

**INTERVIEW WITH
GOVERNOR JOHN ANDERSON
DECEMBER 15, 2003, AND MAY 5, 2007
OLATHE, KANSAS**

GOVERNOR OF KANSAS: JANUARY 9, 1961-JANUARY 11, 1965

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Dr. Bob Beatty, