

SUMMER OF 1959 – AL SCHALLAU’S TRIP TO CALIFORNIA

In the summer of 1959, I was 17 years old and living in Iowa City, Iowa. I had completed my junior year of high school at City High. My biggest desire was to take a Greyhound bus trip by myself to California in August, 1959.

For the first six months of 1959, I spent many hours at the University of Iowa Library studying college catalogs of universities and junior colleges in California. I wrote to many California colleges requesting their college catalogs, and I received about 20.

I hated, hated, hated the cold winter weather in Iowa. Particularly, I detested digging my car and my dad’s car out of six-foot snow drifts in below zero temperatures. Some mornings our cars would not start because of cold temperatures that ranged downward to 20 below zero. The very strong winds in sub-zero weather made life miserable in the winter.

The first three months of 1959 were really brutal. The Iowa High School Boys State Basketball tournament in the second week of March, was postponed two days because the snow drifts left the highways of Iowa and the streets of Des Moines unpassable.

I thought and stated to anyone who would listen, “I am not going to tolerate this weather for the rest of my life. I am going to live in California.”

I had been told that it was 84 degrees in Los Angeles on Christmas Day. I didn’t believe it. So in the first three months of 1959, I checked the DES MOINES REGISTER every day for daily temperatures in other cities. When it was five degrees in Iowa City, the temperature in Los Angeles was 78.

I decided that my first two collegiate years would be at a junior college in California, where the tuition was FREE – even for students who were not California residents. The issue was “Which California junior college will I attend?” That spawned my desire to take a Greyhound bus trip by myself to California, departing on Sunday, August 2, 1959.

I spent June and July, 1959 working days for Hugh Jennings Building Contractor constructing pre-fab houses in Coralville, Iowa. During the house building process, I had to get up in the attic and install the fiberglass insulation. That part was a miserable job. But it paid pretty well, and Hugh Jennings was my buddy and pal.

During June and July, 1959, I also worked three nights per week and Saturdays and Sundays at the Hy-Vee Supermarket on Kirkwood Avenue in Iowa City. That job was easy. It did not pay very well (less than the minimum wage required by Federal law). But I needed to save every dollar I could for my trip, which I paid for entirely with my own money.

Saturday, August 1, 1959, I went to the Greyhound Bus Depot in Iowa City and bought my ticket for my much-awaited California trip. Prior to that date, I had only been in three states, which were Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri. So traveling across the country was a brand new adventure for me.

My travel route (which I mapped out entirely myself) was: Iowa City to Omaha. Then to Cheyenne, Wyoming; Salt Lake City; and Reno, NV. Then to Sacramento, CA, San Francisco, Modesto, and Bakersfield. Then to San Fernando, CA; Los Angeles, and Pasadena. Then to Phoenix, AZ; Las Cruces, NM; El Paso and Dallas, TX. Then to Tulsa, OK; Kansas City, MO; Des Moines, Iowa; and back to Iowa City.

Total distance was 5,500 miles. My bus ticket for the roundtrip cost me \$89.45.

On Sunday afternoon, August 2, 1959, my mom and dad drove me to the Greyhound Bus Depot in Iowa City and stayed to wave good-bye when the bus departed. My dad told me to pack all my belongings in one suitcase, which turned out to be great advice. In 1959, we had no rollers on our suitcases. The technology geniuses at Samsonite had not yet invented the wheel for use on suitcases. In some cities, I had to carry that suitcase six blocks while looking for a hotel room I could afford.

My dad’s parting words at the Iowa City bus depot were, “You write home every day” – which I did. Thirty years later, my mother gave me all the letters I wrote during that trip. She saved them all. It was fun to read them. I had good handwriting at age 17.

FIRST LEG OF MY TRIP: Iowa City to Sacramento, CA.

In 1959, Interstate 80 was not built yet. Almost all of my trip from Iowa City to California was on U. S. Highway 30, which was one lane in each direction. The average travel distance for my buses was about 50 miles each hour. All of my trip was on “Express Buses” – which meant the bus traveled at least 100 miles between stops.

My bus departed Iowa City about 3:00 P.M. on Sunday, August 2, 1959; stopped in Des Moines for a few minutes; and then stopped 45 minutes in Omaha. On Sunday and early Monday morning, it was all the way across Nebraska to Wyoming. Nebraska had corn fields and farmland for many miles, and looked very much like Iowa.

But in Wyoming all the scenery was much different than I had ever seen before. It was beautiful. I thought, “Wyoming is very pretty, but I wouldn’t want to live there.” I already knew that it gets very cold in Wyoming in the winter.

On the westbound bus leaving Omaha, I met a young Afro-American man who was a graduate of Penn State University. He and I talked for hours about many issues. He was a sports fan and was very interested in politics. I had two detailed road maps of the Western United States, and he studied them intently.

