

**INTERVIEW WITH
GOVERNOR BILL GRAVES
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**INTERVIEWED BY DR. BOB BEATTY
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
WASHBURN UNIVERSITY
TOPEKA, KANSAS 66611
BOB.BEATTY@WASHBURN.EDU
785-670-1736
KANSAS INSTITUTE OF POLITICS
([HTTP://WWW.WASHBURN.EDU/REFERENCE/CKS/POLITICS/](http://www.washburn.edu/reference/cks/politics/))**

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Dr. Bob Beatty, Producer, Kansas Governors Recorded History and Documentary Project, Kansas Institute of Politics at Washburn University



Q: Governor, I was looking over the previous interview, so, before we get into the politics, you talked quite a bit about your father, and I wanted to ask you to tell me a little bit more about him and what you may think you got from him, traits or what you learned?

BG: I still believe to this day that a lot of my success in politics and public service was directly attributable to not just my dad but the whole Graves family. I mean, this was a family that didn't always have it so good; a depression era farm family with 10 kids. They managed to scrape out a living hauling farm-to-market in the trucking business early on. Dad and brothers and uncles went away in various capacities in World War II, and came back to what was then a regulated industry in this country. In other words, you had to have sort of permission to be in the trucking business. But once you had that permission there was an established rate for the movement of freight. And so it wasn't competitive because of price, the competition was about service. The company that had the better service got the business, and Graves Trucking was pretty successful because they were pretty focused and understood how to provide great quality service.

And so when I went to work for Jack Brier in the early 1980's in the Secretary of State's office that's what government - at least to me - should be about. It's a public service, and I really enjoyed it. So I think my Dad's commitment in that regard had a lasting impact on me. I can also tell you he was a very early riser, and he believed that I should be as well, and that actually helps you quite a bit, you know. You have to get up and get going in the morning. So I picked up that trait from him as well. The one thing where we differed dramatically is he had no use for cameras and microphones and shied away from them as much as possible and I actually sort of enjoyed that. But I miss him and I think about him every day.

Q. You said previously that your father "Had the notion the government was sort of the enemy, that it made it more difficult to operate a business." I don't think that's necessarily something you adopted from his philosophy.

BG: Well, Dad clearly struggled with the questions about government regulation, and he grew up in this regulated industry, so in spite of their success they were constantly frustrated by - even in those days, in the '60's and '70's - the way government kind of intruded in your business practices. But he overcame that and I know at the end of the day he was a very caring guy. He was very charitable, very involved in his community and I know he understood and appreciated the role that government should play and needed to play in peoples' lives.

I would imagine he would be a supporter of limited government, but of good government where we needed to have government. You know, that was probably how I ended up as a more centrist kind of Republican. I was always in favor of trying to be as efficient as we could be. I was in favor of trying to be as financially responsible as we could be. But I was also in favor of making sure we had a state government that took care of the issues that it needed to to benefit people in our state.

Q: Tell me about your mother.

BG: My mom.....Helen Mayo Graves. Mom was one of three kids and she was always the strong, sort of silent member of the family. In fact, the Graves side of the family dominated the equation. Mom had a brother that was involved in the Navy and then joined the Merchant Marines and lived on the west coast. My grandmother, my mother's mother, lived on the west coast for a number of years and so her family, while important, didn't have that Kansas presence and the dominance wasn't the big family like the Graves were. As we speak, Mom's approaching her 91st birthday. She's just remarkable in her health. A year ago for her 90th birthday when I asked her what she wanted she said, "I'd like to have you detail my Lincoln Continental 'cause I'm really tired of driving a dirty old car." I only hope that when I'm ninety I'm worried about the cleanliness of the automobile I'm driving. But she was always there, always supportive. She loved Dad dearly, and the two of them were a great team and supportive of my political and public service career.

Q: What were you like in high school? When we look at you in high school, what kind of kid are you? Are you, you know, a nerd or a geek, are you a jock, are you all of the above? What's Bill Graves like in high school?

BG: Let's see, what was I like in high school? First of all the year that I entered high school it was a junior high so I went to 7th, 8th and 9th grade at Roosevelt Lincoln Junior High School. I started as a sophomore but then by the time I graduated they had built another high school so there were two four-year high schools, Salina Central and Salina South. I was in the first graduating class of Salina Central High School in 1971. I was an average student. I am sort of embarrassed to admit how poor my study habits were as a student. I had the ability to make good grades, even great grades, but I just didn't try very hard. So I was just an average student.

I loved sports and participated in everything that I could, but I wasn't very good. In basketball, I really couldn't make the team but that's in large part because Salina Central won the state championship in 1971 and so we had a great group of players. I played football every year I was in high school, but really never played until I was a senior. Same thing as in basketball: a big school with a lot of good players. I did run track. I ran the ½ mile in track and I was okay but wasn't great. I think maybe I ran a 2:0, 2:02 half mile, which was pretty good but not great in those days.

I was not involved in student council. I did do a lot of speech and debate. I loved speech and debate. In fact that's how the relationship with Gary Sherrer, who eventually became my Lieutenant Governor began, because he recruited me as a 9th grader to join the speech and debate program at the high school. My sister, who was two years ahead of me, had debated as well.

And so, I'd say I was an average kid. I will confess - because of the success that Dad had - we were at that point considered fortunate, we were an affluent family in Salina. But I don't think that influenced me a whole lot. I had a real wide cadre of friends that came from every side of town and I had a lot of fun in high school. It was a wonderful experience. One of my mentors to this day that I stay in touch was my high

school football coach, Dave Pierce. He taught me a lot about the rules and respecting others. So, I was an average high school kid.

Q: Specifically you mentioned Gary Sherrer, how he recruited you?

BG: Gary Sherrer had been a very distinguished debater at Emporia State University and was then teaching speech and debate at Salina High School. My sister, Martha, really became enamored with the debate program and so I think Gary was trying to recruit and find out who he could count on coming up from the junior high in the next years, and so he actually came over (to my school). I remember going into a little classroom after school one day, at my sister's request, and he came and just talked about speech and debate and it just appealed to me. I thought there was something interesting about it. Getting a subject and developing either an affirmative position or developing the expertise to argue a negative position on that subject had some interest to me.

So I got real active in speech and debate in my sophomore, junior and senior years. I did some forensics as well, but it wasn't nearly as attractive to me as the debate side was. I travelled around the state, loaded up with other team members and we'd go off to these Friday and Saturday debate tournaments at various high schools. I wasn't great at it, but I was pretty good, and brought home a few trophies. I don't think I ever brought home first place but we competed a lot for a team trophy. And Salina High was pretty good about coming home with a team trophy just about every weekend.

Q: It sounds like it wasn't so much maybe the academics, but we might be able to look at the speech and debate as making you look at politics down the road as something that you might be able to do. What many people think is the hard part in politics is getting in front of people speaking and you actually started doing that in high school.

