

Interview of Gus Bogina by Ed Flentje, February 6, 2018  
Kansas Oral History Project Inc.

H. EDWARD “ED” FLENTJE: This oral history interview of August “Gus” Bogina, former member of both the Kansas House of Representatives and the Kansas Senate, is being conducted under the sponsorship of the Kansas Oral History Project, Inc., a nonprofit corporation created for the purpose of establishing an archive of oral histories of Kansas state legislators who served prior to the year 2000. These interviews are funded in part by a grant from the Kansas Humanities Council.

Professor Ed Flentje of Wichita State University is conducting this interview at the Kansas Statehouse in Topeka, Kansas, on February 16th, 2018. Audio and video services are being provided by the Chapman Center for Rural Studies at Kansas State University under the direction of Tom Parish.

Mr. Bogina, originally from Shawnee, Kansas, and now retired, worked as a consulting engineer during his career. He graduated from Kansas State University with a degree in engineering. He was first elected to the Kansas House of Representatives in 1974 and reelected to two additional terms, serving from 1975 through 1980; in 1980, he was elected to the Kansas Senate and reelected to four additional terms. He served as chair of the Senate Ways and Means Committee for eleven sessions, 1985 through 1995.

Does that sound reasonably accurate?

AUGUST “GUS” BOGINA JR.: Very much so. I think that amounts to twelve sessions, but that’s—

EF: Well, let me start by giving a little bit of background before you got to the legislature. I know you were from Johnson County, but—

GB: Not originally, but—

EF: Originally, where did you come from? GB: Crawford County.

EF: Crawford County.

GB: And I was born and raised nine miles north and two miles west of Pittsburg, on a farm, two miles west of the town of Arma, A-r-m-a. Went to grade school there in a country grade school. There were eight members in my eighth-grade class, and—which means it's a country school, and then I went to Arma High School there. It's now consolidated with several other high schools in—in that area.

EF: So, you're from a farm family?

GB: Yes. My dad was a coal miner and a farmer, a coal miner in the wintertime, when there was no farm work, and a farmer during farm season.

EF: And I imagine that coal mining was a declining industry at that time.

GB: Well, he worked in what they called deep mines. We call it—there were, my recollection, 250 feet deep. They were about—there was a coal seam at that—at that depth down in that area. And then later they did the strip mining, which is a coal seam that was about 90 feet deep, with big shovels that turned over earth and left the big scars and everything down there in that area.

EF: Now, was this a political family? Did your—

GB: No, not really. I became political, so to speak, by happenstance. In 1970s, I was Chairman of the Lenexa area Chamber of Commerce, and there were several of us presidents of the chambers who had lunch together once a month or so, periodically anyway. And we were not satisfied with our representation, so we decided we must find someone to run. So, we tried and never—so on, so forth. We couldn't find anybody who wanted to do it, so we decided one of us must do it. And since I was precinct committee and chairman of the city precinct committees there, they decided that I was probably the most political and I should run. I didn't particularly want to, but—I didn't think much of it, but then. I really was not politically involved up to that point in time. I didn't know what it involved and so on. If I had known, maybe I wouldn't have done it.

But anyway, I did, and I ran in the primary against the incumbent in one, and then I had a—a Democrat opponent who was a—he was a representative, but he was redistricted out of it, so he was out of office for two years and decided to run again, and so I—and I won that race also. So, I—that was my first—first election. It was November the 5th, 1974, was the election day.

EF: Now, it's usually challenging to take on an incumbent. How—

GB: It—it—well, I was a novice, of course. At that point in time, we didn't know—we—people who worked with me—we were all novices. And, yes, I realize now that it was—it was challenging, but at the time, we didn't think too much of it. We just said one of us has to do it, so we did it.

EF: How long had you been in Johnson County at that time?

GB: I moved to Johnson County in 1954, so I was there twenty years. And I started a business, my business on July 1, 1962, so I was a — in consulting engineering at that time, from 1962, in Johnson County. And I became pretty well I say versed in—in—in the county because I was in the Chamber of Commerce and I was in Rotary, and I don't know, quite a few things, and—when you're in business, you need to do those things. there are meetings. And Bennett, Governor Bennett, was mayor of Prairie Village, and I was—got to know Governor Bennett before he became governor. I knew him as—as Mayor Bennett there. And so, I moved around in those circles, so to speak. And so—and really taking on an income—it is, yes, very challenging, but really—

EF: Was your practice, engineering practice kind of a one-person shop?

GB: It started out in 1962, me and one person. By '74, oh, we probably had ten, fifteen—because I—I built a new office in 1969, and it—we—we—we ended up—well, not ended up, but at one time we had forty-some employees. But I'd say by '74 we probably had fifteen, twenty, probably, yes.

EF: Did you go directly from getting your degree to Johnson County?

GB: No. I—I graduated in January 1950, and I started to work for the Department of Interior, Geological Survey. And we—at that time—wife and I—we moved—we traveled quite a bit. They sent us north in the summer and south in the winter, supposedly, except my first assignment was in northern Nebraska, and they sent me south—send us south, to Oberlin, Kansas. And that was not very far south because I was—recall one day it was 20 below zero. We were trying to work outdoors that way. So, for the first—And then — and we moved to Johnson County in 1954. And I—I moved there to take a job on the Kansas — building the Kansas Turnpike. I was project engineer for a section of the Turnpike that is through Lawrence. We started east of Lawrence—well, before you get to the rest area there, and then all the way through Lawrence, including the “Kaw” River, to a point about four miles west of Lawrence. And that included the interchange down to 6th Street—6th and Iowa now. And the—at the original design, there was only the one—the one interchange, which is now called West Lawrence. And I designed what was then the East Lawrence interchange. That was one of my first tasks there in the office. So, I designed that. Then they sent me out to the field to manage the construction, and the staking and the engineering and everything on that section, so I—I was out there, I don’t know, ’54—four years. We finished in about ’58. So about four years on the Turnpike.

EF: That was a big project.

GB: Yes, it was. Well, the Turnpike—at that time, they had a general consultant, which was an engineering firm, and then they had sections. And they did that in order to speed up the progress, and so we—that was our section. And we tied into an engineering firm on the east side and one on the west side, and we—we worked together, all together. I—I was in the field and managed the inspectors, the construction, the staking, everything. And the Kaw River Bridge, so on, so forth. So that was in — in the ’50s. And we—when it was done, we drove the turnpike to the grand opening down in Wichita in 1958, so—

EF: Wow. Did you then—was that when you went to Johnson County? GB: No, I was in Johnson County then.

EF: Oh, so you were living there.

GB: I was—we moved—when I left the Geological Survey, we moved to Johnson County and went to work at this consulting firm in Merriam, Kansas, in Johnson County. And after the Turnpike, the consultant didn't have anything else for — for me to do, so I went to work for the [U.S. Army] Corps of Engineers, the Kansas City District there. And then I started my business in July of 1962.

EF: So—

GB: But actually, we were in Johnson County from 1954—I've been in Johnson County from 1954 to 1996, when I moved to Topeka.

EF: Okay. Now, you said you were part of a group that was not satisfied.

GB: Yes.

EF: What—what was the motivation?

GB: Well, we—one thing I remember: He introduced a bill that put a—a fee on fire hydrants that we had to have, and we thought that was a ridiculous idea, and that—that was the crowning blow that we—but we just—we just weren't satisfied with him. And when I—when I won the primary in August, he resigned, unbeknownst to me. He sent a letter to Governor Docking, resigning. And Governor Docking gave him a position in the Department of Revenue. He was an accountant. Gave him a position in the Department of Revenue there, for—for resigning. And I—I could have been appointed in August to—to serve out the rest of his term, but we didn't know until I was sworn in that—that he had resigned immediately after—after the August primary, but anyway, that's—

[Logistical discussion from 13:35 to 13:50 was not transcribed.] GB: That's my background.

EF: Well, before Topeka.

GB: Yes.

EF: And you started in '75—

GB: Yes.

EF: —and I think may have served one term, and then were placed on Ways and Means Committee.

GB: No, I served two terms.

EF: Two terms.

