.

Craig Robertson: I bet.

Coach Ron Polk: So a lot of memories. Again, I like the, this weekend is a good example. I'm visiting with the coaches at Florida. I know all the coaches, especially the head coaches. And this young coach came up to me and said,

coach, I just wanna [01:11:00] thank you. I said. I didn't know who he was as a coach from Gators.

Why? I said I was in the minor leagues in a ball down in Clearwater with a Phillies. And I got a letter from you wishing me good luck on behalf of the SECA lot, relatively long letter. He said, nobody else sent me a letter like that. I just wanna thank you. 'cause it really made my day.

Craig Robertson: Wow.

Coach Ron Polk: And I said to myself, that's why I do it.

Why does, why would I write every minor league player in the summertime, in the mornings and birthday cards and Christmas cards? Because. They needed it or they enjoyed it. Or they appreciated it.

Craig Robertson: Yeah. What's the state of this NIL situation? What how are we gonna fix it? And I know we don't have a lot of time.

Coach Ron Polk: I go five. It's not sustainable, it's wrong. But it's something, unfortunately the NCAA's washed our hands of, it started out innocent. The coaches were making a lot of money. Buyouts were outta control, stats outta control. And they said, Hey, the players should get some of it. So they got the [01:12:00] liberal courts and the lawyers out in California starting maybe a player's union, and all of a sudden they, they said, Hey, we gotta start giving players money at the division one level.

And you could D two now, Nils in high schools, unfortunately and not every state, but it started out innocent. Fine, if Hunter Hines, our first baseman now is doing well and Piggly Wiggly wants to give him $10,000 to be the voice of Piggly Wrigley, that's fine. But in they all, they came out and said, but if he's gonna get that 10 grand, he is gonna do something for it.

Make appearances, sack groceries, I mean something. Now that's outta. Not, we go collectives now. They don't have to do a thing. I don't, I'm not gonna tell you what the average payroll for baseball in the SEC is, but it would shocked the living daylights on here.

Craig Robertson: Really?

Coach Ron Polk: We have some guys in SEC parking lots driving Corvettes right now.

And we're stealing players from the mid majors. We're stealing from each other. The payroll's for quarterbacks now and the SEC are like over [01:13:00] $4 million. They still have to go to school. We keep going back to the same people for the same money. Now, Mississippi State and Miss Ole, miss and Southern Miss, we're in a poor state.

We're playing against Oklahoma and Texas. They have a lot of money in Florida.

Craig Robertson: Sure.

Coach Ron Polk: LSU. And so it's not sustainable, but you gotta do it in order to compete

Craig Robertson: how do we fix it, coach

Coach Ron Polk: It won't, it will not, you can't take the money back. It's unfixable. That's the problem. And so I would think, I know the NCAA liked the back of Miami.

I think the president's not Mark Keenum he's the best. But these presidents, 95% never played sports. And they're tired of the phone calls, the problems, the NIL and portal and kids getting money under the table. If they had their druthers, they would cancel it in a heartbeat. And they have the power to do it, but they have to have something.

They've always wanted these presidents in aural sports, I think in five or six years. You could get up in January 1st, watch a Rose Bowl [01:14:00] parade and watch a football game. Two flag football teams are playing because it's gonna get worse and worse 'cause everyone wants to buy this guy and buy that guy.

We might as be, we're student athletes disguised as professional athletes. I had a fan the other day asked if I know you short starts making a quarter million dollars, can I boo him if he boots the ground ball? I said, eh, yes you can. Or if I wanna watch pro players play baseball, I go to Atlanta. Once we lose the fans, if we do, we lose the TV revenues, we'll all become intermurals. All these facilities now we're building TVs, radio and tv, it's off for Naugh, but this is a sad day in college athletics, but it's still pure in NAIA Junior college high school. But it's gonna filter down if we lose the top division is to, we filter down all the way down to high school.

Craig Robertson: Alright, coach, in your last few minutes I wanna ask you a few like quick questions.

Coach Ron Polk: All right?

Craig Robertson: Okay. What role is faith or spirituality played in your life?

Coach Ron Polk: Say what?

Craig Robertson: Faith and spirituality.

Coach Ron Polk: I. I'm a spiritual guy. I still [01:15:00] give $10,000 every year to the fellowship of Christian athlete to sponsor our breakfast at our convention. I've done a lot of FCA work in the past. Yeah. But basically that, that is very part of much of my life.