There was a young man on our bus who was from Pakistan. He could not speak any English, but he had a white slip of paper that listed his destination address in Lodi, CA. When our bus got to Sacramento, my friend from Penn State put him on the right bus and told the bus driver to make sure he got off in Lodi.

After Wyoming, we traveled into Utah to Salt Lake City. We had an hour-long stop in Salt Lake City on Monday night. So my Penn State friend and I took a walk to the Mormon Tabernacle, which was the first major “sight” that I saw on my trip.

Then we traveled across the state of Nevada to Reno. I was surprised by so much land in Nevada that was utterly barren with no trees or vegetation growing. I asked my friend, “Do you think anyone owns that desolate land out there?” He said, “It is probably owned by the Federal government or the state of Nevada.” When we got to Reno, the state of Nevada looked much different. Even in 1959, there were bright lights everywhere.

On Tuesday, August 4, 1959, we crossed into the spectacularly beautiful state of California. Almost immediately, the scenery in the Lake Tahoe area was breathtaking. I was then (and still am) completely in awe of the natural beauty of northern California. Our bus struggled at slow speeds up the mountain highway, and made it up the Donner Summit (elevation 7,239 feet). From there it was on to Sacramento, arriving about 3:00 P.M.

My first three days and nights in California could not have been any better. Our next door neighbor in Iowa City (Mrs. Boulton) had arranged for me to stay at the home of her son Jack Boulton and his wife and two daughters. Jack was a graduate of Iowa and was an electrical engineer for Aerojet General Corporation in Sacramento. Jack’s wife Connie picked me up at the Greyhound bus depot and drove me to their home at 3939 Winding Creek Road, Sacramento. I will never forget that address.

Jack and Connie belonged to the Del Norte Country Club which had very nice tennis courts and an Olympic size swimming pool. Jack was a very good tennis player. I had been riding on a bus for 48 hours, but I was happy to accept Jack’s invitation for a tennis match at an elegant country club. Jack beat me 6-4, 6-3, but I did put four backhand passing shots down the line inbounds. He talked for a couple days about my backhand passing shot. I had to borrow tennis shoes from Jack’s neighbor, and my feet were aching at the end of the match. But I was thrilled by my first night’s introduction to the great state of California.

The next day (Wednesday, August 5, 1959), I got on the Metro bus and spent about two hours touring Sacramento State University, which I liked very much. Then I spent about three hours touring Sacramento City College, which I also liked very much. I also spent about two hours touring the California State Capital buildings in downtown Sacramento.

The next day (Thursday), Connie drove Jack’s brother Julian and me to the Del Norte Country Club again. Del Norte’s girls swim team had a meet against Sierra View Country Club from Roseville, CA.

That was a magical day for me. Sierra View had beautiful twin sisters named Sherry and Sandy Evangelisti, who were awesome swimmers. Those two won every event in which they competed – Sherry in the freestyle and breast strokes, and Sandy in the back strokes. They also won all of their relays.

Those two were beautiful, personable brunettes and I was surprised they would even talk to me. I flirted a lot with Sherry Evangelisti and a romance of sorts developed. We wrote each other letters about once every two weeks through my entire senior year of high school. I even wrote several poems about her.

During Christmas vacation in December, 1960, the Evangelisti twins rode a roundtrip train from Sacramento to Iowa and spent one week with my family in Iowa City. Sherry and Sandy were such identical twins that my parents could not tell them apart. One year after Sherry graduated from high school, she got married at age 19. That was the end of our long distance romance. But to this day, the Evangelisti twins are great memories for me.

SECOND LEG OF MY TRIP: Sacramento to San Francisco.

On Friday morning, I left Sacramento on a Greyhound bus to San Francisco, arriving about 11:00 A. M. The bus depot was then in the Mission District of downtown San Francisco. I locked my suitcase in a coin operated locker at the bus depot. I walked around the Mission area and found a hotel room for \$2 per night. It had no telephone, no TV or radio, and no bathroom. It had a bed and a chair and not much else.. It was like renting a room at the YMCA in downtown Chicago. I never did take my suitcase to that hotel room. I left it locked up in the bus depot locker.

In 1959, the San Francisco Giants were playing their second year at Seals Stadium in downtown San Francisco. Candlestick Park was opened in 1960. Seals Stadium was an historic baseball park that had been the home of the San Francisco Seals of the Pacific Coast League -- which in the 1930's featured a great player named Joe DiMaggio.

I got on a Metro bus and rode out to Golden Gate Park and to the Golden Gate Bridge. I walked around Golden Gate Park for a couple hours and went inside Kezar Stadium. In 1959, the San Francisco 49ers played their home games at Kezar. When I watched telecasts of 49er teams that featured Hall of Famers Hugh McElhenny, Joe Perry, John Henry Johnson, and Y. A. Tittle, all those games were at Kezar Stadium. So walking around on the field and the track inside Kezar Stadium was a big thrill.