GB: Two terms. I went to the House Ways and Means Committee in 1979, in '79 and '80. And I was two years—the Speaker then was Mike Hayden, Mike—Governor Hayden was Speaker—not Speaker, was Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. And Wendell Lady as Speaker of the House at that time. I—I served in the majority party in — at—for the first two years, and Pete McGill was Speaker. Then in my second term Republicans became a minority party. And Carlin—then Speaker Carlin but then later Governor Carlin was Speaker. And then back to the south side of the—the chamber. In my third term in the House, Wendell Lady became Speaker. And I kind of facetiously said, “That’s enough movement back and forth, I’m going to go to the Senate.”

So, I ran for the Senate. And the incumbent was a Democrat. And I beat him. And I did not have a primary. And I won—won the general election. And I was placed on the Senate Ways and Means Committee. The Chairman was Paul Hess, Chairman. Anyway, we smile. Anyway, he was Chairman then. Talkington, Senator Talkington became President, and he, through the process, appointed me Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee in 1985, and I served in that position until Governor Graves appointed me as Chairman of the Board of Tax Appeals. And I resigned—which was a hard thing to do because I liked the Senate, and I liked the process, but in reality, after so many years you build up some baggage, and I had built up some baggage, especially with the unions, that—they didn’t like me. Didn’t like my politics. I guess I’ll put it

that way. And so, I decided—I thought about it, but it was hard to do, because I really enjoyed the camaraderie and everything that goes with the political process, and the Senate especially. And so, I—I did resign, and I served four years as Chairman of the Board of Tax Appeals. And then, whenever my term was up, Governor Graves was not going to reappoint me, so I retired, and I've been, in quotes, "retired" ever since.

Now, I did, in the early 2000s—I did consulting work, engineering work primarily in Wyandotte County. Did work for Berkshire Hathaway there in Wyandotte County. He built—they built—Buffet or they built a retirement village, retirement subdivision of duplexes, and I was the project engineer, sort of the project engineer on that particular project, and I did several other engineering works, consulting on an individual basis. Did not do any planning because I did not have the capacity—or I did some capacity, but really not much. So, I—I—I did some consulting work, but pri- —my biggest job was with Berkshire Hathaway. It was kind of unusual. They—they interviewed me, and they said, "What would your fee be?" I marked it down. And I, Boy, I better add some more to it, so I told him a price. "Fine. Okay." Oh, I should have—should have added—

EF: calculation.

GB: —should have added a little bit more. No, I came out fine. But, I mean, they—it was not a problem. That was it.

EF: Well, I'll—

GB: I'm sorry, I maybe got sidetracked.

EF: No, no, that's fine. I want to go back—

GB: Okay.

EF: You obviously expressed an interest in Ways and Means.

GB: Well, back—

EF: You must have said that to Wendell Lady. I think he would have been the person—

GB: Back in my beginning—and I—I was kind of a loner, and I didn't have much to do. I didn't go to many of the receptions or things like that, so I spent my nights studying the budget. And I think I knew the budget very well after four or five or several years there, and Wendell Lady then decided to—or agreed—maybe I asked; I don't remember—no, I think he—he offered that to me. And I—I said, “Yes, I'd like to do that.” And then I kept studying the budget. I—I think I was pretty well versed in most of the aspects of the—of the budget there. So—

EF: Where did this interest come from? Was it —

GB: Well, first of all—

EF: —your engineering—

GB: Engineering is math, I mean, primarily. And so, I—I liked numbers. I still do. So, I—I think that's probably part of the genesis, and the other one was I was up here, didn't have much—anything else to do. What would—what would be interesting and what could I do? And one of the things I was—I was on the redistricting of our area in 1979, I guess—'78 or '79. Wendell Lady had—juggling numbers and as a representative, Heinemann, that was in our office, that worked with us there.

And there were three of us in that office, the House office that had districts that were overpopulated, I guess is the best way to put it. And I think we should have had probably six votes instead of three, based on numbers. But anyway, I worked on those numbers very diligently, not for our area, the area that was assigned to me, and—Johnson County primarily. And I—I manipulated—not manipulated, juggled those numbers to— to get a balance that we needed, and that was a challenge to me, and numbers have always been a challenge I guess probably somewhat because of the calculus and the differential equations and all that stuff that engineers have to take, I guess, that probably the cause, it might be, you might say, of that interest in Ways and Means. I—I wanted to see how it went together and why it went together, and then work on it there.

EF: Were you more interested in the taxing side or the spending side?

GB: Spending side.

EF: You were on the spending committee.

GB: Yes. I was more interested in—in the spending side, the balancing the budget and trying to equalize and properly fund agencies. I was always committed to properly fund them, and not overfund them or not underfund them but fund them properly. And that's kind of difficult to do, to find a balance in there, but that's one of the reasons that I—I worked and studied—studied the budget.

And when I was Chairman, Chairman of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, before session, generally, in December, I would come up here to Topeka, and I would have staff come in, and I would go over every budget that they had, trying to understand what—what and why. And then I—I tried to create a—a guide that we would work towards during the session. And you call it whatever. It was a plan—it wasn't a plan. It was kind of a goal to work towards. And I—I did that, maybe not the first couple of years, but I—in general, most years, to try to massage and—and get the budget to come out in a balanced form and adequately fund most agencies. Now, many people might not believe that I funded them adequately or that I had tried to fund them, in my own way, adequately. But I did there.

EF: Now, I can understand the connection of engineering and numbers and budget figures but being chair of Ways and Means requires some political skill.

GB: Well, —

EF: Where does that come from?

GB: Well, where that came from: Ross Doyen was President of the—of the Senate, and he made it be known that he was not going to run for President again. So, Bob Talkington, President Talkington started campaigning for the position. And I told him I would—I committed to him to—to run—to vote for him for President. And after I did that a while—I don't remember how long—later, Doyen, Ross Doyen called me up and said he was going to run for

President again. And I said, "Well, Ross, I'm already committed to—to Talk." He said, "But, you"— "No, I don't do that. When I commit, I commit. That is that. Unless I—if I change my mind, I'll tell you about it, but I—I don't—I don't—I don't just knife you in the back," so to speak. I told him, "Ross, I can't do that. I committed to—to Bob, Bob Talkington, and I'm gonna do that."

Anyway, through that connection, he appointed me Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. There were a couple of others that wanted it pretty bad, and there was a lot of surprise when I was appointed. Now I had served four years in the Senate Ways and Means, as committee member, and two in the House, so I had six years' experience in that regard when—when President Talkington appointed me Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. Then I was [unintelligible; 25:18] governor, and then from there on I served until I resigned.

EF: So, you were on the Talkington team.

GB: Yes, I was. Yes.

EF: Was it a close vote, or did Ross—

GB: I have no idea. I—I—I—as far as the vote—it was pretty close as far as Talkington and Doyen. Yes, it was. Maybe one or two votes. Yes, yes, yeah. I—I—I—I—I don't know, but Ross—he was—he was disgusted. He said, "my wife left me, and now nobody's voting for me." And he said, "She took all my furniture and everything, and I— I"—so I—I—I felt sorry for him, but—

EF: Doyen had probably put you on the committee originally, hadn't he?

GB: Yes, I think so. EF: So—

GB: Yeah, yeah, but—yeah, he put me on the committee, yes, but not as Chairman. No, Paul Hess was Chairman there. But, no, yes, he put me on the—on the committee.

EF: As I was—

GB: But—and I hated to do that to him, but I—because I liked him. I got along with him fine. A lot of people didn't, but I—I did. And I—but when I commit, that—that was it. EF: I had a conversation with Mike Hayden before our interview.

GB: Oh!

EF: And he reminded me that Paul Hess was between—

GB: “WW1” [Senator Wint Winter Sr.] and—

EF: —and your chairmanship. And as I thought about it, that was a strange combination, Ross Doyen and Paul Hess.

GB: Yeah. Oh, yeah!

EF: Doyen would have had to have named Paul Hess chair.

GB: Yes, yeah, because let's see, the district judge was President of the Senate before— from Manhattan—Richard Rogers. Then he became judge, and Ross then became President of the Senate. I was in the House then, but I—but he—he became—

EF: When Bennett was—

GB: Bennett was—was—yeah, was President of the Senate first, but then he became the governor, so then Rogers became President. Then Rogers went to the—the federal court. Then Doyen came in, and then Talk and so on. And “Bud” Burke.

EF: Did you—you talked about this a little bit. Did you have a philosophy about—I mean, as chair of Ways and Means—you were Chair of that committee probably longer than anybody in the history of our state.