Craig Robertson: Yes. Yeah. I heard you speak about that. What personal values have you tried to live by? What is Ron PO's Golden Rule?

Coach Ron Polk: Follow me and you'll like what I do.

Craig Robertson: Okay. How did you handle DI mean, obviously you won a lot of games, but you lost a lot of games too.

How did you handle loss and disappointment in your career? And your life?

Coach Ron Polk: The thing is, on my resume, it says I have more wins than any other coach in the history of SEC in any sport. And that's true. What? It doesn't have the resume. I also have more losses because who lasts 31 years in the SEC without getting fired?

Craig Robertson: That's right.

Coach Ron Polk: Yeah. But I handle losses. Hey it's an l Now again, if a kid doesn't hustle or something like that's another story. But I try to keep my yelling at players down to a minimum, but they get the attention, my attention when I tell 'em, Hey, we still love you. I just don't like what you did.

Craig Robertson: Yes, sir.

Coach Ron Polk: I've said that over [01:16:00] and over again.

Craig Robertson: What do you think was the. I'm sure there's several, some of the biggest turning points in your life walking up that that spiral staircase at Arizona was certainly one of 'em.

Coach Ron Polk: Yeah that's probably that. Everything, again, as I'm related to you and you've asked some great questions, everybody doesn't get the brakes I've gotten.

But what I did when I got the break, I took advantage of it. A lot of people get a break in a job and don't work hard, and all of a sudden they wonder why they're not going to another level. And basically, you gotta eliminate distractions. You either go all the distractions, play the golf, go hunting and fishing, do all the party scene, do go to movies every day, watch TV all day.

You'll lead a fun life, what's your legacy gonna be?

Craig Robertson: It sounds like your legacy has been just one of service To others. Yeah. To your players,

Coach Ron Polk: basically. Yeah. I don't ever think about it that, and that's nice of you to say, but I just basically did what I coach a kid, like I want my son to be coached.

I don't wanna be yelled and screamed at, and cussed at or dumped based on [01:17:00] performance. And so I've always treat, I told the coaches, we always treat these kids with respect and you'll get respect in return. But I'd want every player that I coached, if I had a daughter, I'd like to have that boy as her husband.

Craig Robertson: Yeah. Besides smoking cigars, what brings you joy? What brings you joy right now, coach?

Coach Ron Polk: It ha that was a must. I had to do it to stay awake. I'm serious. Coming back, I almost crashed twice in the, that just trace, there's no. There was no rails. Two or three in the morning.

Coming back after speaking and knowing I have to do a practice schedule or a recruiting or whatever, and I just basically had to get something going, playing the radio, windows down, air conditioner high, getting coffee everywhere. All of a sudden I put a cigar in my mouth one time and I stayed awake the rest of the way.

And that's what's happened.

Craig Robertson: What what bring, what brings you joy right now in your life?

Coach Ron Polk: I think right now, basically you know what I do every day is just around these kids, around these coaches.

Craig Robertson: [01:18:00] Yeah.

Coach Ron Polk: Around the university.

Craig Robertson: What keeps you curious and hopeful about the future?

Coach Ron Polk: I'm not very, the future for NCAA sports.

I'm not very hopeful for

Craig Robertson: You've been saying that for a while,

Coach Ron Polk: but I know, but the thing is, it should never have happened.

Craig Robertson: Sure.

Coach Ron Polk: Yes, I think we should have given players some money, but not to the point where we're stealing players from other schools.

Craig Robertson: Sure. Yeah, no doubt. Coach. What inspires you?

Coach Ron Polk: Basically at my age, just the fact that I'm getting up, I had a scout.

A scout a couple weeks ago came up. Ron, it's great to see you. I said, it's great to be seen and not viewed. Yeah, that's true, coach. But one of these days I'll be viewed. You will too. It's just part of life.

Craig Robertson: That is part of life.

Coach Ron Polk: That's where the Christian aspect comes in, that you have something to look forward to in later life.

Hopefully.

Craig Robertson: That's right, coach. Coach, thank you for spending your time.

Coach Ron Polk: My pleasure. Good to

Craig Robertson: appreciate you so much.

Coach Ron Polk: Enjoy your great questions.

Craig Robertson: Thank you so much.

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