BG: I think speech and debate was a starting point. It was certainly one of the key early moments in my life, unbeknown to me, I was getting ready. The next sort of step was that I stayed there in Salina and went to Kansas Wesleyan. I was still interested in sports, playing football and playing baseball in college. But one day the theatre instructor, a guy named Jimmy Crank, approached me on campus and said, "You know, I'm short male actors in a show we're doing and I'd love to have you consider trying out." And once again it was one of those moments where you wonder, what was I thinking? But I said "Okay".

And so I then took that speech and debate and took it on stage, and I did some theatre stuff at Kansas Wesleyan, which was great for me because it was a small enough university that I got the attention I needed academically. I got the opportunity to play sports that I wanted to and I got involved in a lot more extracurricular kinds of things like theatre that I otherwise wouldn't have at a larger university. That sort of stair-stepped me into community theatre and I did a number of shows at the Salina Community theatre and so at that point you really develop a confidence and comfort level that you can stand up in front of a crowd of people and say what needs to be said or perform. And that's a lot of what running for public office is: the confidence to

perform. And you also always need to have that energy level and you always need to be ready, and I was, and I enjoyed that.

Q: Was this musicals, was it drama, both? What shows do you remember doing?

BG: I was involved in all aspects of theatre, both performing on stage and I did a lot of backstage supporting stuff. At Kansas Wesleyan, the first show was a Greek comedy; I believe it was called "The Birds" which is kind of an outrageously funny show. I then did a very dramatic Ibsen play called "Hedda Gabler." I always was poor in pronouncing the name of the show!

Oh golly, lots of community theatre musicals: "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying," was one of my favorites. I did a show called "Picnic," which was kind of a famous Kansas piece because it really was originally written about - and thematically had to do with - Independence, Kansas, and the Neewollah Festival. Anybody that's grown up in Southeast Kansas will know about Neewalloh and Independence, and there was a movie done in the 1950's with Kim Novak and William Holden, and probably in a horrible miscast situation I had the William Holden role in "Picnic."

So I did a little bit of everything and I enjoyed theatre. Once I got into political office, the guys there at the Topeka Community Theatre found out I had some ties back to theatre so I actually did a couple of shows when I was Governor. I made some cameo appearances. I performed in the "Odd Couple," as one of the poker players, and I actually did the voice-over for "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying," which was easy because I didn't actually have to appear and be there in person. It was great because it allowed the Community Theatre in Topeka to promote my involvement and raise some money and sort of generate some energy for the theatre.

Q: Now in the previous interview and you said it here, you said, "I can't say I was very good at sports." But even at a small college you have to have something to play sports, especially football. Did you play all four years? And the reason I ask is it actually is relatively rare for Kansas governors to be that active and to have a sports background. You'd think it would be very common, but it's actually not. Tell us about playing sports at Kansas Wesleyan.

BG: One of the reasons Kansas Wesleyan was so attractive to me is because of the opportunity to participate in lots of activities, especially sports. I'd practiced and been involved at the high school level but never really played much. But when I became a senior I grew a little and just maybe matured in terms of my sports, so I decided I was going to play football at Wesleyan. And one of my friends, Mike Lindsey, was kind of recruited to play at Wesleyan by Coach Gene Bissell - one of my other mentors in my life - and I told Coach Bissell that I was going to come to Wesleyan and more or less walk on and play football. I couldn't tell that he was happy about it, it wasn't like I was a star recruit or something, but things worked out.

Timing was everything - maybe a lot like politics - and I started as a freshman. I started every game for four years at Wesleyan and my freshman year at one point we were the third or fourth ranked NAIA small college in the nation. I got to play with a Little All American, Charlie Jessamy, who went on and had a very, very brief career with the New York Giants. So I went from my freshman year where we lost one game to a senior year or junior year where I think we won one game. But I look back and realize that I had as much fun in the years that we won as I had in the years where we lost.

I mixed in some baseball with that. Unfortunately, baseball was what really caused most of my injuries. It wasn't football! I tore my knee up on a couple of occasions playing baseball. And so baseball wasn't nearly as illustrious a career as my football time at Wesleyan. And I still stay very involved with Kansas Wesleyan. In fact I'm in the middle of chairing a capitol campaign to do a restoration of the football field. It's a great, great small college that means a lot to me, means a lot to my family. My dad was on the Board of Trustees. My mom was on the Board of Trustees. I've been on the Board of Trustees, so we stay very committed to that school.

Q: What positions did you play?

BG: I was a very small defensive end. I actually was a little heavier then. I probably played right at 200 lbs. And in those days, in the early 1970's that was about what you would expect at that position.

Q: You graduated from Kansas Wesleyan and you don't find out that Graves has been sold until 1980, so you have a couple of years there. What are you doing during this time?

BG: Yeah, after I graduated from Kansas Wesleyan my whole goal was to go back and do whatever it took to position myself to move into the management roles at Graves Truck Line, so for two years I worked in virtually all aspects of the company. I was what you might refer to as a management trainee. I was travelling out to Great Bend, Kansas, Manhattan, Kansas, filling some vacation time at some terminal facilities. I went to a little town called Tonkawa, Oklahoma that we used as a point to serve Blackwell and Enid, Oklahoma. I worked in the front office, loaded and unloaded trailers, worked a midnight shift on the dock there in Salina. So I was ready to assume my rightful place, at least what I thought it was, and my dad called me in one day and in effect said, "You know, times are changing. The industry is different than it was. Used to be that all you had to do was to commit yourself to work hard and you could succeed, but this is the day and age now where you've got to work smarter".

So he encouraged me to look at graduate school, which was really surprising because you have to understand that my dad didn't finish high school. And so, for him to recognize the need for higher education as a person that succeeded without much formal education, I find that interesting. So that's when I went to the University of Kansas and enrolled in the Masters of Business Administration program at KU.

While I was at KU, Dad and his brothers - it was a publicly traded company at that time - they had an offer to sell all the outstanding shares of stock that they held to a

Detroit-based company, so I got a call and basically was informed that the family business had been sold, and soon thereafter learned that the company that had acquired the family business had pretty much decided that they were going to ask the family to step aside so that they could bring in a whole new management team. So in the late 1970's, right before 1980, my whole life - at least at that moment, I thought - sort of crumbled, because what I had aspired to do was no longer available to me.

Q: Were you angry because you had essentially not only been trained, but you've majored in business at Kansas Wesleyan? You had spent a couple years essentially in management training. You had gone to graduate school on the advice of your father to prepare to step into this. So several years you could argue have been spent getting ready and then you're told, "Oh, never mind." Were you mad?

BG: I don't think I was mad about that the family decision to sell the company. I think I understood it because at that point in time we had thousands of people working across six or seven states, a lot of these were people that had been with our company for 40 years, probably some of them 50 years, and as a publically-traded company they'd been able to acquire stock and this was an enormously successful transaction financially, not just for the family but for them. So I was disappointed but I did understand it. I was still young enough that I just probably made the kind of mistake young people do, I thought well, you know, I'm not sure what I'm going to do with the rest of my life because that was all I had focused on. It really took me a while to sort of recalibrate and redefine what I thought might be of interest to me.