GB: I don't know that. I mean, I—I was there a long time, yes.

EF: Did you—what was your philosophy?

GB: Well, the philosophy was to determine the need, what I did determine was a need, and try to fund it adequately. And, you know, that's—probably it's a matter of perspective, I'd say my personal; somebody else may have a different idea as to what the need really is, and—but my philosophy was try to—to serve the needs, whether it be for Medicaid or whether it be for the transportation, you know? They're—they're all a part of government there. And, you know, I—

I've been termed as being heartless and cruel and mean and so on, so forth, but someone has to make those hard decisions. And one of the things I always said, that—I at the time said I did not have an ego. But, yes, I had an ego. I believe that anyone that asks someone to vote for them or give them campaign funds, money, their hard-earned dollars must have an ego, or you can't do it. And there's 165 egos up here, and there must be a way to massage those 165 egos in order to come out with a compromise that works. And that's not always easy.

And so, I tried to determine the needs, what I felt were the needs—and, of course, I used staff. I mean, I relied on staff very much so. But I used my own judgment as much—as much as possible, too. And then to try to get—you don't need 165; all you need is a majority. Get a majority of those to agree with you is not easy, sure. And over the years, it got pretty difficult sometimes.

EF: And that's within your committee. Did you ever have committee mutiny?

GB: Eh, well, not—well, yes, I probably did. One time I remember—I don't remember what the issue was, but somebody made a motion on a bill we were working on that I thought was wrong, and I called for the vote. I thought it would be defeated, but the vote was—I asked my aide, what was— “What's the vote?” She said, “They approved it” there. So, I—So I—I adjourned the committee. And Marty Hawver—around the capitol here—press fellow—he came up, and he said, “What happened to the vote?” I said, “It's still on the table.” He said, “Well, you took the vote, but then you didn't call it.” I said, “No, I did not call it.” He said, “Well, you can't do that.” I said, “I did, didn't I? We're adjourned.” He said, “You can't do that.” I said, “We are adjourned, and that's it.” So, we took a vote the next day, and it didn't pass. Need I say more? Okay.

EF: Now, I ran onto a newspaper clipping that I don't think I'd seen before. It described—and I'm not sure this is fair—it described you as “gruff,” “a bulldog,” “obstinate,” “slams doors,” “snaps pencils.”

GB: Yes.

EF: That can't possibly be true, can it?

GB: Yes, it is. In committee—I think it was Conference Committee with—with Representative Bunten, Bill Bunten there. He kept wanting to put packages—he said, “I’ve got—here’s a package I’ll give you of—of different agencies.” And I said, “Mr. Chairman, we’re talking about individual agencies. I want to talk about this one, that one, not packages. I don’t want packages.” He kept insisting on packages, so I broke a pencil.

I was disgusted. Yes, I did. It was a wooden pencil, and I—I broke it there. I was probably rough on him.

And then another time, it was Bill Bunten again. Oh, he and I—oh, boy! Anyway, another time I did leave the room and I slammed the door, yeah. It rattled the glass pretty—pretty—pretty good there. So, yes, I did do it.

Now, “gruff” is a matter of opinion. I—I probably—it was, at times, no question about it. They called me a bulldog when I was Chairman of the—of the Post Audit Committee. In fact, they gave me—after I left, they gave me a little statue with a bulldog on it there, and a little plaque, so I have that at home there. But anyway, it’s—yeah, I probably was gruff.

EF: Was this a negotiating technique?

GB: Probably, yes. I—I don’t think I was normally gruff. I mean, —

EF: You came back to the committee sooner or later.

GB: Oh, yeah. After I cooled off, I went in the office and cooled off a little bit, I came back in, because they were all in there waiting—you know, “What’s goin’ on?” Because I was Chairman of the committee, and I didn’t adjourn it; I just left there.

Now, as far as the broken pencil, I just—I sat there and just—I just threw it in the wastebasket. I don't know. But I—I—I was fiddling with—with this pencil, and I got disgusted, and I just—I snapped it. Yes, I did do that, so—

EF: Were there particular issues that always would give you trouble?

GB: Oh, I remember one of them. [Rep.] George Teagarden was—was Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, and we were in the—in the veto session with the budget. The last issue left was the state salaries, salaries for state employees—and as I recall, we had a two and a half percent increase, and the—not NEA, but the union, the employees' union, whatever it's called. They had sent some lady in from Ohio, in their national headquarters, to come down here and convince us, me, that we were—we were wrong.

So, George Teagarden would not agree to this two and a half percent increase in overall state salaries, so we left and rejoined the meeting, and she called me in the hall, this lady did, and she starts reading me the riot act and so on. And I told her, "Lady, we're gonna go back in there. You don't agree to that, it's gonna be two percent when we go back in there." She said, "You can't do that! I said, "Watch me." So, we went back in. We made it two percent. We adjourned, and she came up. She just went ballistic. I said, "Next time, it's one and a half." She didn't—she didn't take me on, but that—she let it go at that there. But anyway, so we ended up with two there. They had two and a half if she had left me alone, but she didn't, so we ended up with two percent. But George Teagarden was Chairman of that—of the [House] Ways and Means Committee.

And the other time there was Robin Jennison was—oh, the fellow who's now Secretary of Wildlife and Parks.

EF: Mike

GB: No, no, no, no. But anyway, he was Chairman of the [House] Ways and Means Committee, and I wanted to start funding the unfunded liability, which they still haven't—now, we— we—it was—that unfunded liability was back there—KPERs, unfunded liability. It's still—in fact, it's getting worse. And I wanted to start funding it, and he did not. Oh, what's his name? He's over—he's—he's secretary of Parks —

EF: I know—I can't—

GB: But anyway, he was Chairman. And I, of course, —I his group. There was a Democrat leadership over here then. That's got nothing to do with it, but anyway, they—they did not want to start funding that unfunded liability, which comes from the teachers' union, when they—the old teachers retirement system was merged into KPERs. There was that unfunded liability for all those teachers, and it's still there. It has never been—it's gotten worse. It keeps growing. And I—I think it's—it's a mistake. They need to—they need to start attacking that.

But anyway, that—that was another frustration of mine that I wanted to—I can't think of the fellow's name. Nice guy.

But another little tidbit: One session, Chairman Buntin and I—maybe it's the time I broke the pencil; I don't remember. But immediately after that, I went to the KU Med Center [University of Kansas Medical Center] for a minor surgery procedure, and I had gone through the procedure, and I was laying there in the recovery room. And there was a fellow over there taking off his clothes, ready to put on the gown and everything. I said, that looks like Bill Buntin over there. And I said, My God, I've died and gone to hell. Because after all the times we—excuse me, I didn't mean—I—after all the frustration that we had there during the session there, for him to be there. But he was getting a procedure done of some kind. But Bill and I was good friends, but we—we—we had some good experience together—

EF: You ended up in the same hospital room?

GB: Yes!

EF: Amazing!

GB: Yeah.

EF: You worked—I mean, you worked the budget from the legislative side. You had a number of governors that you had to deal with: Bennett, Carlin, Hayden, Finney, Graves.

GB: Yes.

EF: Do you have any recollection of working with those folks?

GB: Yes. My—my best friend as Governor was Governor Finney. Kind of amazing. But when she became Governor, her daughter, Mary Holladay, was—was her chief of staff. They didn't even know I existed. I mean, the first year, they—they totally ignored me. Second year, Mary came down one time, and we visited, and Governor Finney and I became friends. I mean, very good friends, besides being Governor and—and—and Senator. I mean, just a friend. And I—I believe she was—she was—as far as friendship, she was my best friend in the governorship.

Governor Bennett—I was a freshman House member, and so I really didn't have that much to do with Governor Bennett, because I knew him when he was mayor, and so I knew Bob, or Governor Bennett. But Governor Finney was my best friend in the Governor. And—she was different. But one time she had line item vetoed something, so I went down to her office. I said, "Governor, I'm going to have to make a motion to override your veto. I just want to let you know." She said, "You do what you have to do, I do what I'm gonna do." She said, "That's okay." So, I made the motion. We overrode her. It was an ag [agriculture] issue of some kind. So, we overrode her veto many times. And she thought it was fine. She said, "No big deal."

