

2013-17 PT. 1 SIDE A

Jim Loftus

May 31, 2013

Fairbanks, Alaska

Dan O'Neill, interviewer

Dan said he and Jim Loftus have known each other since they were ten years old. They attended high school together.

Jim Loftus talked about his birthplace of San Francisco. His parents were also born in San Francisco. Their parents were from Ireland and met in San Francisco. He stayed in California through college. In 1972 he had a chance to drive up to Fairbanks with Jim Ringstad. Dan asked about his parents. Dan said his father had a rough childhood. His grandmother died when his father was sixteen. His father lived with the O'Connell family until he joined the Marines. Both his paternal grandparents were from Ireland. His maternal grandparents were from Ireland. His maternal grandparent's names were Nora Gehrarty King and Joseph King. His parents, Mary King and Jim Loftus, grew up in the San Francisco area. His father attended St. Joseph's in Alameda County. They were married after WWII. His mother worked in a bank. His father was working in the telephone company. His older sister was Jeanne. Jim was born on May 17, 1950. Right after he was born his father was called back into the military to serve in Korea. In WWII his father was in the Pacific Theater. His mother lived in the Mission District in San Francisco and attended Corpus Christi and St. Paul's High School. Dan's mother attended school with Jim's mother.

After his father returned from Korea they lived in the Marina District. They then moved to Mill Valley north of San Francisco. He lived there until he was in the third grade and they moved back to San Francisco. They bought a house in the Sunset District. They kept that house from 1958 until about 2004. He attended St. Cecelia School and Reardon High School. He then attended the City College of San Francisco for two years. His last two years of undergrad work was at Santa Clara. He said he lived in a small town atmosphere even though they were in the big city. There were unorganized sports every day and he said it was a great place to grow up. He listed some of his neighborhood friends. He considered himself an average student. He enjoyed reading the classics. He talked about being in the boy scouts which was a good experience for him. His neighborhood friends were also in the scouts. He camped in northern California. He became a leader in the troop and eventually became an Eagle Scout.

Running became important in high school. He wasn't coached in any of the formal sports before that time. He started participating in track sports. He figured out that his skill level was a mid-distance runner. He started focusing on the 400. He ran track his first three years in high school because he loved it. He started training more in his senior year and improved. He had the fastest time in the league – 50.1 for the 440. He had a cast on his arm during his senior year. Once it was removed it threw off his stride. He talked about running the 880 once in high school. When he attended college he started training for

longer distances. He tried cross country. He ran the 880 in college. He also participated in summer meets. He talked about learning how to breathe while running. When he attended the University of Santa Clara he ran on his own. He attended all-comers track meets. He used the same workouts he had in college. He worked a lot on his form and breathing. After college he came up to Fairbanks and didn't do any running for a few years. After the pipeline ended for him in 1976 he went back down to San Francisco and started running again. He got back into shape. He returned to Fairbanks in 1977 and built a house. He went to Ireland for a visit. In January of 1978 he started graduate school at the University of Washington. He started training again and went to track meets. He was involved with Club Northwest. He completed his master's degree and came up to Fairbanks. He married his wife, Eileen. There weren't many jobs in Fairbanks. He got a job doing subdivision design. He named quite a few roads on the Goldstream Road such as Waterford, Galway, and Clifton. He named them after Irish towns. He went to graduate school as a structural engineer. He returned to Seattle and got a job. Six weeks later he sent for his wife. He worked and ran. He started getting better and better at track. He would go up to British Columbia for track meets. He talked about his training work out. He fit in his training with his lifestyle. When he came to Alaska he became in all-comers track meets. He took over coordination and running the program from 1986 until this year. Every Wednesday night they would have a track meet in June. When they started the seniors games ten years ago in Fairbanks he became the commissioner in charge of the track meets. He now has cancer and he no longer coordinates the programs.