And it brings me further back around again to Gary Sherrer, because it was Gary who had gone on from teaching in Salina to working at Capitol Federal Savings & Loan, still a really fine company based out of Topeka, and Gary and I stayed in touch and he knew that I was looking for something to do, so he's the person that called me and said, "Hey, there's a guy running for president, George Bush." He's not getting a lot of traction in Kansas because most everybody's aligned with Bob Dole who, by the way, my Dad and our family had supported for years and years given the close geographical proximity of Russell and Salina. I mean it never dawned on me that Senator Dole might take exception to me signing on with one of his competitors! So that was when I signed on the George Bush for President campaign in 1980.

Q: Considering your political career, you're working for the opponent of Bob Dole, it seems almost outrageous, but you're saying you didn't really think about it. This was your first job and new to politics?

BG: Well, you know when I started in politics in 1980 I clearly was naïve. I had no appreciation at all for the competition between candidates. Obviously I had known who Bob Dole was most of my entire life, and it probably speaks volumes about Senator Dole that later on he became such a great supporter a great mentor. He means a lot to me in terms of what he and Elizabeth did to support my (gubernatorial) campaign. But I can say the same for President Bush, because I ran for governor in 1994 and just before the election President Bush flew into Kansas City and did an event for me. And when you're a young public official - I was Secretary of State at the time, running for governor, which is taking it from AA to major league - to have a former president of the

United States come in and know that he has remembered (is special). He and Mrs. Bush, Barbara, were always very gracious and always remembered the time I spent working in 1980 on their campaign. That's the kind of people they are so. So, I had a lot of fortunate little steps along the way that all added to the success that I enjoyed all those years.

Q: Now you're on the Bush campaign for a few months apparently? And obviously if you didn't like it you would have gone on to something else so there's something there that you must have enjoyed in terms of politics?

BG: The attraction to me of the 1980 Bush campaign? First of all there was a lot going on! Ronald Reagan (was running). Dole was running. John Anderson was running that year. It was the first time I had really spent much time in Topeka. I had grown up and gone to college in Salina. I then jumped over for a few years to Lawrence and had been there, but it was the first time I had been in Topeka, and we had a little cubby hole of an office a block and a half away from the State Capitol. But the Kansas State Capitol is just a beautifully impressive building, and so it was great to walk in the shadow of the Capitol every day to meet these young people that were all involved politically on the Bush campaign.

One of my jobs was to try to generate some interest in the Bush campaign by culling through some of the voter registration records and getting people to come out to some of our different events. This is what introduced me to the Secretary of State who was the chief election official for the state, and then that opened that door of course to give me a job in the Secretary of State's office when the Bush campaign finally closed down.

Bush was selected as the running mate to Ronald Reagan and was elected Vice President. Because of the work I had done on the campaign I got on the inaugural invitation list. I went to Washington with my Dad and we went to a number of the inaugural events that year. That's all just kind of heady stuff, and so I certainly was smitten and bitten by the political bug. And Jack Brier, then the Secretary of State, contacted me, who by the way was also friends with Gary Sherrer, and Jack contacted me and said "Hey, I have an opening in my office and I think you'd be a good choice. "Why don't you come talk to me?" So August of 1980 I started working for Jack.

Q: I think especially students who read this, many of them would be interested in getting into politics and I don't want to embarrass you, but what is it they're seeing that they're picking up the phone to Jack Brier and offering you a job? Because there's a lot of people that want those jobs. A lot of people that want their foot in the door and Gary Sherrer and Jack Brier must see something in you that is attractive. What do you think it is? If you can look back a bit?

BG: Looking back at the transition I made from graduate student at KU to Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, you know that happened over a period of about a year and a half. I think that both Gary Sherrer and Jack Brier saw in me some of the values my dad instilled in me. I was a hard worker. It may sound a little bit simplistic but I was a good kid, respectful. I was willing to do whatever I had to do. I didn't expect to be

elevated prematurely. I wasn't looking for a quick ride to the top. I was willing to do whatever it took. In fact, for my first job at the Secretary of State's office on any given day I might have been pushing a two-wheeler through the halls of the Capitol delivering a case of law books to a legislator's office. I would have been downstairs running a postage machine making sure that corporate annual reports were getting mailed out in a timely manner. I wasn't in a hurry. I wasn't looking to leap frog forward. I was prepared to do whatever was expected of me and that hard work paid off.

Q: I don't want to denigrate lawyers and people that go to law school but it sounds as if some of these people see in you someone who didn't go to law school and it sounds like they could trust you, maybe with your background, things like being in theater, sports and being on the loading docks as you said, came through that you could essentially be trustworthy in those jobs that they recommended.

BG: Well, I certainly think that of all the attributes that helped me be successful - I mean very candidly I was a jack of all trades and a master of none - but one area that I still think I do pretty well at is I understood teamwork. I understood the roles that everyone plays. I succeeded a lot because I found really good friends, really good co-workers who were really good at specific tasks and I always enjoyed empowering them to take care of their respective business, because at the end of the day you all end up succeeding. And as you move higher up the chain, you actually get in many ways a lot of credit for things you never did but that the people you surrounded yourself did and that's certainly true when you are the Governor because there is just so much going on with an enterprise the size of the State. So you've really got to have a lot of confidence in your team. And I think I did a pretty good job with my team.

Q: When you're in the Secretary of State's office you're under Jack Brier. Tell me about Jack Brier.

BG: Jack Brier. There's a handful of influential people in my life but in terms of opening the door and giving me this opportunity Jack's undoubtedly important. Jack saw in me some qualities that he thought would serve him well because he was very good about surrounding himself with good people. But I also had the benefit of watching Jack run for governor in 1986, and while he was not successful - I don't think Jack would mind me saying this - I got to watch Jack make mistakes and learn the things that didn't work for Jack.

And I had actually tried to resign in 1984 because Dole had become majority leader back in Washington and I thought it would be a great opportunity to go back and experience D.C., and Jack really talked me out of it. I had a letter of resignation prepared. I had my résumé ready, my recommendations from the people that were going to support me in a job with Dole. Jack talked me out of it because he could see ahead. He knew what his thoughts were about running for governor. He had already concluded that I would be a good candidate to run for Secretary of State, and so that was a very defining moment when he rejected my letter of resignation and talked me into staying and running for Secretary of State in 1986. And winning started me on the path that ended up with the gubernatorial run in 1994. And Jack to this day remains one of my dearest, closest, supportive friends. He's a special guy.

Q: He basically said to you, "I think you should run for Secretary of State in a few years." It sounds like something you hadn't really thought about as you were getting ready to go to D.C.

BG: No, and I hadn't thought about running for political office. And maybe that's what makes how things turned out all the more interesting. I mean, there's an odd element, the fact that this was never what I planned to do and yet when I decided to do it, it was a lot easier than I thought.

Q. In 1986 the first time in your life you decided to run for office and you're not running for City Council or even the State Legislature, it's a statewide race...