And then at the end of her session, she called me up. She said, "Can you come up?" And I said, "Yes." So, I went up there, and there's Mary Holladay, the Governor, Susan Seltsam, who was Secretary of Administration, and Gloria Timmer, who was Budget Director. And she said, "I want to take a pic- —I want to have a picture of you and your harem." I said, "I—my harem?" So anyway, a photographer, said, "Governor, move over." She said, "What do you want me to do, put my head on his shoulder?" He said, "That would be nice." So, she did. And he took the picture. I have the picture. She sent me the picture and a letter. I have it framed. She sent a nice

letter, and I have—have it framed. So, she—we—we were good friends. She was different, but, I mean, we were good friends there.

And I'm maybe getting a little ahead of myself or yourself. My most memorable thing was in 1989, April 1, April Fools' Day. I was in my workshop in Shawnee, and my arm went numb there. So, I—I filled up my—I smoked a pipe at that time. I filled up my pipe with tobacco, and I said, I don't know. So, I laid my pipe down. I went upstairs. This was in the basement. My wife, Nancy, was there. And I said—I laid down on the floor, and I said, "I think something's wrong." So, she called Marlin—Marlin Rein, who was the representative for KU, the University of Kansas [At that time Rein was Associate University Director of Business and Fiscal Affairs (1985-92)], and he said, "Bring him in. Bring him in to the emergency room at the Med Center."

So, she—she drove me over there, took me up to the hospital, and after tests they found out I had blockage. So, they did bypass surgery April the 4th, and I remember very well, 1989. Come veto session 1989, there was the state water plan, Governor Hayden's pride and joy. It was deadlocked in the Senate. I'm in Johnson County. The doctor at that time said, "You can have—go to the office half days" and so on, so I did, and I was in jeans and so on, not dressed, really, because I was just loafing around the office. I wasn't really doing anything. My engineering office.

So, I got a call from "Z", who was the President's secretary for—anyway, we called her Z. She said, "The Highway Patrolman is gonna be there in five minutes to pick you up." I said, "Highway Patrolman?" She said, "Yes, we have a call in the Senate, and your wife, Nancy, said that you could come in." Well, unbeknownst to me, the President called her up to—my wife—she was working in the Senate there. Called her up and said, "You think Gus could come and vote?" She said, "Oh, he'd love to." He said, "How will he vote?" She said, "I don't know. He probably will vote for it, but I don't know that."

So here come the Highway Patrolman, five minutes. So, we get in his car. The first thing you know, we come up to—we're on 87th Street, and there's a median, island. So, he goes on the left-hand side of the island, turns on the siren and goes through the intersection and the red light, and I said, Uh-oh! We're gonna have a ride! So anyway, we're on the [I]435, and he gets on the radio, and he says, "Have a gate open at the Turnpike." At the time, the gates were to the—"Have a gate open. We're comin' through there in five minutes." I said, "Five minutes?" He said, "Yes." Away we go. We go through the gate. He didn't even slow down. [Makes sound signifying speed.] Through the gate. There's telephone poles that were going by like fence posts. Look at the speedometer, and I could see 100. I said, "You have good tires on here?" He said, "Well, they're new, but, you know, they're low bidder." I said, "That don't make me feel any better, you know." He said, "Well, you're the one that says we have to have low bidder, so"—I Okay. I remember they had a Plymouth. That was the car.

We go, and in the Senate there, President Burke said, "They're at Milepost such- and-such now. And Milepost such-and-such." And he called, and said, "Have—have the south door open" to the Senate. They have an elevator. So, the south door. And here the cameras. They're backing up as I go in. Get on a cage elevator and go up and go in, and—and the President explains they're voting on the state water plan, and "How would you vote?" "I vote aye." It passed the state water plan.

Then I was so tickled about—happy that—first of all, I was back in the chambers, and secondly, that ride was exhilarating, believe me. I mean, I know 100 miles an hour is—is stupid, but, I mean, that was—that was something. And I was excited. So, I'm on a microphone telling everybody about my nice ride here at 100 miles per hour. And the press didn't like that. They said, "You endangered everybody on their highway." I wasn't driving! I was riding! Anyway, I wanted to put that in there, my ride that I had in the veto session of 1989 there, after my bypass surgery there at the KU Med Center, so—

EF: They didn't take you back at 100.

GB: No. No, no, no, no. I stayed for the rest of the veto session there, so—but anyway, yeah, we had an apartment here, and so—

EF: You were also chair of Ways and Means during Carlin's last term.

GB: Yes.

EF: And Mike Hayden's.

GB: Yes, yes.

EF: How were they?

GB: Well, I got along with them fine. Governor Carlin, not too much contact except once. I was working late at night, and Governor Carlin called and said, "Can I come down?" I: "Well, yes, Governor. Absolutely." So, he came down to my office down on the first floor. And he said, "I have something to ask you." I: "Okay." He said, "We are leasing the state plane," which is a "Queen Air—

EF: The state?

GB: The state airplane, a Queen Air at that time. He said, "We have the opportunity to buy it there, on a lease-purchase deal." He said, "There's money in the budget for a— for the lease." He said, "I'd like to ask you if you could change that, add some money to it"—I've forgotten how much. It was, considering, not much, but some money to it, and change it to lease-purchase. So, I said, "Well, yeah, I could do that, Governor." He said, "Well, I would"—I said, "My party I don't think would like that." So, he said, "Could you do that?" I said, "Yes, I'll do that."

So, I changed it to lease-purchase and the dollars, and when I explained the bill, I said, "There's money in here for the plane," which there was. I didn't—I didn't tell anybody untruth. Nobody asked me anything more than that. So, in essence I bought an airplane and hid it in a bill, which I did. The Governor asked me to do it, and I did it. So, we purchased it, and I don't know what

kind of plane they have now, but we went from Queen Air to King Air, and they may have something different now. I don't know. Don't have any idea. I haven't kept up. But I know that Governor Carlin asked me to buy the plane, so I did. Now, I don't remember any other contact with Governor Carlin. Yeah, I had some, sure, but I mean anything that was memorable to me, except buying the plane.

EF: You seemed to be in sync with Mike Hayden most of the time.

GB: Yes, I was, yes. In fact, in 1986—well, the Senate elections are in between the election for Governor. [Sen.] Bill Morris and I—well, went to visit editors in small-town newspapers. And I remember—I don't know, we had several, one of them—it was Lincoln, Kansas [County seat of Lincoln County]. I had never been to the Lincoln—I haven't been there since, either, but Lincoln. It was a quaint and a beautiful little town, and we—we went to visit. We visited the editor there for Mike, for Governor Hayden, and tried to get the editors to support and endorse the Governor. He was not Governor then. To endorse Hayden for Governor. So— but Bill Morris—Bill Morris from Wichita, Senator Morris and I were the team, I guess you might call it—we were paired to do this tour. And I—

EF: Was this for highways or—

GB: No, this was for the governorship, to get—

EF: Oh, for the Governor's election.

GB: Well, I—I also—there was also that highway group. I was a member of that highway task force—I have the report—in fact, I saw it not too long ago in my cabinet there at home there, that we—we, the committee, that group put together for the highway—the highway plan, state highway plan. That was during Hayden's administration, though. That was not for his election, where Governor—I mean, Bill Morris and I were around for his election.

EF: Yes, I see.

GB: Ninety-six there, '96.

EF: So, you were venturing out from Johnson County.

GB: Yeah, I did not have an opponent in '84. What did I say, "96? '86.

EF: '86.

GB: I did not have an opponent in '84. I had a free ride there, so I guess they felt that I probably couldn't do much damage to my campaign to go out and do that, so— and I don't know about Bill Morris, but anyway, Bill and I did do some campaigning with editors for Mike Hayden for governor.

EF: If you want to take a break at any point—

GB: Oh, I'm fine.

EF: —or have a swig of water, just—

GB: I'll do that.

EF: that.

GB: Okay.

EF: [unintelligible; 51:26].

GB: I know I—I may be getting off here and there.

EF: We're covering the territory. You, after Talkington, you had Bud Burke as President.

GB: Yes.

EF: I assume you've had a pretty good relationship with Burke.

GB: Yes and no.