I rode the MTA bus back to the Mission District and walked to Seals Stadium. I had to wait in line for over an hour to buy a General Admission ticket for the Giants' game that night against the Cincinnati Reds. I also splurged and bought a Reserve Seat ticket for Saturday afternoon's game because I didn't want to stand in the General Admission line again. The gates at Seals Stadium opened at 5:30 P.M. and I was in my seat in the right field bleachers by 5:35 P.M.

In 1958, 1959, and 1960, my biggest thrill at Major League baseball games was watching superstars take batting practice. The Giants had Willie Mays, Willie McCovey, Orlando Cepeda, and Felipe Alou. McCovey hit six balls completely over the right field bleachers onto the street outside. The Cincinnati Reds had Frank Robinson and Vada Pinson. Watching all those great players take batting practice was a baseball junkie's delight.

In the first week of August, 1959, the Giants were in first place in the National League and every game at Seals Stadium was a sellout of about 22,700. The August weather at night in San Francisco

was cold. I found out quickly why Mark Twain said, “The coldest winter I ever spent was a summer in San Francisco.” Fortunately I had my reversible nylon jacket that was windproof. It served me just fine.

The Giants vs. Reds game on Friday night was really special. The third batter up in the game (Gus Bell – a left-handed batter) hit a screaming line drive to the opposite field in left-center that looked like a double or triple. Willie Mays took off on a dead run from right-center field and made a spectacular over-the-shoulder catch that was almost identical to the famous catch he made in the 1954 World Series. That was my first inning of Major League baseball in California.

The game was tied 2-2 in the last half of the ninth inning. With one out and runners on first and third, Willie Mays drove in the winning run with a single and the sellout crowd went whacko. That was my introduction to Major League baseball in San Francisco.

The Giants vs. Reds game on Saturday afternoon was a disaster for the Giants. I had a much better seat – almost even with first base. After four innings, the Giants were behind 9-3 as the Giant pitchers stunk up the place. A fan asked the guy sitting next to me, “What would you do if you were at home listening to this game on the radio?” He answered, “I would turn it off.”

Willie McCovey, Orlando Cepeda, and Felipe Alou all hit gigantic solo home runs, but it was too little, too late. The Giants lost 9-6 in a rather forgettable game.

MY TWO NIGHTS IN MODESTO, CA WERE REALLY SPECIAL

When the Giant game ended, I walked and ran about eight blocks to the Greyhound Bus Depot to catch a 5:00 P. M. bus to Modesto. It arrived about 6:45 P.M. and I went straight to the Hughson Hotel which had a prominent sign that it was home to the Modesto Reds. Modesto was a New York Yankee farm team in the California League and almost all their players resided at the Hughson Hotel.

Within five minutes, the Day Manager offered me a ride to the ball park. A very handsome, well-dressed young man with a cast on his leg rode with us. He was second baseman Pedro Gonzalez (age 21) from the Dominican Republic, who was batting .371 when his season was ended by knee surgery. He spoke very good English and for the next two days, he was my buddy and pal. Pedro went on to play two years as a utility infielder for the New York Yankees, and three years as first-string second baseman for the Cleveland Indians.

Modesto also had an outfielder named Art Pennington, who played for the Cedar Rapids Indians of the Three-I League in 1953 and 1954. I saw him play many times for Cedar Rapids. He was not in the starting lineup on Saturday night, so he was sitting in the left field bullpen area with their relief pitchers. I talked with Art for about 40 minutes and he was pleased that I could remember every detail of his two years with Cedar Rapids.

In their bullpen, I also had a long conversation with one of Modesto’s ace pitchers who had the unlikely name of Bill Murry (spelling is correct). He was hilarious. He had a strong voice with a southern drawl from Louisiana, and a sense of humor that was unstoppable. He was very impressed

with Pedro Gonzalez's talent for attracting beautiful women. He said, "Pedro is now down to one girl friend, but she is A plus."

I met Pedro's girl friend on Sunday. She was a beautiful single mother about 25 years old. Pedro was a complete gentleman with her and her daughter, who was about five years old. Although his girl friend was Hispanic, all their conversations around me were in English.

My primary reason for stopping in Modesto was to explore Modesto Junior College. On Sunday morning after Mass, I walked from the Hughson Hotel to the college. I walked around the track which was the home of the famed Modesto Relays and explored the campus. I already knew that I was not interested in Modesto JC, but I wanted to explore the campus anyway.

That same Sunday afternoon, I spent about two hours in the hotel's TV lounge watching a Major League baseball game with Modesto's shortstop – a young man named Phil Linz. He went on to play four years for the New York Yankees and two years for the New York Mets. Even at age 20, he was a real student of baseball.

About 5:00 P. M., Pedro and the Day Manager drove me out to the ball park. Both nights the gate keeper never even asked me for a ticket. If I was Pedro's buddy, that meant I got in free.