BG: Yes, in 1986 I probably surprised myself that I ended up running for Secretary of State. It was never what I had thought or aspired to do. Jack really convinced me that I could do it and that I should do it, and it was probably then that I really discovered the power of this great family business that I had grown out of. Graves Truck Line had little freight terminals in 36 cities in Kansas, and so for 30 years local businessman had seen a Graves truck pull up at the back door delivering their freight. People had become so conditioned seeing Graves' trucks running up and down the road and so I harnessed that, I bottled up that logo. I made it my campaign logo. I utilized that network of people in communities all around the state, employees, again, most if not all of whom had very good feelings about that company and had made great livings working there. It was kind of like getting a head start on a statewide network that other people would spend months trying to build.

I had an old Chevrolet and jumped in and just started driving the wheels off if it, going to every civic club I could and introducing myself. And I had a couple of very good opponents that year. My Democratic opponent was Judy Reynolds, who was a state legislator from Topeka and was a fine lady and a good candidate. Another was one of the members of the State Board of Education from Whitewater. But it wasn't like I was just handed the job, because with Jack leaving a lot of people said "Hey, this is my chance to get a statewide office." But I won the primary and won the general and the next thing I knew I was holding a statewide office at the age of 33.

Q: So you had a primary for Secretary of State...You had opponents. So, you had the Graves name but you would need also to have a campaign. Did you find the fundraising difficult? Some people don't like it. That was one of the things you would have to do as a candidate. Was that okay?

BG: I would like to think that people recognized in me an individual that was going to be good as a public servant and they overlooked some of my inadequacies as a politician. I clearly could do the public speaking, I had that part down, and I had six years of experience knowing what the office did. I had relationships with CPA's, with attorneys, with people that interacted with that office, but I probably drew on that skill of surrounding myself with good people. I found other people who knew how to raise money and let them do that. In fact, I can't tell you that I ever was very good at fund raising throughout my entire political career because it just didn't appeal to me. I wasn't good at it, so I let other people do it.

Q: So you become Secretary of State and then you obviously get to the governorship. You end up with two terms as Secretary of State. What does the Secretary of State do? What did you when you arrived there every morning? How did you end up spending your time as a Secretary of State of Kansas?

BG: Probably one of the hardest questions on the campaign trail was to explain to people what the Secretary of State did. I mean, why should it matter? How did you generate some energy? And it was hard. And I think it would be even harder today because the office has been transformed dramatically since even the 1980's. When I was there we literally hand-filed a whole array of legal documents that were nothing spectacular or sexy but they were critically important to articles of incorporation for people in business in the state: Annual reports to pay your franchise taxes, what we called uniformed commercial code lien documents that were a big part of the financial institutions in the state. We compiled and sold statute books, session laws, journals of the Kansas Legislature. We had retail operations selling Kansas flags and different things like that. Principally the job was known for being the chief election officer of the State. Although the 105 county clerks or election commissioners didn't work and report to the Secretary of State, they looked to the Secretary of State for guidance on the administration of all the elections in the State.

And about that time we were starting to experiment with mailed ballots, quite an innovative concept that you don't have to go to the polls any more, you can fill out a ballot at home and mail it in. And so that sort of made it a little more interesting position at the time to talk about some of these innovative elections techniques. We were starting to use optical scanners instead of hand-counting ballots; we were using different kinds of ballot technology. So it's still even hard today for me to sit here and give you a real inspiring "this is why you really need to elect me," speech, but at the end of the day what I think worked was to simply say, I've got six years of experience doing this whole array of business-related services and election-related services. None of these other people do. It's not broken, let's not try to fix it, let's just stay the course. And you've got this known sort of Kansas quantity, Graves, you know, ready to move into this trusted position. And it worked remarkably well.

Q: You're re-elected in 1990. Did you have an opponent?

BG: In 1990 I was re-elected and I did have an opponent. It was just token opposition. There wasn't a whole lot whole lot going on. Actually the landmark in 1990 was I married my wife, Linda and so that really cemented to some extent the team, the family that was going to be running for governor four years later.

The other thing that I think was significant about the election in 1990 was that the Republicans didn't do very well statewide in 1990. We still won the constitutional offices, the executive branch offices, but they were shaky margins of victory for a lot of reasons. When the night was over of course Governor Hayden had been defeated by Governor Finney and the attorney general had been re-elected, but just barely. Bob Stefan had just hung on that night. And he had had some challenges that he had to overcome that made it look unlikely that he would seek the governor's office and so even that night I had a few close friends approach me before I'm even re-elected as a

Secretary of State, suggesting that the die had been cast and that in four years I'd be running for governor. Now, I had a lot of other things on my mind at that moment to believe that was true, but it turned out that was sort of the beginning of the race four years later.

Q: And when had you met Linda? You say you got married in 1990.

BG: Linda and I had met in 1988 when she was an attorney in Kansas City. I suppose if the truth be known she was like a lot of attorneys, she was trying to figure out how to expedite filings in the Secretary of State's office! The epicenter of legal document filing in America was in Delaware; everybody wanted to file those Delaware corporations because they had a very favorable corporate code in Delaware. I was great friends with Mike Harkins, who was the Secretary of State of Delaware and, I kid you not, I think Linda was more excited about a dinner where she had a chance to meet Mike Harkins than she was about meeting me! She was a Washburn Law School graduate and had had been born in Topeka. She had travelled around with her family but came back to law school in Topeka and graduated in 1979 and had gone to work for a law firm in Kansas City. We were basically set up on a blind date. The date didn't go exactly like it was originally planned. There's two different sides to that story. It required me calling for a follow up to actually get together with her, and it was great chemistry and she is to this very day just an integral part of the success I have achieved.

Q: This was in Topeka, this first date?

BG: Kansas City. We were going to have a first blind date at some kind of a gala function in Kansas City and I thought that she understood that she was to attend and that I was going to meet her there. She assumed that I would call her and more formally ask that she meet me there, and so we got our signals crossed, and so she didn't show up. I put my tux on and went to the event, and she wasn't there, which quite frankly made me all the more curious.

So, the first date just didn't work out the way either one of us thought. I thought she was going to be there waiting for me or would meet me there, and she thought I was going to call to follow up and call. I didn't call. She didn't show up, so as a Secretary of State I was fascinated that an attorney would stand me up! She would later say that she never stood me up, that I didn't call. So I called her then a few days later and I remember saying, "I think you owe me a date." And she took it in good stride, good humor, and we in fact we went to the Missouri Repertory Theatre, went to dinner following that, and got married in 1990.

Q: So you are the Secretary of State of Kansas standing in an event in Kansas City with your tux on and your date doesn't show up.

BG: My date didn't arrive but a good time was had by all. And actually it worked out great.

Q: You were able to observe three governors. What works, what doesn't work from what you observe from these three governors? We'll start with John Carlin.