EF: You're both Johnson County

GB: Yeah, I understand that. Yeah, I would say pretty much, except the—leadership- wise—and I go back to—once again, to Governor Finney. It was the end of Governor Finney's term, and she had appointed Susan Seltsam as Chairman of—not Chairman, a member of the Kansas Corporation Commission, and we had a Republican Senate caucus, and the leadership—Bud

Burke, et al.—said that we should not consider the appointment because we would probably get a Republican governor and we could get a Republican Corporation Commission member. And I said I didn't think that the Corporation Commission should be political. I thought Susan Seltsam was very capable, very qualified, and very able to be on the Commission. And he disagreed very strongly. We had a few words, and I won. And unbeknownst to me, my wife, Nancy, was out in the corridor, waiting for me, and he went out to her and just went up one side of her and down the other, chewed her up. She didn't know what the problem. Something about not following leadership and so on, so forth.

And so, I guess at that time, that particular moment, I had more power than the President had there, because I—we did confirm Susan Seltsam there, and I think it was right, and I was maybe not as political as some people thought I should be sometimes, but I felt what's best for the state and who's qualified should be the most— get most concern. So, I say we—I got along with Bud Burke? Yeah.

And going back some time, Bennett was elected to the Senate, and he became Governor, so there was a vacancy. And it was up to the precinct people to appoint the new Senator. Well, Bob Burke had just won reelection to the House. So, he came before our precinct committee—I was Chairman of the committee—he and his wife, Pat, then-wife Pat—and we agreed we would vote for him for Governor Bennett's seat in the Senate. We did, and he became a state Senator—

And then my first office was in the treasurer's vault down on the second floor, and in it was Bud Burke—one thing—he was there one day; then he became a Senator, and his replacement was there, and I don't remember his name, and Bob Frey, Representative Frey from western Kansas. And we were in there for one year, I think, maybe two. I don't know.

Then I—we —an office with Bob Frey, David Heinemann, and myself, and I don't know if that was—no, that was—that was probably in '78 and '79, I'm guessing.

Secretary Gloria there. Ring a bell?

Anyway, so, yes, I knew Bud Burke a long time. Yes, I guess I voted for him to be our senator. Did I get along with him? Most of the time. I—he, quotes, “left me alone” because very honestly, he didn't know anything about Ways and Means there. And so, he said, “Whatever you want to do. Just let me—let me do it.” So, for four years, I—yes, I did—well, I did pretty much under Talkington also. He didn't—he really did not—now, Ross Doyen was a member of the Ways and Means Committee when I was Chairman there, so he—but not Talkington. Ross was. He was not vice chair, either. He was just a member there, as was the minority leader on that Committee, so we had pretty good leadership on that Committee.

EF: You obviously focused—spent a lot of time on Ways and Means. During Carlin and Hayden, there were some—a lot of things going on outside to some degree touched Ways and Means, mostly outside. Were you pretty much in line with Republican leadership during those times?

GB: I would say pretty much in line. Maybe not 100 percent.

EF: Sales tax increase, a couple of them, highway plan.

GB: On the highway plan, I was a member of that committee, and I felt, as an engineer, I knew something about construction of roads and so on, and I thought I had something to offer, so I asked to be on that committee, and they did appoint me there. I guess I was maybe somewhat out of line, but I felt that since I was an engineer, and I did— completely familiar with highways because I designed some—we did—I—we had a couple of—we worked for. We did some work for—I felt I—I had something to offer, so I asked specifically to be on that committee. And I was appointed to it there. And as far as the sales tax, yeah, that was—I didn't quite approve it, but, I mean, yeah, it—

The gasoline tax—that was different. We went up to twenty-one cents from seventeen. That was the tax. That was under Talkington. I remember that.

Yeah, there was—there were some issues. Now, I was also Chairman of the Building Construction Committee [Joint Committee on State Building Construction], and that was probably pretty well because I'm an engineer. Maybe that was when I was in the House. But I was—I was on it for—

EF: I went back and looked at that. That was created in '78.

GB: Okay, so that—

EF: First time.

GB: Okay, so I—

EF: And I was wondering if you were involved in the creation of that committee?

GB: I think I was Chairman. That was the first time. Wendell Lady would have appointed me.

EF: —if you had anything to do with the creation of that committee.

GB: Yeah.

EF: Tell me about that.

GB: Okay. We were—I guess it was Ways and Means Committee. We went over to the—they opened the court—the Supreme Court building over here, and the “Sage of Osage [County]”—he was in the House here. I've forgotten his name. We used to call him the “Sage of Osage County.” We went in there, and—we go in, in the atrium there, and he said, “My God, we could put a lot of hay in here!” And I felt we have—look at the wasted space in there. That's beautiful, but look at the wasted space, the heat, the cooling, the space. So, I complained about it. And I don't know if that was a direct result of—of me being named Chairman of the Committee—whatever it was. Anyway, I agreed with—I can't think of his name, but that would have held a lot of hay—in it. And I say it is beautiful. I'm not disagreeing with—but it is, in my opinion, a big waste of space there. And I said that we should not be having that much wasted space and

paying for all that room that we're not using. And that may have caused the—precipitated the committee, and it probably—he's a troublemaker, so he probably—could be. Yes, it could be.

EF: Did you see that committee accomplish things?

GB: Yes, I think we did because the—I think the administration probably didn't like having to submit some of those things to us for review, and, yes, we made some—we made some comments, you know, about some of them, and I think a lot of them were changed: the university buildings and so on, so forth, because it was quite a task. And I— I think that Committee has gotten to be watered down and non-effective. But at one time, we were effective there. So, I think it—it serves a purpose, yes.

EF: You—you mentioned Post Audit.

GB: Yes, I was Chairman of Post Audit.

EF: Were there things you remember particularly about Post Audit that—

GB: No. No, not really, except we reviewed those audits very thoroughly, in my opinion, and I don't think that's being done now, and I point to the Dale Dennis issue a while back because that Post Audit Committee should have taken care of that before it ever got to the press there. But anyway, that's neither here nor there. That's—that's now.

But I don't remember an issue per se that we had, such as my earlier hay barn story or on the—because I do remember that. But now I don't remember. But it was created for a purpose, too, back when—that was before my time, back at the KU scandal, at KU Med Center scandal, the architecture and so on, so forth, construction and that. That's why the post audit was—was issued. And at one time, it was only members of Ways and Means Committee originally. And somebody by the name of [Dr.] Richard Brown was the post auditor. But anyway, that—that all was before my time.

EF: Are you surprised that there's gubernatorial candidates calling for an independently elected auditor?

GB: No, but here again, it—that can be a good thing, and it cannot. It depends on, obviously, the personnel, if they're qualified and able, and if they do something with that audit. If you just put it on a shelf with another bound document, it's worthless and you're spinning your wheels, and you're doing nothing. So, I would say it can be effective if they do it right.

EF: I'm going to jump back to Ways and Means and tee off from a comment you made. You mentioned working closely with staff. What staff members do you remember

GB: Oh, boy! It's been a long time ago. Gee whiz.

EF: You mentioned Marlin Rein.

GB: Marlin Rein. Yes, he sticks in my mind. Carolyn Rampey—she was in education. She's in Wichita and lives in Wichita, last time I knew. I don't know now. I got a card from her after Nancy's passing.

But the other thing I want to mention—I think we were the first or maybe the only two people married in the Senate chambers, Nancy and I there. We were married on December 5, 1988, which was the day that we had the meeting of the Senate—I mean of the parties, the Senate and the organization. You elect a Chairman and so on and so forth. December 5, 1988. Nancy, who worked in the Senate there, but she happened to work for the Democrats at that time. She was a Democrat; I was a Republican. And she was working with leadership; I was in leadership. We were opposites all the way down the line. She was a Protestant; I was Catholic there. And they say opposites attract, but anyway, we were married by Senate chaplain Reverend Hollomon, who—he's passed away very recently. Matter of fact, the funeral is tomorrow. So, she asked if I'd like to get married, if we should get married in the Senate. I said, "I don't think we can do that." So, she went to President Talkington. He said, "I don't know why not." So, they

arranged it, and so we had the Senate chaplain that officiated at our wedding, and we were married on—in the Senate, on December 5, 1988. She recently passed away, but then that's—

EF: Yes. We're going to go a little different direction. The '94 election was the end of your service.

GB: Well, '95. I served in the '95 session.

EF: Right. But I'm just saying—

GB: Yes, that was the last election, yes.

EF: Toward the end of your time.

GB: Yes.