Then came one of the biggest thrills of my whole trip. When Modesto started taking batting practice, Bill Murry suggested that I go out to center field and shag fly balls. Bill even loaned me his glove because he didn't want to shag flies himself. I caught about six routine fly balls in right center field. All of those were pretty easy.

But near the end of batting practice, Modesto's catcher Norm Kampschorr (a big left-handed hitter), hit a towering fly ball to straight away center field. It was one of the highest flies I have ever seen. I went back to the warning track and got under it. I was VERY concerned that I would drop it, or the ball might drill me into the ground. But I caught it and threw it back into the infield like I had been doing that all my life. I still cringe at the thought of that towering fly ball coming down directly at me.

Bill Murry saw all the catches I made -- particularly the last one. When I gave him back his glove, he said, "Al, after you finish high school will you be going to a tryout camp?" I said, "Bill, as a baseball player, I only have four weaknesses. I can't hit; can't field; can't run; and can't throw."

The last three innings of the Sunday night game, I got to see Bill Murry pitch. Nine batters up and nine batters down. Bill never made it to the Major Leagues, but in 1959, he could bring third degree heat up to the plate and had a wicked curveball. He finished the 1959 season with a record of 14-6. He played for New York Yankee farm teams through 1963 before moving back home to Louisiana. He passed away in 2002 at age 64. I only knew Bill Murry for two days, but he is a fond memory for me.

In the Sunday night game, my Cedar Rapids hero (Art Pennington) hit a line drive home run over the right field wall that never got more than 15 feet off the ground. It was a real rocket shot. It felt like old home week from his two years at Cedar Rapids.

ON TO BAKERSFIELD, LOS ANGELES, AND PASADENA

On Monday morning, August 10, 1959, it was time for me to leave Modesto and head south. When I checked out of the hotel, Phil Linz was the only player in sight. He was reading the sports page in the hotel lounge. He walked with me to the bus depot, which was only three blocks away. Then we said our good-byes, and I have never seen him or talked to him since.

But I followed his career closely as he played on the New York Yankees' American League pennant winners in 1962, 1963, and 1964. He won a World Series Championship Ring in 1962 when the Yankees beat the Giants in seven games. There was no reason for Phil Linz to walk with me to the bus depot that morning. He did it just because he is a good guy.

Phil gained lasting fame for an incident that occurred on August 20, 1964 on the New York Yankee team bus. Manager Yogi Berra became angered at Linz playing his harmonica and had a physical confrontation with Linz. The New York press went bonkers over the Berra vs. Linz confrontation. The "Phil Linz harmonica" incident will live forever in the annals of New York Yankee baseball. After Yogi Berra's blow-up over the Linz harmonica, the Yankees went on a big winning streak and won the American League pennant again. Phil hit two home runs in the World Series, which the St. Louis Cardinals won in seven games.

On that hot August morning in Modesto, I got on the 8:30 A. M. bus to Fresno and Bakersfield. Fresno held no interest for me. During the bus stop at Fresno, I ate breakfast and then I was on to Bakersfield. I got on the Metro bus and went out to Bakersfield College.

My mouth was hanging open. Bakersfield College was then (and still is) a beautiful campus. I went to the Administration Office and asked for some directions for touring the campus. A young lady with a long ponytail named Penny showed me around campus. I was only at the Bakersfield College campus for three hours. But I left thinking, "That is where I want to attend college."

Then I got on a Greyhound bus headed for San Fernando, CA, which is in the far north part of Los Angeles County. From the Greyhound bus depot, I walked to a hotel and asked to check in. The front desk manager asked me, "How old are you?" I said, "17." He said, "You can't stay here without permission from the Police Department. We can't register anyone under 18."

Then I got my first experience with the Los Angeles Police Department. San Fernando is part of the City of Los Angeles. I called the LAPD office in San Fernando and told the Desk Sergeant my problem. He said, "Just go down the street to another hotel, and if they ask you how old you are, tell them you are 18."

Wow. That was an easy enough way to deal with the problem. But I was surprised that a police officer was telling me that. I walked to another hotel, and nobody asked me how old I was.

In 1959, most hotels were NOT air conditioned – particularly the ones that I could afford. I never stayed in an air conditioned hotel on my entire trip. In August, San Fernando, CA is hot, hot, hot. The hotel was on the north side of the street, and my room was at the far south of the building,

with the afternoon sun beating directly in and some loud traffic on the street below. I don't think my room got below 90 degrees the whole night.

There was absolutely nothing to do in San Fernando, CA. But one saving grace: There was a coin-operated laundromat about one block away. So I used that evening to wash and dry and fold and re-pack all of my clothes. Of course they all fit into one suitcase. I was still awake past midnight because the heat was stifling. The next two days and nights were far better.