BG: I had the opportunity to work in and around a number of governors during my tenure at the statehouse. Initially it was John Carlin who was of great interest to me because John Carlin was from Smolan, which is just a few miles away from Salina, my home town. I had known the Carlin name. Governor Carlin's father, Jack, had been a friend of my father's. In fact they were in the dairy cattle business and at one point Graves Truck Line moved cattle. So we knew that family. He had been the Speaker of the House and I very quickly developed a great appreciation for the institutional knowledge that a member of the legislature can bring to a political campaign and then to their service, especially as Governor, because so much has to do with budgets, policy issues, that are ultimately decided or are started in the legislature. Governor Carlin was just a very fine public official, a good politician, and was the first governor elected to two four-year terms, and that always gets your attention.

Q: How about Mike Hayden?

BG: Mike Hayden has become one of my one of my great friends, somewhat of a political mentor. He was always very gracious to me and supportive of me. He was Governor during my first term as Secretary of State. I'd seen Mike in action as Speaker as well in the early 1980's. He instilled in me a great appreciation for wildlife and the Kansas outdoors, and I think everyone knows that's his passion. It was a big focus of his tenure as Governor, and obviously we circled back around to that because when I needed someone to run Wildlife and Parks and he was available, I asked him. He got me involved in fishing, got me involved in turkey hunting. He and Patty are just great, great people. You know, it's probably easy for a governor to get so busy with everything on your plate that you don't have a lot of time for perhaps some of the other executive branch offices and the officials, but Mike always went out of his way to graciously include me in things that were special, and he made you feel special as an executive branch officer like I was when I was Secretary of State.

Q: Joan Finney?

BG: Governor Finney was beloved by many, many people. She was one of the finest retail politicians you'd ever want to meet. If you went to an event somewhere out in the state and you were there to see Governor Finney press the flesh and meet and greet, wow, she was just really good. And what she perhaps lacked in policy skills, I mean, as Governor she made up for that because she went out and found good people to put in her cabinet and to run state agencies. She had had experience as the State Treasurer. We essentially served together opposite one another when I was the Secretary of State.

Her victory was a surprise, no doubt about it. But she sort of tapped into a populous vein in that election against Governor Hayden and I think just snuck up on the Governor to some extent and won. It was always to me tragic that she was only able to serve one term and then decided - I suppose rightly so given how her health got away from her in such a short period of time - that she didn't want to seek a second term. But she was ground-breaking in the role she played in politics for women in Kansas.

Q: So you run for governor in 1994. You're not going to be handed the nomination from you party. It's a crowded primary. Gene Bicknell is a key opponent and he has

quite a bit of money and you're able to fundraise as well. What's your strategy? How do you approach this race in terms of beating Gene Bicknell. There were others but that's probably the tough one to beat.

BG: The campaign in 1994 was kind of like diving into deep water and not being sure exactly what you're going to find. You just have to go all in and you have to be willing to lose. If you're going to run you need to know the minute you dive in that there's a chance I'm not going to win. But I'd been in the Secretary of State's office for 14 years, and it was just time to sink or swim.

My opponents: Gene Bicknell was an incredibly successful businessman who had a passion to want to be in public office. Fred Kerr had been majority leader of the State Senate and had a tremendous following and backing from western Kansas. Those were the two individuals in the primary that stood out and both brought their own very good skill sets and capabilities to the race. It probably benefitted me that there were a number of other individuals in the race because the more you get in there it takes a lot smaller slice of the pie to win. And I had 8 years of experience in state government as an executive branch official to run on. No one else had that. Although obviously the office of Secretary of State is dramatically different than being governor, I had done state budgets before, I'd managed people before, I'd delivered services to people before.

So we went back to basics. We moved back to Graves Truck Line, struck up the theme "Loading High and Tight," which was our way of conveying to people our intention to be very efficient, very effective in our administration of state government. And my media crew, Paul Wilson, was instrumental in helping frame that up as an image of me loading a trailer, reminding people that my Dad had always instructed me to "load 'em high and tight." I can remember walking down a parade route in McPherson, Kansas, and people on the sidewalk yelling out, "Hey Bill, load 'em high and tight!" I mean, it resonated, and you'd sort of laugh and say well, that's kind of silly, but the campaign having that kind of identity connected to you means an awful lot.

Q: Now in the last interview you said you weren't sure exactly who first suggested using the "High and Tight" phrase...

BG: I honestly do not remember how we came up with that whole theme. Campaigns do become a blur. I mean, you're paddling as fast as you can and trying to cover as many miles as you can and assembling a team on the fly. One day someone is an advisor, the next day they're not. I mean it's kind of an insane process. But I did have a great group of people.

I ought to comment that State Senator Dick Bond invited me over to his home one day to meet with a former Republican Committeeman and State Party Chairman, Jack Ransom, and then State Party Chairman, Fred Logan - three guys that were key Republican stalwarts - and we sat and talked and they essentially said we think you should run for governor and we're prepared to support you. That was a big moment for me because these were three guys in their own right who could be running for Congress or Senate or Governor perhaps themselves, and the three of them said we're going to

hook up with you. And so I knew at that point I had some of the sort of institutional Republicans ready to help me out.

Q: Gene Bicknell, if I'm correct, had been criticized for helping to produce...I guess it would be an R+++ movie. What was your thinking in terms of your consultant saying, Mr. Graves are you ready.....would you go negative if you have to?

BG: The campaign as it developed relative to Gene Bicknell's candidacy probably to this day is one of the more sort of troublesome moments for me. Because you never know how you're doing. You think you're doing well, but you're not sure. And generally the rule of thumb in politics is, don't leave anything to chance. You kind of drive your way home to victory. And so it was discovered that Gene had been involved in a film that was probably - knowing him as well as I do today and what a great guy he is - not his pride and joy. And so there was a decision made that we ought to run with this, we ought to make clear to people that his judgment is such that this was the kind of thing he would be involved in. That campaign TV spot was developed and it was run. In hindsight - because we won fairly easily - we didn't need to run it. But we didn't know that at the time. It probably introduced me to the tougher side of politics. I still don't care for it. I do understand that it's kind of what happens and I ended up taking my share of blows along the way as well. But that was one that I even to this day wish there was a way to have a do-over, because I came to know Gene as a really fine guy and actually worked with him on some projects in Pittsburgh and he's so loyal and supportive of Pittsburgh, and so you regret that kind of thing.

Q: So if you had it to do over you'd say "No"?

BG: Well, of course I know now that I came out on top. I mean, it's just so hard to know when you've got things trending your way, and those polls can be awfully misleading sometimes.

Q: There was an article later, written by, I think, Jim McLain who said that you were a very wily strategist, and that your campaign leaked a poll, showing you losing the race in order to make sure your supporters showed up. Is that true?

BG: In fact it goes beyond that. There was a poll leak that was designed to inspire people to get fired up, indicated to show that we weren't doing as well as we thought. It's even a little more insidious than that. My brother-in-law had come to help out with the campaign and he and one of the other campaign aides came up with the notion of concocting what turned out to be a phony Jim Slattery briefing memo that in effect highlighted all of the things they viewed as the campaign weaknesses I had that they were planning to exploit. And these guys actually conned me into believing that they had come into possession of this document, which was the road map that Jim Slattery was going to follow, and that I needed to take notice of those things and make an extra special effort to counter those points. And in fact they just made it up! All they were doing were trying to get inside my head and get me to be the candidate that I guess they knew or hoped I would be. And it really worked quite well.