EF: And that was a critical election.

GB: Yes, it was a big win, big win.

EF: Newt Gingrich at the national level is elevated to Speaker of the U.S. House. [Rep. Robert H. Miller] Bob Miller is “deposed” from his second run as Speaker in Kansas. Obviously, some turmoil going on politically. Did—did you see these things developing? I'm thinking of the—the abortion issue. I'm thinking of the emergence of—of the Kochs in state politics.

GB: No, I—

EF: Did you see those things?

GB: Well, I knew it—I knew it was changing. First of all, the '94 election was my toughest.

EF: Was what?

GB: My toughest, my hardest election there. The primary—

EF: Now, you would have been running in '92, or was it?

GB: No, '94. No.

EF: You were—

GB: Ninety-two, '92.

EF: You would have run in '92.

GB: '92. You are correct, yes. That was my toughest, the hardest election that I had. In fact, the Saturday before the election, I was behind in the polls, and we had a mass drop by—I mean, lots and lots of people came from all over that helped. We flooded the district. I mean, blanketed it. And I ended up winning.

EF: What was the issue?

GB: Union. My opponent was a union member of the telephone—she was telephone—she was a telephone employee. I don't know what that union is. But primarily it was the NEA and the CIO and so on, so forth. And there were other—as I said—over the years, I created a lot of baggage. You know, there's no question about that. Yes, I irritated some people, and I—other than that, I really don't know of any issue per se except just generally. And they—they—I don't know, maybe some of them felt I didn't fund something well enough. I know they didn't think education—but anyway, that's always a big issue.

But anyway, the times were—were changing. Governor Graves won handily, and then he won two terms there. And that's when my wife changed politics, too. She—for Governor Graves' election there. And she—not because I said so; this was because she wanted to. And she also changed religion, not because—because we went to both. But anyway, that's—she became Catholic, and she was buried in the Catholic faith. So, the opposites did attract in that case. But as far as—to answer your question, I don't know of any right offhand.

EF: So, you would interpret the closeness as a response to your tight-fisted budget.

GB: Yeah. That's what I think as far as my last election would be, yes. You're right. It was '92, and '96 would have been my next—because I would have been up for election in '96.

EF: It wasn't because you were a big spender.

GB: No, no. Well, I was considered to be tight-fisted and a conservative, maybe an ultra-conservative. And I think now I would be considered a flaming liberal, but, I mean, it's the same—

EF: Well, how do you—you know, we've had a Governor for seven years that said everybody in the past spent too much money.

GB: Yeah. I disagree there. I think we balanced the budget, and I remember one time—well, I guess it was in '88, we—Nancy and I were in Hawaii, and morning—we were in a hotel, and the phone rings, and it was Governor Hayden—Governor Hayden's secretary there. She said, "The Governor wants to talk to you." So, I: "Okay." He said, "We need you to come back." I: "What do you mean?" He said, "We need to allocate funds," because by the Constitution, the Governor must allocate if the budget didn't—didn't get—didn't get balanced.

So anyway, I said, well, we're leaving the next day there. "When do you get in?" I don't know. I told him, "We get in at 10 o'clock in the morning" or something like that. Said, "We have a meeting at 3 o'clock in the afternoon here in the Capitol." So, okay, we flew in. I got home. I changed clothes, got in the car. I came to Topeka. And we allocated funds in order to keep the budget balanced there. And then, of course, when the session began, we—we made it law, I guess you might say, passed the statute. But that was a call from the Governor in Hawaii, and I: "Oh, my goodness! He traced us to—traced me to Hawaii there." But anyway, it was—Bill Bunten's wife was [the Governor's] secretary. I can't think of her name there. Anyway, that's who called there, in Hawaii there. It was early morning there. Here, it's—I don't know what it is, six hours or whatever difference? It was afternoon, I guess. I don't know. Anyway, it was—she—he got me out of bed there.

EF: While you were in the legislature, did you have any sense of the emergence of the Kochs or abortion activists?

GB: Yeah. Well, there's one of them, Westboro Baptist Church—Fred—Fred Phelps. I got an—had an e-mail from him just about every morning. I'd say maybe every morning through the week, anyway. And it was—it was an e-mail that came to my office down here that was—I think it was a copy of the one he sent to Governor Finney there. And that—of course, that's not in here. I mean, that's out there. But in here, yeah—yes, they were beginning to—to coagulate or

to get together kind of—I'd say groups, maybe three, four of them, not—not huge groups, but, yes, they were—they were starting to do that, yes.

EF: If it was Governor Finney, would that have been early or late in her term? Do you remember?

GB: I would say probably about mid-term because I those for quite a while, and my administrative assistant said, "Here's another thing from—from"—

EF: Was it actually from the Kochs?

GB: Yeah. Yeah, well, I guess so.

EF: What was the message?

GB: They were very anti-Finney and anti-government, anti-just about everything. They were anti-whatever. Yeah, the—the bulk of the message was just about everything and anything.

EF: Did—obviously, you're Catholic.

GB: Yes.

EF: Did the abortion issue give you trouble at all?

GB: No. No, I could—I mean, I see some—some problems, and I think there's a place for an abortion, but I don't believe it ought to be just, "Hey, c'mon in," you know.

Another disappointment I had is Menninger—I don't know which Dr. Menninger—came to visit, and Dr.—well, then Congressman— Roy, was his last name, Bill Roy, visited me. He wanted a tax exemption for Menninger Clinic there, to reaffirm it or do something. And I said, "Well, I mean, yeah, but you're gonna be here." "Yeah, yeah." Next year, they go to Baylor University down in Texas. And I—they're sitting in my office in the evening. It was after hours. And they're—they swore that they're— they're going to be here in Kansas, they're going to be part of Kansas and so on, so forth. And boom, away they go. I said, "You son of a guns there." We went out on a limb, and we bent over backwards to keep them, because they were a benefit to Kansas. But then they skipped right after that. I remember that, too.

EF: You—in '95 you served as chair, during the session, as Chair of Ways and Means.

GB: Yes.

EF: And then shortly thereafter, you stepped down—

GB: Yes.

EF: —near the end of your term, to be chair of the—

GB: Of the—yes.

EF: —Board of—

GB: Board of Tax Appeals, yes.

EF: And you said earlier that was a hard decision.

GB: Yes, it was.

EF: How did that happen?

GB: Well, I got to looking at my future, my engineering company. I was about to turn it over to my boys, to our two sons. And so, I said, "What am I gonna do?" You know, I was getting up there in age—in years there, because I was born in 1927, and in '95 I would have been seventy— I've forgotten my arithmetic.

EF: Sixty-eight maybe.

GB: Let's see, in '99 I would have been seventy, so, okay, I was pushing seventy years old. So, I: "What am I gonna do?" And so on, so forth. And I looked around in government to see what might be available. And there was an opening, an appointment available in the Board of Tax Appeals. And a few years earlier—it was back when [John] Carlin was Speaker—we amended a law that tied the salary of the Board of Tax Appeals to the judiciary, same as a judge. So, I looked at that. Well, that's pretty good. And so, I knew there was going to be an opening. There was an opening. In fact, it was already. The Governor had not made an appointment. There was—there was an opening. So, I went to Governor—oh, what was his name?

EF: Graves.

GB: No, Governor Graves, but I mean his administrative assistant, a guy—oh, Latino. Well, anyway, went to him, and I said, “Is it possible the governor would appoint me to that—to that thing?” So, we did some inquiries and everything, and he talked to me, and he said, “Yes, I’ll—I’ll appoint you to that if you want it.” I said, “Well, I sure hate to do this.” When I resigned, I felt real bad. I really did. They had a party for me and everything, but it was tough. And I resigned in July of ’95, which was after the session. The session was done there. So, I resigned, and the Governor appointed me Chairman of the Board of Tax Appeals, and I was there four years. It’s a four-year term. So, I was there four years.

And it was—it was nice, and it served me well, because I had the boys—the sons took over the business and—they sold it after that, but anyway, that was up to them there. And I became Chairman of the Board of Tax Appeals. That’s when we moved to Topeka, because I had to live in Johnson County, to be in my district, of course. And we moved here in ’96, September of ’96. And so, I started in July of ’95, so we were driving two cars. Nancy worked for KDOT, Kansas Department of Transportation, and I was with the Board of Tax Appeals, sometime driving two cars, and so we decided, no, that’s not good. So, we found this—this house, and so we moved here to Topeka in September of ’96. And I was on the board until ’99, and then I, quote, “retired.”