Early on Tuesday morning, August 11, 1959, I got on a bus in San Fernando for a short ride to the Van Nuys bus depot. I walked to Los Angeles Valley College and toured the campus. I wasn't really interested in Los Angeles Valley College, so I didn't stay long.

Then I got on a bus headed for downtown Los Angeles. The bus traveled on the Hollywood Freeway past the Capitol Records Building and some other Hollywood sights that were interesting to me. We arrived at the Greyhound Bus Depot about 12:15 P. M. I found a hotel room rather quickly. I left my suitcase locked up at the bus depot while I traveled on the Metro buses around Los Angeles.

My first destinations were the Los Angeles Coliseum, Exposition Park, and the campus of the University of Southern California, all three of which could be reached in 20 minutes by one 25 cent bus ride from downtown Los Angeles. I got off the bus at the corner of Figueroa Street and Exposition Blvd., and from there, all three were within easy walking distance.

In 1959, the Los Angeles Dodgers were playing their games at the Los Angeles Coliseum and won the World Series that year. But on the days that I was in Los Angeles, the Dodgers were playing the Cubs in Chicago. I thought the L. A. Coliseum would be locked tighter than a fortress. Wrong. I found a gate that was wide open and I walked in.

I walked around the southside seats of the Coliseum, and went down onto the field, which was then configured for baseball. I don't know how many people saw me, but nobody said a word. The place would seat 100,000 people, but it seemed like I was the only person there. I stayed inside the Coliseum for about 45 minutes and then left.

I walked over to the Exposition Park Museum, which is one block north of the Coliseum. Inside a big window, I saw a huge skeleton of a dinosaur which took up an entire large room. I had never seen anything like that before. On the north side of Exposition Park, was a HUGE flower garden filled with some of the most beautiful flowers I had ever seen. That beautiful flower garden on the north side of Exposition Park is still there.

Then I crossed Exposition Blvd. onto the campus of the University of Southern California. I knew that I would not be enrolling at USC for undergrad school, but I was still fascinated by the legacy of the USC Trojans even in 1959. Several years later, when I decided to attend law school in Los Angeles, USC was always my first choice. I feel honored that I attended the USC School of Law and graduated from there in 1968.

After I walked around the USC campus for about two hours, I took the Metro bus back to downtown Los Angeles. That evening I ate my first ever meal at the “Original Pantry” at the corner of 9th Street and Figueroa in downtown Los Angeles.

That is a restaurant with real history. In the 21st century it is still there, almost completely unchanged from when it was opened in 1924. Then as now, the prices were very reasonable, and they gave each patron far more food than he could eat. I have eaten at the “Original Pantry” many times since 1959. Nothing about it ever changes.

I was through eating by 7:00 P.M. and it was still daylight. What do I do now? I was only 17 years old, so I could not go to any bars that served alcohol. I did not want to spend the evening in my hotel room. So what does that leave? Going to a movie. Ugh. It made me cringe to think of spending my first night in downtown Los Angeles attending a movie. I could do that in Iowa City, Iowa.

In downtown Los Angeles, on Broadway between 3rd and 9th Streets, there are 12 movie theaters, all built between 1910 and 1931. The movie I chose was a brand new Alfred Hitchcock thriller “North by Northwest” which starred Cary Grant and Eva Marie Saint.

The film had only been out for one month and was getting great reviews. So the theater was almost full. I had to sit in the balcony, which was fine. I did not realize that I was watching a movie that would become an all-time classic. I did realize that I was seeing one of the most beautiful ladies who ever graced any movie screen. Eva Marie Saint is one of my all-time favorites.

Wednesday, August 12, 1959 was another special and fun day. I walked to Wilshire Blvd. and got on the westbound Metro bus to Santa Monica (all the way to the ocean). For 35 cents each way, I rode on Wilshire Blvd through the “Miracle Mile District”; through Beverly Hills; through West Los Angeles, to the very end of Wilshire Blvd in Santa Monica. I walked around the area and down by the beach for almost two hours. I especially enjoyed walking around the Santa Monica Pier. Being that close to the ocean fascinated me.

Then I took the same bus eastbound back to downtown Los Angeles. I got on a Metro bus to downtown Pasadena and then east on Colorado Blvd. to Pasadena City College. I thought, “Wow. This is where Jackie Robinson went to college.” He attended PCC for two years before becoming a superstar in baseball, football, basketball, and track at UCLA.

I walked all over the Pasadena City College campus; inside the buildings; inside the library; and ate lunch in their cafeteria. I walked around the football field and walked around their track and thought, “This is where Jackie Robinson set all those records in track and field” – some of which still stood as of 1959. I went to their baseball field and walked around the outfield. In the 1990s, baseball at PCC fell victim to budget cuts, and what used to be their baseball field is now a very big parking ramp.

In the movie “The Jackie Robinson Story” there is a scene where he and Rachel are sitting by the man-made, concrete-enclosed lake in front of the Pasadena City College Administration Building. That man-made lake is still there at 1570 East Colorado Blvd., Pasadena.