Q: Why did it work quite well?

BG: It worked because I believed it was a campaign document. I believed the points that were raised were legitimate. In effect what it called on me to do was to be more assertive in campaign debates on certain points and certain issues that this document suggested they were prevailing on given my unwillingness to engage on whatever it might be. They were worried that I was too nice a campaigner.

Q: Is that just a part of politics? That it can get pretty nasty and you have to roll with it? Or is it something you're looking back and you still say you never liked that part?

BG: Politics and public service is a tough business. But sometimes I think people make it more so than it needs to be. And I remember there was a Wichita Eagle political cartoon, something about "Billy the Boy Scout," and it was really about me being too nice. But I think I had the ability to be aggressive, and doing what needed to get done, when it needed to get done. But I wasn't one of those people that got up every morning and felt like I had to prove to everybody that I was the meanest, baddest guy on the block just because I was a Republican candidate for governor or I had become governor. I just don't think you ought to burn any bridges that you don't have to burn. In this business you never know who you're going to need as a friend and ally the next day. I will say I survived two terms and I tell people all the time I had the same wife, I wasn't indicted and I got a job when I left office. I think that's pretty good.

Q: Before we get to the general election, you had to pick a lieutenant governor candidate who would serve with you. How was that process? This was new for you. How did it work?

BG: The process for deciding on a running mate in 1994 was interesting. We had a number of candidates and I talked to a couple of people, but at the end of the day everybody concluded that the significant weakness I had was a lack of legislative experience. That I had the executive experience, I had the business experience, but that I didn't know anything about the legislature, and that was true. And at the same time one of the key emerging issues in Kansas was education, the funding of education and just the quality and support of education. And so we went after Sheila Frahm, who was the Senate majority leader and had been Senate Chair of the Education Committee, a very well-respected, great lady from western Kansas. Her appeal was also due in part to the fact we were running against Fred Kerr, who had been a key member of the Kansas State Senate.

Sheila at first was a little reluctant. In fact I believe she might have said no the first time around, but it turned out that she finally agreed and said yes and being from Colby, she really anchored the western Kansas vote, the agricultural community vote, and she had strong supporters in education. She sort of put a stake through the heart of the lack of legislative experience piece, and she just became a very, very good match as a running mate.

Q: You're running against Jim Slattery. Looking back on it now, were you nervous about the general once you got the nomination?

BG: Regarding the 1994 general election, I was nervous about where that campaign was headed the day that Governor Finney announced that she wasn't going to seek re-election, because we had sort of predicated the whole thing on the idea that we'd eventually be running against Joan Finney, the incumbent. Then all of a sudden she steps aside and you get Jim Slattery, a six-term Democratic Congressman who was very bright, a very good public speaker, and had very good broad support throughout the state. I think Jim knows this as well that in the early debates I was essentially going to school on Jim's knowledge of a lot of public issues that I didn't know a whole lot about. I was listening closely to how he responded, which would help then give me a way to respond at later dates myself. And I think that about any other year our race would have been much, much closer, but timing is everything and Jim picked just the year that if you were a Democrat anywhere in this country, you weren't going to do very well in an election, and that was certainly true in Kansas and it turned out to be a lot easier than we had anticipated.

Q: I'm going to jump ahead because I think it is a very interesting point of your eight years. Bob Dole resigns as Senator and it certainly wasn't unprecedented for governors to appoint themselves or to appoint a place-holder and then run six months, a year down the line. It's happened quite a bit. So Dole resigns. What goes through your head? Tell us about that.

BG: I was in Washington in a meeting of the Republican Governors' Association at the Willard Hotel. Bob Dole came over. I assumed it was simply to greet and say some things to the Republican Governors, which he did, but he then had a staff member tap me on the shoulder and we went to the side of the room and sat down. He wanted to say something. He leaned over and said, "I'm going to make an announcement tomorrow that is going involve you," and I initially thought he simply meant he was going to announce some money for McConnell Air Force Base or that he'd done something for the farm program. I think he could tell from the blank expression on my face that I didn't know where he was going. So, he then said, "I'm gonna resign." And I whispered back and I said, 'As Senate Majority Leader?' and he said, "No, from the Senate." And it was just one of those moments where you could have knocked me over with a pin because it just all sort of cascaded on me, the implications of we're going to lose our Republican Majority Leader of the United States Senate, we're going to lose the senior senator from Kansas, and I'm going to be in a position where I'm going have to name a replacement for Bob Dole.

Now, just trust me, there's a lot I want to aspire to do in life, but picking a replacement for Bob Dole is really not one of them! Because what happened almost immediately is lots of people started lobbying, lots of people wanted a free U.S. Senate seat! And you discover very quickly that you can only pick one person and at the end of the day that person's likely going to believe that they were the one that should've got it and everybody you don't pick is going to be mad you didn't pick them, so it's a thankless job. The other thing is the news media coverage. That was the most intense few days of media scrutiny I've ever experienced in my life. They were everywhere I went. Every time I got out of the car they were there with the cameras rolling, wanting to know, "What are you going to do?" And obviously I needed some time to really think about it.

Q: What was your thought process?

BG: I never once thought about myself as a successor to Senator Dole. I loved what I was doing. I loved state government, and probably the more time I spent in state government the more I appreciated how little the federal government held no attraction to me. I talked with a lot of people. My Chief of Staff, Joyce McGarity, Gary Shearer, my then- Commerce Secretary, my Lieutenant Governor Sheila Frahm, and Kent Glasscock, those were probably my four closest advisors, but also talked with Dick Vaughn and Jack Ransom. There was just a lot of conversation that went on. I also talked pretty extensively with Senator (Nancy) Kassebaum about the whole thing. I guess the blessing and the curse was I could name a dozen people that were really fine people, capable of being members of the United States Senate and taking care of the business of the people of Kansas. But I only had one to pick. And at the end of the day when my Lieutenant Governor Sheila Frahm "I really would like this appointment," it was very, very difficult for me to say no because I had gone to her and asked her to sign up as my Lieutenant Governor and she had then played such a key role in my election as Governor. That just goes back to kinda who I am. I couldn't deny Sheila that opportunity and I thought she'd be very good at it as well. In fact, I believe she would have been very good as Senator. I think she would admit that she stumbled as a political candidate for Senate in that election.

Q: I'd love you to name names but you probably won't! How does somebody let you know that they wouldn't mind getting that appointment? Do people literally call you or do they come to through those circuitous routes of an aide saying, "Well, I've heard"...How do the politics of that work?