EF: Was there something that you wanted to accomplish at the Board?

GB: No, not really. It was—it was a stopping point. It was a pause between Senate and retirement, and it was—it was a job, and I enjoyed it. It was—it was different, entirely different. We had to take a class in appraisal and the cost approach and so on, so forth in order to understand what you’re talking about. So, we took—I don’t know—about a week class in appraisal of properties. And after that, I did some consulting work there, appealing some properties for some individuals with the Board of Tax Appeals. They’re primarily, I guess—I won at the first level because they have a hearing officer, and if you don’t like the results of the hearing officer, you go before the Board. And I think when I was consulting, I only went before

the Board once or twice. But then they called it the court. What they did, they changed it from the Board of Tax Appeals to the Court of Tax Appeals, and they all had to be lawyers. Now they're back to the Board of Tax Appeals, and they don't have to all be lawyers.

Anyway, I appeared there once when they were all lawyers. That's different. But anyway, I did some, but primarily we stopped at the hearing officer level in the counties, in Wyandotte County, Johnson County and I think I did some in Osage County, along with consulting engineering work and painting the house and so on, so forth there.

EF: And it was a still a three-member—

GB: It's still—it was a five-member when I was on it.

EF: Oh, it was five.

GB: Five, and then it became a three-member court, and now it's a three-member board. But it was five when I was there. Let's see, it's myself, Bob Frey, representative—yeah, Representative Bob Frey—he was a Senator; no, he was a Representative. And Lyn Entrikin, who was with legislative staff. She was an attorney. She was Revisor of Statutes. [Lyn Entrikin Goering was formerly a Fiscal Analyst in the Legislative Research Department, not a Revisor.] She was an attorney. She was on the Board. Let's see, that's three. Oh, and there was a retired judge from—from western Kansas. That's four. Let's see, there was one other. Who was the fifth one? Anyway, —

EF: We've covered a lot of territory.

GB: I'm sorry. I mean, I got to rambling on.

EF: No, you're—you've been specific and shown great memory of things.

GB: Well, it was a pleasant time in my life.

EF: Yeah. Of all your work during that time, what would you point to as most significant?

GB: Well, I would say my opportunity of being in leadership position, and the Chairman of [Senate] Ways and Means Committee made it work. I mean, if it wasn't for that, I don't know as I would had that much of an interest in it. I like to do things. I want to—I want to be active. I don't want to—I don't want to be proactive. I want to be active. And I think the Chairman of Ways and Means should be. I mean, I don't know if they are now; I don't have any idea. But should be active, and I tried to be active. I wanted to be a part of it. I wanted to be a decision maker. And I think that's probably what did it. If I would have been, quote, "sitting in the back row"—and I don't mean that derogatory—I don't think I would have lasted that long. I don't think I would have stayed that long. I don't think so. I mean, it's—that's too mundane for me.

EF: Were budgets as interesting in '95 as they were in '75?

GB: No, because in '75, they were a challenge; in '95, it was I won't say routine, but it was getting that way, I guess you might say. And I think I probably knew more about the budget than most anyone. I don't know. I'm not going to say everyone, but most everyone. And so, it became more routine and mundane, yeah. But in '75 it was new. It was something new. It was something that I didn't know anything about, and I wanted to find out about it and so on, so forth, so—I knew about budget because I had to have a budget in my office. You know, I mean, you all—you have a budget of some kind, you know, so—

EF: When you look at some of the governors you served with—Bennett, Carlin, Hayden, Finney,  
—

GB: Graves.

EF: —legislative leadership, the Senate or House, what stands out as the special skills that made things work?

GB: I think Bob Talkington was—was a leader, and he was an organizer, and he was a get people to work together. I think he was—he was—he was very friendly, of course. And he was outgoing, and I played football against him. I didn't know it; he played for KU. And another one: I played football against Rex Hoy. He played for Nebraska, Representative Hoy there. So, he

played for Nebraska same time Talkington played for KU. Of course, Talkington was on the Orange Bowl team at KU there, and so I didn't know that, of course, at the time. And he probably ran all over me. I don't remember that. Anyway, I—I think he was—I think the best one of the lot.

EF: Where did you get your people skills? I don't think of an engineering school as a place for people skills.

GB: Well, I think maybe back growing up. I mean, we were—you know, we were out there in the country. We—you're going to have to make friends or you're going to be pretty lonely. And the nearest—oh, there was something—that was a half mile, there was nobody closer than a half mile. They didn't have any kids there, so I don't know. I guess back then, in high school I was very shy and not outgoing. I woke up, I guess, at K-State to be—you have to be more outgoing because there's people all over the place there, and so you have to be friendly. And my first girlfriend was at K-State, and so on there. I still think about her. But anyway, that's been a long time ago.

EF: Did you ever consider farming as a career?

GB: Yes. When I got ready to—graduated. I didn't know—I interviewed for engineering jobs in Wichita, Chicago—I don't know, quite a few places. And I had no offers, no job offers. That was pre-Korean War, which was kind of a—down as far as—and I thought, well, I guess—my grandpa said, "You come home. We'll—I'll set you up. I'll fix—get you some equipment, so then you go—you farm" there. And I thought about. Yeah, yeah, well, okay. I liked it. I mean, I liked farming, but I thought, "I got a degree in engineering. I'm gonna go farm?"

So, I—finally—I don't remember how I came across this job at the [U.S.] Department of Interior, so at that time we had to take a test for government positions. So, I took the test, and I didn't hear from them for a while, I thought, Well, okay. I guess this would be before I graduated. I said, I guess I'm gonna go home and be a farmer there. So, I graduated, and I guess

we went home for a couple of weeks, two or three—I don't know. Anyway, it wasn't much longer after that that I got this call from the Department of Interior, but, yes, I considered it, probably more serious than I thought right now, because I didn't know what I was going to do. I didn't have a job, and all these interviews I had turned out to be—

And I remember one in Enterprise, Kansas. I forget what that little company was there. But they wanted a design engineer, because that's what my mechanical design in— I mean, machine design and mechanical engineering was not my field. Machine design option, mechanical engineering. In my engineering career then, yes, I say I've done some—designed pump stations or something with hydraulics, and so I did use a little bit of that mechanical engineering— my civil engineering works there, but very little. But, yes, I did consider that. And probably if that Department of Interior hadn't come—well, then the Korean War started, and I had job offers, quite a few, because people were tooling up there. So, I had some after that, but I was already working as—you know, I'm not interested in those at all. I just put them in a wastebasket. I had several of them. I don't remember how many, but I did. Job offers. But for a while there, yes, I considered going to work in farming.

EF: I kind of missed early on: How did—how were you able to balance your consulting engineering work with the legislative?

GB: Good staff there. And I —at payroll time, I used to go home and make payroll at night there. I'd go back to the office and make—make payroll at night. I built the office in '68 and moved in in '69. I built it. I had a contractor. I hired bricklayers, and I hired carpenters, and we did all the trim, the painting inside, me and a couple of—a couple of people there, so we had a nice office.

But anyway, I'd go home and make sure that the payroll got built and did get done. We had— had a secretary there that would do it, but I'd go over and make sure that they were all correct, because I wanted to make sure that people got paid what they— what they would do. I didn't

want to—never wanted to short anybody in any—any of their salaries or wages or whatever they had coming to them. So, I used to go back every—and I did that until—in the '90s there, going—on payroll time. We used to pay twice—twice a month.

EF: So, it was mostly more than eight-hour days.

GB: Yes. Oh, yes. Oh, yeah. There were times when I had to attend meetings, consulting meetings and that. I'd try to make those at night, but sometimes I'd have to skip—skip morning and go there and then come back for session in the afternoon. I'd try to make those meetings that I had to have over there in the—in the mornings so that I could be at session in the afternoon. And then, of course, my committee meetings were in the morning, but I just had to work around them there. But I—I had good staff. As far as—at that time, I was not doing all that much design myself. I was more of an administrator at that time there. My design times were—I did some. Yeah, I did—after session and so on, yes, I did, but I had other engineers do design, because, oh, back in '74—let's see, I had Bruce Byrd, Ed Schlagel. I'm trying to think of engineers that I had. I probably had three. I had that Iranian.