I was thrilled to be walking around Pasadena City College and I thought, “I would really like to go to school here some day.” I got my wish in the summer of 1962 when I took three courses in PCC’s eight-week summer session. Back then all the Rose Queens and Princesses were students at Pasadena City College. So many great-looking young ladies flocked to PCC hoping they would become Queen of the Tournament of Roses Parade, or one of the Princesses. The young ladies at PCC were nothing but beautiful and very sociable.

After my two hours on the Pasadena City College campus, I took a Metro bus out to the Rose Bowl. Again, I figured the Rose Bowl would be locked tighter than a fortress. Wrong. It was wide open. Particularly their gift shop and souvenir shop were wide open for business. They let me walk around inside the stadium.

I walked down onto the field. Back then there was a track around the football field, and I walked two laps around that track. I was thrilled that within 24 hours, I ventured inside the Los Angeles Coliseum and inside the Rose Bowl. Both were thrills that I never expected. Then I took a Metro bus back to downtown Los Angeles and had another big meal at the “Original Pantry.”

During my days and nights in Sacramento, Modesto, Bakersfield, Los Angeles, and Pasadena, I was thirsty for 7-Up and lemonade all of the time. Neil Diamond’s famous concert album and song was “Hot August Night” – and we have a lot of those in California.

ON TO PHOENIX, AZ AND THEN TO EL PASO AND DALLAS, TEXAS

About 8:30 P.M., I was on a Greyhound bus headed for Phoenix, AZ. I had to change buses in Indio, CA, which is a desert city east of Palm Springs. I had to wait for over an hour for my connecting bus to Phoenix. Two young guys about 20 years old, both wearing T-shirts, shorts, and sandals, were nervously walking around inside the lounge. Neither of them sat down one time.

Then four uniformed police officers burst through the door and accosted the two. They spread-eagled both of them up against a wall and handcuffed them and took them away. Nobody said one word. It all happened in less than 60 seconds. I was so happy the two young men did not offer any resistance or they would have been dead. I am glad they chose to live instead of die. Thirty minutes later, I was on a bus headed for Phoenix. Indio, CA was behind me. I was so glad.

My bus arrived in Phoenix very early the next morning. I got on a Metro bus to North 17th Avenue to the home of my aunt and uncle, Betty and Vernon Boddicker. Some bad planning by me. I had not contacted them to let them know I was coming. They were not home, and were gone for one week. Their next door neighbor, Sarge Gray, saw me with my suitcase and came out to talk to me.

Their neighbors across the street (Mr. & Mrs. Cummings) took me into their home and gave me breakfast. Then they let me sleep on the couch in their den. I was very grateful for that. That evening Mr. Cummings drove me around Phoenix and showed me some sights including Brophy Prep (where Vernon’s son Chuck Boddicker went to high school), and Phoenix Junior College, and other places. It was scorching hot in Phoenix, and I knew I had no interest in ever living there. The hospitality given to me by Mr. & Mrs. Cummings was exceptional and I am forever grateful to them.

MY TIME IN EL PASO WITH FATHER HAROLD J. RAHM, S. J.

Then I was on a Greyhound bus that went through Tucson; through Las Cruces, NM; and on to El Paso, TX. My stop in El Paso was at the request of my younger brother Don Schallau. He was 15 years old and was planning to enter the Jesuit Seminary upon graduation from high school.

Don had been exchanging letters with Father Harold J. Rahm, S. J., who was Assistant Pastor of the Sacred Heart Church in El Paso, and was the founder of Our Lady's Youth Center which offered recreational activities for juveniles – many of whom were gang members. Father Rahm was a primary force in alleviating gang violence in El Paso.

I got a room in a hotel across the street from the bus depot. I was very tired after a 450 mile bus ride from Phoenix to El Paso. So when my head hit the pillow, I was out like a light for about nine hours. It might have been noisy on the streets below, but I didn't hear any of it.

On Saturday, August 15, 1959, I walked the six blocks from my hotel to meet Father Rahm at Our Lady's Youth Center. My brother Don had written to Father Rahm to tell him I was coming. Father Rahm and one of his staff members were very hospitable to me. I spent about two hours visiting with them.

From 1959 onward, Father Rahm became a very famous and respected person in El Paso. Fifth Avenue runs east and west from South Santa Fe Street to South Cotton Street in downtown El Paso. Fifth Avenue is now officially named Father Rahm Avenue. I think that is awesome. I don't expect to ever have any streets named after me.

About 5:00 P.M. on Saturday, August 15, 1959, I got on a Greyhound bus in El Paso for a 650 mile trip to Dallas. I sure found out that Texas is a VERY big state. The route was through Pecos, Odessa, Big Spring, Abilene, Fort Worth and then to Dallas, -- all of it at night and early morning. The trip was over 14 hours and I did sleep for much of that time. I do remember it rained VERY hard that night. At least twice the bus driver pulled the bus off the road because he was having trouble finding his way through the torrential rain. I was very pleased by his devotion to safety.