BG: People that were interested in Senator Dole's vacancy communicated in a variety of ways. Some simply just called me. Some just said, "Hey, I'm interested." And I don't think he would mind me saying, Governor (Sam) Brownback was one of those people. He was serving in Congress at that point. He was very interested in the Senate seat, and he called me and it was a very amicable, professional conversation. He said he would be interested in the appointment and I indicated that I wasn't sure which direction I was going, but I think I probably knew even at that point, it was not likely that I would designate Sam. He said to me, "If I'm not your appointee, then know that I'm pretty well inclined that I will run for the Senate seat when the opportunity presents itself." It wasn't personal, it was just business, and he obviously followed through, had a real sound plan in mind for how he'd accomplish that and was successful. Life goes on.

Q: You were showed quite a bit of ambition running for Secretary of State, knowing when to run for governor, and then when possibilities arose in Washington, D.C., you decided not to do it. It's probably a big decision because people say, "Hey, Governor you can be X-Y-Z," so why not?

BG: My passion was always the state of Kansas. I grew up there, went to school there, got my political start there, enjoyed those 16 years in elective office there, and Washington just never appealed to me. It was always a place I wanted to visit but never live. I am living here now, but of course I never envisioned I could come full circle back

to the industry of my family. But I think that both my wife and I, when we adopted Katie in 1995 and brought her into our lives and by the time we left office in 2003 she was 7 going on 8-years-old, we just in a way made a calculation that we had sort of been there, done that. By 2003 that would have been really eight statewide elections, four primaries, four general elections. I had been in 22 years of state government service and I'm kind of a believer in term limits. I like the idea of people getting in office, serving with great passion and conviction, but then moving out of the way to let some new ideas and some new energy enter, and so, I had enough confidence I guess in Kansas and our system that I was pretty comfortable that life would go on without Bill Graves as an elected public official for Kansas. And it's worked out pretty good.

Q: The conservative/moderate split. How did you view those social issues? You were accused essentially by some in the media of, for example, reluctantly signing the Gay Marriage Ban. Tell me if that's true or not. And the whole abortion back and forth? I even found an article on you commenting on the evolution controversy. The Gay Marriage Ban and the Evolution controversy you use the same term, you told them, and I'm paraphrasing, "I'm not staying up very late at night thinking about these things." Can you talk about the social issues?

BG: You know, as I think back on my election in 1994 and the emergence of social issues and social conservatives and the Republican Party, my timing was probably fortunate in that I was not a candidate later. I would have had a much harder time if I was running today than when I ran then. In fact, by 1998 the conservatives had taken over the state party and David Miller felt compelled to run against me when I ran for re-election, which speaks a lot about how I just missed the edge of that real strong conservative wave.

I have to say, I'm the son of a businessman. I saw government as a business, a business whose job was to provide services and take care of the needs of people, and I know it irritated a lot of conservatives that I didn't just buy into all of the angst and the concern over some of the social issues. I know how important they are to other people but they just didn't rise to that level on my "to do" list enough that satisfied others.

When we went through the real enormous conversations about tax cuts in the early stages of my administration I think people wanted to somehow believe I wasn't a proponent of tax cuts. Well, the truth of the matter was I was always in favor of tax cuts. I was just trying to strike that nice balance between cutting enough to satisfy what we can cut but make sure we don't mess up the services that we're committed to providing. Conservatives tended to believe there's no tax cut that's that is too big and to the extent we do err, all we'll do is properly realign government in a smaller way. What's happening in Washington with the debate we're having now, to me is at the macro of what we did in Kansas in the late 1990's.

I just didn't invest a lot of time and energy on the social issues. To the extent I did, I was certainly a moderate Republican who tried to find a compromise position. Whether it was abortion, whether it was guns, whatever it might be, it was just like the dynamic today, where people were beginning already to sort of believe on the

conservative side that compromise was just not possible, that it wasn't doable. And I kept trying to be a guy willing to compromise. So we tended to agree to disagree.

Q: In many of the articles on the abortion issue you're labeled as various things. Where did you consider yourself on abortion? Were you pro choice? How did you even think about it?

BG: On abortion, I have to start by saying Linda and I adopted a baby at birth and so we feel very strongly about the rights of unborn children to come into this world and grow up and be in loving, caring homes. But I can also sort of segment myself and say that I do understand that there are circumstances, and I think the courts have worked really hard at trying to draw that fine line of saying there are circumstances where a woman has a right to, and a need to, seek to terminate a pregnancy. So we went to great lengths to try to be as supportive as we could of pro-life concerns, supporting adoption, tax credits, all the things we did, but I always tried to stop short of crossing that legal line that I think has been drawn and re-affirmed. And even though there were still these restrictions on what you can and can't do, I think we handled it reasonably well. The fact that I had people on both sides unhappy with decisions I was making tells me I was probably about in the right spot.

Q: Did it frustrate you that you were trying to craft something palatable to the majority of Kansans...

BG: When you're the Governor you quickly understand that lots of times there are just shenanigans that go on in the legislature. I mean, they may not like to have it called that, but it is what it is. They just craft and do things to try to embarrass other members of the legislature or embarrass the Governor. I was always willing to talk to people but there was a point at which we had to finally make a decision and do business. I vetoed a couple of bills. It was gut wrenching to do that. One was on concealed carry. We also dealt with a number of abortion issues. But there were plenty of opportunities for Kansans to object to my work as governor at the polls in 1998, and for conservatives to support David Miller in 1998 and it didn't happen. In fact 1998 was the best political year I ever had. So, I'd like to think that we were doing a fairly good job of responding to what Kansans were looking for in a governor.

Q: Did it feel lonely in that spot, as you said, gut wrenching at times, and like you wouldn't be rewarded no matter what you did?

BG: In my mind, there's no doubt that moderation and centrists in the political world are few and far between, whether you're a Republican or a Democrat. The shrill, loud volume is coming from the far left and from the far right and I believe that to some extent shame on us, those of us that occupy the middle, because we've kind of gotten lazy and allowed those two extremes to dominant. I'm not a media basher, but I think it's it's easier and more fun to report on the shrill right and left than it is to try to find the deep breadth and scope of the middle of American thought in politics and in public policy these days.

I had a state senator come into my office one day and simply tell me that compromise was a dirty word. Well, much like today in American politics, that idea starts to create a dynamic where it's hard for anything to happen. And so, I probably sound like an old fuddy-duddy, but I have a lot of respect for the Alan Simpsons, the Nancy Kassebaums, Bob Doles, the Bill Bradleys, you know the statesmen-like public officials who could be great marvelous politicians when it was time to be a great marvelous politician, but also understood the moment when that stopped and the business of governing begins. I think today politics is 24/7, 365, it never stops, and again that's why maybe it also contributed to that desire by me to move on and let others do this business because it's not something I'm interested in anymore.

Q: I can't not ask this: In 1998 the State Party Chair conservative runs against you. Four years later, a conservative, Tim Shallenberger, is running for governor, and says, "I need your endorsement." It sounds like the normal rules don't pertain to that situation, that party loyalty is good when we need it, but there was no party loyalty in 1998 when the state chair decides to try to take out the sitting Governor. Is this part of the process, because you didn't seem too happy in 1998.