EF: We've covered a lot of territory. Is there anything we missed?

GB: Oh, I'm sure there is, because first of all, I—I was here a long time, considering. I mean, you know, I'm—I'm sure there's others been here—Anthony Hensley has been here longer, and Paul—[Sen.] Paul Feliciano. But as far as cutting a swath, I think I—I may sound boastful, but I think I cut a pretty wide swath when I—when I was here.

EF: You left your fingerprints on lots of things.

GB: I think I probably did, yes.

EF: And if some historian wants to come and review it all, they'll have that.

GB: All right.

EF: And now they'll have you in person.

GB: Well, you know, maybe I've gone too far, I've gone beyond what you wanted to discuss—

EF: Not at all.

GB: —or something.

EF: Not at all. I—if there's anything you want to add?

GB: I can't think of it. I—I had an enjoyable time here. I really did. The first couple of years were kind of mundane and dull because I was, you know, a freshman, and Pete McGill was Speaker.

One thing I—I remember. The first bill I carried there, I was on Local Government Committee in the House, and they asked me—it was the TIF, Tax Increment Financing bill, and I was in—I was in Local Government Committee, and they said, "Well, do you want to carry the bill?" I had never carried a bill before. I said, "Ooh." Of course, I saw them, you know, up here. And I had an idea, so I: "Okay." So, I carried it, and I was—and everything, got along pretty good. Towards the end, Representative Don Mainey, who was here—he got—put his light on and came up, and he said, "Why are you carrying this bill?" Because was inferring that I had an interest in it. And looking back at it, that's—but at the time, I said, "Well, the Speaker asked me to carry it. I mean, I—and that's why. I have no other reason." He said, "Are you sure there's not another reason?" I was flabbergasted. "No! I don't know."

Anyway, I remember—Don Mainey's a nice guy, a friend. He's a good friend. He was a good friend. And I'm sure he was put up to do that by the Dems, the Democrats on his side, to fluster me, which he did, because I—I never carried one before. That's the first bill I ever carried. Of course, I carried many of them after that. I mean, lots of them.

EF: That's a fairly complicated bill, too, isn't it?

GB: Yes, it is. And I don't know why the Chairman didn't want to carry it. The Chairman—I don't—I don't remember who the Chairman was. But it was Local Government Committee. I sat next to Theo Cribbs, from Wichita. I remember we had a bill, something about rabbits. He said, "Why are there no rabbits in Wichita anymore?" And the Speaker—I mean the Chairman said, "What do you mean?" He said, "There used to be lots of rabbits in Wichita. There's no rabbits there anymore." He said, "I don't know." It was something—I don't even remember what the

bill—but it had to do with rabbits. But Theo wanted to know why there weren't any rabbits. Maybe you remember Theo. Okay. Theo Cribbs. He sat next to me around the table that we had there. Been a long time ago. Yes, that was—that had to be my first year there. I mean, '75 there.

EF: Gus Bogina, you've given a wonderful interview.

GB: Oh, thank you.

EF: I want to thank you for coming today and—

GB: I appreciate it.

EF: —spending time with us.

GB: I welcome the opportunity. I really do because I like people. I really do. And you're good people.

EF: You can—after they get this set up at the [Kansas] Historical Society, you can tell your sons and grandkids to look you up—

GB: Okay.

EF: —and see what you had to say.

GB: All right. All right. Well, yeah, the—was it—one of them wanted to know, "Can we get this?" And I said, "I have no idea. I have no—I don't know," so—

EF: You can—you will be able to get it all.

GB: Okay. All right. Very good. Ed, thank you. EF: Thank you.

GB: I appreciate it.

EF: You've been terrific.

GB: Okay. Thank you.

EF: You really have.

GB: Thank you. Thank you. What time is it? Oh, my goodness!

EF: We went on quite a while.

GB: We've run out of film?

CAMERAMAN: No. [Laughter.] I [unintelligible; 1:38:21]. I was, like, I wonder if I might actually run out of cards.

GB: I thought you just got the cameras up there for the heck of it there, so—

EF: Well, I was fascinated that you worked on the Turnpike.

GB: Yes.

MAN: You must have known Ralph? back then.

GB: Yes, Ralph? Oh, yes. Yep.

EF: [unintelligible; 1:38:41]? GB: Huh?

EF: That would have been quite a project to work on.

GB: It—it really was, because we had a section, and — was the consulting engineer that had the—they did the general layout and everything, and we had a section, each—these engineering companies—did the—we joined them on the—on the east, and [Payton & Bartlett, which became Bartlett & West]—we joined them on the west there.

EF: This would have been '25, '6, '7.

GB: Yep, probably.

EF: [unintelligible; 1:39:13]. GB: I was born in 1927, so—

MAN: Refresh my memory, but it seems to me they built the whole urnpike in something like eighteen months?

GB: Yes. That's why they broke it in sections. And they—they—

MAN: [unintelligible; 1:39:27] had a picture of the southern—where the four lanes go into the oat field.

GB: Yeah, the—it was the wheat field down at the—south of Wichita down there, in Oklahoma, yeah. Yeah, we—we had a caravan from Johnson County. Went down for the grand opening there, down the Turnpike. We drove the Turnpike all the way through there.

MAN: There's a story on Theo Cribbs. Remember when they had the?

GB: Yeah.

MAN: Well, he got on the turnpike one day, and he says, —oh, I forget what his CB handle was. “You got the birddog here” or whatever. “I’s got legislative immunity, and we’re forming a caravan behind me.” And the troopers picked up the chatter on it and slowly picked off everybody from the rear, and they got to Theo in the front, they told him he didn’t do things like that.

GB: Oh, Theo Cribbs. I remember he—he sat next to me in Local Government my first year. But, yeah, I remember him very well there. So—but, yeah, on the Turnpike we—as I said, our section was—was from, oh, about two miles west of the rest stop in—, and then we went through Lawrence—well, there was a cross—there’s a county road there, and I drove a bar right in the middle of that road, where the turn—that’s where our section ended there. That’s where the Turnpike—and then [Payton & Bartlett] took it up from there. That was the location. Drove a bar right in the middle of the road there, and that’s—our section went this way.

EF: Were you able to shift from mechanical to civil?

GB: Yeah. I never did do mechanical because I—I learned the civil, surveying, so on with the Department of Interior primarily. Then when I got on the turnpike, a lot of this stuff was—was new to me, the construction. And one time—they were working twenty- four hours. And we had inspectors who did compaction of earthwork there at—working for us.

And this one guy—every one of those came in— [Extraneous communication not transcribed from 1:41:40 to 1:41:49, but many voices are now heard in the background, coming closer.]— every one of these compaction tests came in 100 percent, 100 percent. I: That can’t be. There’s gotta be some bad ones. So, I—he [was] working at night, so I thought, I’m gonna go out there and see. So, I—I go out. I said, “Where’s”—I forgot his name— “Where’s Such-and-such?” He said, “Oh, his pickup is down over the slope down there, there.” So, I go down there, and he’s in there with his pajamas, sleeping in this—in this vehicle. I fired him on the spot. I mean, [Makes sound indicating speed.] He said, “You can’t do that.” “Yeah, I just do. Go!” So, he was in his pajamas yet! And I said, Now, that—you know, I can understand—I can see sleeping in your

pickup, but staying in your pajamas in your pickup? Come on! So, all those tests he was doing were faked. So anyway, I fired him on—on the—on the spot.

EF: Now, you said one of your sons is here in Topeka.

GB: No, he owns property—he's in Shawnee.

EF: Okay, so—

GB: He's got those houses in Shawnee. And one of my—

EF: Is that the one that still has the company?

GB: No, they sold the company.

EF: Oh.

GB: They sold it, and my son—only one son went to work with—with them there. want to go. So, Mike went, but Mike passed away. But his—his son, which is my grandson— he's—he's named Mike. He's working for them now there. And they—they bought our company. They're out of Lincoln, Nebraska. And they got to be pretty big. What they did, they came to Johnson County. They wanted to pick up some—wanted to get clients. And so, they bought—they bought three small companies, and then combined them. Now they have—they've got an office in Manhattan and one in Overland Park and one in Springfield, Missouri, and one in North Kansas City. So, they—

[Abrupt end of interview.]