MY EXCITING TIME IN DALLAS, TEXAS

Our bus arrived at the Dallas bus depot about 8:00 A.M. on Sunday morning, August 16, 1959. In the Dallas bus depot, I saw something for the first time that troubled me a lot. Two signs – one said "White Waiting Room" and the other said "Colored Waiting Room." I had never seen those signs before, and I have never seen them since. But that was a huge disappointment to me.

I locked up my suitcase at the bus depot and found a Catholic Church to attend Mass. I can still remember the priest who said that Mass and preached the sermon. He was a short little guy with

a booming voice. He had just returned from Rome and he told us how honored he was that he got to say Mass at St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City. He told us all of the specifics about Vatican City and St. Peter's Basilica. I was enthralled.

After Mass, I had breakfast and found a hotel room. I put my head on the pillow to sleep for about three hours. Then I got on a Metro bus and went to the campus of Southern Methodist University, which I liked very much. I knew I would not be enrolling at SMU for undergrad school, so I only stayed about one hour.

The Dallas newspaper said that Dallas and Fort Worth were playing a doubleheader that evening starting at 5:00 P.M. Those were AAA farm teams in the American Association. Fort Worth was the highest level farm team of the Chicago Cubs. I got on a Metro bus for a short three-mile ride to Burnett Stadium to watch them take batting practice and to watch both games of the doubleheader. Fort Worth won both games.

Fort Worth had some familiar Chicago Cub names on their roster including Dick Ellsworth (then 19 years old), Moe Thacker, Dick Drott, Bob Will, and Jerry Kindall (who later coached the Arizona Wildcats to three NCAA baseball championships).

That evening I had my first experience with a soft drink that I had never seen or heard of before. What the heck is a "Dr. Pepper"? I bought one just out of curiosity. I liked it fine. During those two games, I sat by myself in the first base grandstand and ate hot dogs and drank Dr. Pepper. I admit that in my adult years, I have consumed MANY cans of Diet Dr. Pepper.

Unlike my two nights in Modesto, I didn't talk to any players for either team. Dick Drott had pitched for Cedar Rapids in 1954 at age 18, and I could remember every detail of his one summer in Cedar Rapids. I thought about going down to talk to him during batting practice. But he was scheduled to pitch the second game, so I decided not to bother him.

Prior to August, 1959, I had toyed with the idea of going to undergrad school at North Texas State University in Denton, TX, which is 45 miles north of Dallas. Their fees were very reasonable even for out-of-state students. Their college catalog showed course offerings that included much of what I wanted. So at 8:15 A. M. on Monday, August 17, 1959, I was on a local bus to Denton, Texas. I visited the North Texas State campus for about an hour, and then got back on the bus to Dallas. My interest in attending North Texas State was gone. There was nothing wrong with it, for me the lure of California was overwhelming.

SMU BATON TWIRLER NAMED MELANIE. WOW. SHE WAS BEAUTIFUL

I was back in Dallas before noon, so I went to the SMU campus again. I really liked that campus, and I still do. As I was walking along, I saw what had to be a mirage. She was a super beautiful blonde who was practicing her baton twirling. She was doing acrobatics and throwing the baton very high and catching it. She was wearing short shorts and she had the best legs in Texas.

As I was walking southbound, I had my head turned eastbound watching her every move. Then I walked right into a light pole and hit my head rather hard. The impact knocked me to the

ground and I felt like a complete fool. The young baton twirler saw me fall and came over to assist me. Her name was Melanie and she was very nice. After we figured out that I had no broken bones and no bleeding wounds, she and I went to an on-campus cafeteria to eat some lunch and drink lemonade.

It was a very unorthodox way to meet a beautiful young lady. I never did get her last name, and I knew I would never see her again. From the 1970s onward, every time I see a beautiful blonde wearing a Dallas Cowboys cheerleading outfit, she reminds me of Melanie.

I spent most of that afternoon walking around the SMU campus. Two buildings that I visited were the SMU School of Law, and their law students dormitory known as the Lawyers Inn. I had such good memories of Southern Methodist University that in 1963, I applied for admission to their law school and was accepted. But after I got my acceptance letter from the University of Southern California School of Law, my decision about which law school to attend was very easy.

My Greyhound bus from Dallas to Kansas City departed at 9:30 P.M., so that meant spending a few hours in downtown Dallas. I went to a movie, which was "Go, Johnny, Go." It starred Chuck Berry, Alan Freed, Jimmy Clanton, and others. It was a rather ordinary movie, but I really liked Chuck Berry back then and still do. "Oh Maybelline. Why can't you be true?"