BG: The tension that exists between conservatives and moderates, conservatives and centrists, it's very real and because both view how our energy and effort should be spent and where we should deal with issues very differently. I mean, in hindsight, obviously David Miller did me a great favor because he gave me reason to motivate the centrist base and to really get out and sort of flex our muscles, and we did. And I must confess, I still think that's very doable politically, but it scares people to death who are currently in that position. I mean, people tend to want to run more to the right, because they're just afraid of what might happen to them in the primaries.

First of all it's hard to get used to the fact that you're going to be gone and somebody's going to come in and shake your hand and then it's just .it's over. But when the House Speaker, Tim Shallenberger, got the nomination in 2002, it was awkward for me because he had defeated two candidates who had become great friends of mine. Certainly Kent Glasscock, a running mate to Bob Knight, was one of my best friends and Bob Knight's wife, Jane, had run my Wichita office forever and ever. Dave Kerr was president of the Senate, had been very supportive and had become a good friend, and he had Connie Hubbell with him, who was one of my Cabinet secretaries. So these people were all near and dear to me and yet they lost to the more conservative candidate.

And so for me to have the conservative candidate win and then immediately be asked to come in and endorse him, a person that even though I'm friends with Tim and have known him forever he would admit that the others were a lot closer to me. It was just awkward and I probably didn't handle it that well. Also, I'm not sure endorsements at the end of the day really amount to a hill of beans. It's a lot more symbolic than anything else. But I think with Kathleen (Sebelius') candidacy, she pretty well teed herself up for her election and whether I did or didn't endorse Shallenberger wasn't going to have a lot to do with the success or failure in that campaign.

Q: The Transportation Bill. Tell us about it. What did you do to get that passed?

BG: Well, everyone knew about my history in transportation, so it wasn't like I was new to the subject. What I think we did successfully to get that bill passed and passed so easily was first of all we developed a really broad coalition of stakeholders and said to everybody, look, if you want support for general aviation airports, you have to be in our deal, if you want roads and bridges, concrete and asphalt, you have to be in our deal, if you want public transportation, you have to be in our deal." I mean, we decided that we were going to harness all that energy and not let anybody freelance on us, so we got lots of diverse community and political support because of that. This included the railroads which of course as a trucker, I think people were astounded that we did so much for the short line railroads and some substantial things for the majors.

So, that was No. 1. No. 2, I led with my chin. I obviously was from a trucking background but I said, look, if we're going to build real infrastructure, we're going to have to have real money, so we're going to raise the fuel tax. And I think at the end of the day, Kansans get that. People understand you don't get stuff for nothing. It's not free. So we sort of led with our chin. I think the other thing was we floated initially a really aggressive bond program that I think would have worked, but a number of legislators didn't like the idea. And in fact it was one of those days when there was a sort of phony baloney vote out on the House floor just to embarrass me. I wasn't embarrassed by it, it was actually okay because it made the point that we're not going to do this massive bonding thing. But it turned out they came back and said, "But we will do pretty substantial bonding coupled with the use of federal funds coupled with the use of a fuel tax increase," and we had the quarter cent sales tax still left over that we were dedicated to highways, so unlike Governor Hayden, who just had to almost pull teeth on his initial plan, it was almost remarkable that it just all came together.

Q: Personally, in a situation like that, what did you have to do? John Anderson told me that he would get the legislative leaders in the room and they would lock the door and give them lunch. What tactics did you use to lobby legislators?

BG: My approach from the very beginning was to empower lots of community involvement, lots of business leaders, chambers of commerce, these diverse advocacy groups. Maybe it's a little bit like I commented earlier about my fund raising prowess. I'm not very good about lobbying, I never was good about twisting arms, and at the end of the day I didn't do a heck of a lot of it. I just managed the process and the votes just fell into place. Everybody knew we needed the program. Everybody knew how beneficial it was going to be at the end of the day. So I ended up getting probably one of my proudest legislative accomplishments without really doing too much.

Q: Do you personally like to go back to Kansas and drive on those roads?

BG: I'm very proud of Kansas. In fact I'm astounded here in Washington how poorly the federal government is managing current infrastructure investment. Everybody knows it's critical to our economy, it creates jobs, our mobility depends upon it and we're currently stuck going nowhere fast on the national program.

Q: You do something at the end of your eight years that the Republicans essentially are not supposed to do. There is a budget shortfall. You have a mix of cuts and tax

increases and you get that passed. You know, it's not exactly what you want but but again, how do you do that, and it's not something that people want to talk about now, but when you look back it's very beneficial to the state and certainly at the time or the State would have been in big, big trouble. How do you accomplish that? Do you stand up there in front of the Legislature even though you know they're not going to be happy? And you tell them that we've got to do it.

BG: The final years were challenging and they weren't the years I would have preferred to have, and it's probably because I compare them to the early years, which was absolutely unbelievable. You know, (in the late 1990's) we had so much money we argued over how big the tax cuts are and how big the spending increases are going to be. It was a great time to be Governor. I suppose I felt like in those final years that it's your job, it's what you owe to the state, you owe it to the next governor and the next legislature. You can't just simply walk away from the hard job when you've had the benefit of what I think was probably six years of the easy job.

While I think that there were certainly legislators who didn't care a whole lot for me and my philosophy and my governing style, I think those first six years I really did develop some friendships. I think people knew me to be an honest broker, and I decided that my responsibility was to lead with my chin. You know, your legacy is what your legacy is, and I just did what needed to be done and did it in a way that I think legislators, they said, look, if the Governor can stick his chin out and lead on this, (we can act).

My re-election was a fairly strong endorsement, and so I think people said, "Hey, if Bill Graves is going to lead on this, we're going to take a risk and follow." I'd like to think that turned out okay, but then again you know things change so quickly. The ebb and flow in political fortunes and fiscal fortunes for states and the national government is constant. Every day's a new day in this business and you can only do your best each and every day.

Q: You had to cut money from departments and programs, and you even got sued by people saying that the cuts were illegal, and you had opponents and people not happy, saying you're cutting meals from the elderly. Is that the hardest part of the eight years?

BG: You know, the cuts at the end were some of the most difficult painful decisions, but only because of where we had been. Things had gone so well, but, you know, you don't get to choose, you play the hand that's dealt you, and we had tough times in 2001 and 2002. I had already agreed to take the job with the American Trucking Association, and part of what we needed to do was raise the fuel tax, and in fact, some of my critics led the way in sort of promoting that, anticipating that I would then not support it, given where I was going career-wise. I was humored by it but happy to disappoint them, that I wouldn't not do what was right for Kansas just because I was eventually going to become the head of the American Trucking Association and the truckers might not like fuel taxing. We needed to take care of the road program in Kansas and we did. I thoroughly enjoyed 22 years of public service. I'd like to think at the end of the day, I

had more good days than bad days in serving the people of Kansas and I will be forever thankful and honored by that opportunity. Thank you.