



Bud

The Coach



and I



Glora Gay

A Secretary's-Eye View of Coach Bud Wilkinson From Glora Gay Hill

"He's a very impressive person—you feel like he's doing his best and you, in turn, want to do the same."

These are the words of his recently retired personal secretary about Athletic Director Charles B. (Bud) Wilkinson, who entered his fourteenth season this fall as head coach of O. U.'s Big Red football team.

"And he's just the same as when I first knew him. Never, in eight years, did I hear him say a harsh word to anyone," says Mrs. Russell Hill, who worked closely with the Sooner coach during the years his powerhouse reached its peak of 47 consecutive victories.

Mrs. Hill, known as Glora Gay or G. G. to most of her friends, was called simply "Glora" by Wilkinson. She always called him "Coach."

Glora Gay's 6-year career as Bud's personal secretary officially ended June 30 when she retired to become a "full-time housewife." She actually began in May, 1951, as secretary for Gomer T. Jones, assistant athletic director, and other coaches in the Department of Athletics.

"I became interested in the job through a close friend, Fran Stalnaker, who was Coach Wilkinson's personal secretary at the time. Ken Farris, '43bus (O.U. athletic business manager) interviewed me," Glora Gay recalls.

"At that time, Fran and I were the only secretaries for the coaches. I became Coach Wilkinson's personal secretary in February, 1953, when Fran left."

At the time of her retirement, Glora Gay was serving as administrative secretary of a 4-woman staff as well as being Bud's per-

sonal secretary. When she first began working for the athletic department, Glora Gay did general secretarial work, helped the coaches keep records of the players' grades and took scouting reports.

"I took my first scouting report from Pete Elliott (now at the University of California)," she remembers. "He told me someone 'ran naked' (without interference) around left end. I thought I might have misunderstood him so I asked him to repeat it.

"I didn't really know too much about football then, and I certainly didn't want the coaches to laugh at my first report. I raced home to ask my husband about the 'ran naked' phrase. I thought he'd never stop laughing."

Almost exclusively a baseball fan when she took the job in the coaches' office, Glora

Gay admits her interest now spans all sports.

"For instance, I had never been to a college wrestling match before—now I just love to watch wrestling."

Her interest in baseball stems from her days at O. U., where she met her husband, Russell Hill. Both are from Norman, and they became acquainted while he was studying journalism, and she was taking secretarial science courses.

"Russell played right field then for Jack Baer, '42ed (O. U. baseball coach)," she says, "and that's when I became interested in sports."

Hill, now a civilian official at Tinker Air Force Base, Midwest City, received a BA degree in journalism from O. U. in 1951. The Hills were married in August, 1950.

Gloria Gay attended O. U. from 1947-50 and was secretary for an attorney before taking the job in the athletic department.

How does it feel to work for a famous coach?

"He is an ideal boss. He never tells you to do anything—he asks you. Coach Wilkinson is also a very modest person. He doesn't think of himself as the great football coach everyone else does."

In describing Bud, Gloria Gay painted a picture of a man with endless energy.

"Sometimes during football season, his work day begins at 6 a.m. and ends at 9 p.m."

Wilkinson also dictates personal answers to all his fan mail. The coach receives at least 150 letters a week, Gloria Gay estimates.

"They are mostly from young boys who want to know how to keep in condition, what courses to take to get into college and whether they should enter the coaching profession."

One youngster wanted to know Bud's birthday—so he could send him a card on the right day.

The Sooner mentor keeps up daily with his correspondence, except during football season when he tries to devote parts of Mondays and Fridays to dictating answers.

"He's a good businessman and manager as well as a good coach," Gloria Gay says.

Wilkinson also fills requests for autographs. Many fans clip his picture from magazines and newspapers and send it to him for his signature.

The Big Red coach has a speaking schedule filled months ahead to help keep him busy, his former secretary points out.

"But he's never too busy to talk to some youngster about football or to do other nice things for people."

For example, last summer, when the Norwegian naval cadets were appearing in Oklahoma City with the movie, "Windjammer," one of the first things they requested was to meet Wilkinson. So a meeting was arranged, and the coach autographed a football for them.

Being Bud's secretary had its fringe benefits—notably when Gloria Gay and Russell made three Orange Bowl trips as part of the staff.

Gloria Gay has seen her share of changes in the athletic department—such as last February when the offices were moved from the Field House to the second floor of Owen Memorial Stadium.

"And when I came to work for Coach Wilkinson, J. D. Roberts, '55ed, and Eddie

Crowder, '55geol, were playing for him. Now they are assistant football coaches."

Although she is retired, Gloria Gay is keeping her fingers in the athletic department pies by serving as secretary for the Varsity "O" Club, athletes' organization. She works with Port G. Robertson, '37ba, longtime O. U. wrestling coach and sponsor of the "O" Club, and W. Leon Bevers, assistant athletic business manager, who is also executive secretary for the group.

She sums up her six years as Bud's secretary as "a wonderful experience."

"But it wasn't a loafing job by any means," she emphasizes. "The work was so different and interesting from day to day that I can truly say I enjoyed it."

Does she miss her job?

"Well, vacationing was fun last summer. But now that football—the busiest season—is here, I'm afraid I'm beginning to miss it."



The mop and broom brigade may lack the glamor of being the coach's right hand when King Football is in full swing, but Russell Hill favors G.G.'s new full-time housewife role.