KANSAS CITY AND A CHANCE TO WATCH TED WILLIAMS IN PERSON

From Dallas to Kansas City was a 12-hour bus ride, which included a two-hour layover in Tulsa to change buses. The bus from Tulsa to Kansas City had some empty seats, so I got to curl up on the long seat in the far back of the bus and managed to sleep four hours.

By the time I got to Kansas City, I was running very short of money (less than \$20). I could have gotten on another bus and headed straight to Des Moines and then to Iowa City. No chance.

On Tuesday night, August 18, 1959, the Boston Red Sox and the great Ted Williams were playing the Kansas City A's at Municipal Stadium in Kansas City. I locked up my suitcase at the bus depot and went to a library and read about three days worth of newspapers. Then I got on the Metro bus to Municipal Stadium and arrived about three hours before game time.

When they opened the gates, the Red Sox were taking batting practice. I was in baseball junkie's heaven as I sat watching Ted Williams. He had the most beautiful swing in the history of baseball. Many fans say he was the greatest hitter of all time. I still have trouble with that because my vote is for Babe Ruth.

In 1991, I got to meet Ted Williams at a baseball card show in Anaheim, CA. He was so gracious. I got to talk to him for about five minutes.

I said, "In 1959, I rode 12 hours on a Greyhound bus just to watch you take batting practice."

He said, "How did I do?" I said, "12 straight balls over the right field wall."

He said, “Was it all worth it?” I said, “Ted, I would do it again tomorrow if I could.”

The Red Sox won a rather lack luster game in which nobody hit any home runs. The Kansas City rightfielder was 0 for 4 that night. His name was Roger Maris. He was traded to the Yankees in 1960, and hit 61 home runs in 1961.

BACK HOME TO IOWA CITY

After the game in Kansas City, I got on a Greyhound bus headed for Des Moines. Again, I got to curl up in the far back seat and sleep about four hours. The bus pulled into Des Moines in the early morning hours, and shortly thereafter I was on a bus headed for Iowa City. When I got back to Iowa City, I had eight dollars left.

My mother picked me up at the bus depot in Iowa City and told me that my last letter (from Dallas) arrived that day. Within two hours of my arriving in Iowa City, I went to the Hy-Vee Supermarket in Iowa City and got my old job back. I worked from 5:00 P.M. to 10:00 P. M. that same evening.

In writing this journal 52 years later, my memory has been refreshed a lot by reading the letters that my mother saved for me. But some items (like my two days in Modesto, CA, and my afternoon with the Evangelisti twins in Sacramento) seem like they were five years ago rather than 52 years ago.

WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THE SUMMER OF 1959

During my senior year of high school at City High of Iowa City, I became a very motivated student. Three of my teachers -- Art Campbell (who taught me Chemistry and Physics), Richard Hootman (who taught me College English Composition), and Nancy Stillians (who taught me English Literature and Interpretive Reading) became my close friends and advisors.

All three recommended that I get my undergraduate college education at the University of Iowa. Mr. Hootman told me, “Al, you will be able to graduate from Iowa without any problems. Many of my former students have graduated from Iowa, and you are a better writer than most of them. Also, with a B. A. degree from Iowa, your chances of being accepted into graduate schools or law schools will be excellent.”

Those were very encouraging words to me. Mr. Hootman was a perfectionist to the 1,000th degree and he taught all of his students to use that same perfectionism in their writings. Richard Hootman was the best teacher I ever had – in high school, in college, in law school – anywhere.

Since 1969, I have written over 200 appeal briefs and a lot more than 200 trial briefs. I think about Richard Hootman every time I write one of those briefs. He was the one who taught me writing skills, and I am forever grateful to him.

My basketball coach at City High (Bill Holmstrom) also influenced me in a profoundly positive way. I was a career bench warmer at City High, but he always treated me like I was special.

The last week of practice in my senior year, he took me aside and said, “Al, I want to tell you some things about yourself. You are never going to be an NBA basketball player. I don’t think you will ever be a college basketball player either. You have two great gifts --- an excellent brain and a BIG MOUTH. Find something in life that will let you use both of them.” So I became a trial lawyer.

I enrolled at the University of Iowa in September, 1960 and graduated in 3 ½ years with a B. A. in Marketing Management. I went to summer school at Pasadena City College in 1962 and went to summer school at Iowa in 1963.

I got my diploma from Iowa on February 1, 1964 at 11:30 A. M. and I was on my way to Los Angeles by 4:00 that same afternoon. I already had a job lined up as a credit investigator at Crocker Bank in downtown Los Angeles, and I had already been accepted into law school.

I graduated from the University of Southern California School of Law in 1968, and I have been a practicing trial lawyer and appellate specialist in Los Angeles ever since. I love my work as a lawyer and I will NEVER retire. I also love living in Rancho Palos Verdes, CA in a house overlooking the ocean, and I have never had any desire to move.

AL SCHALLAU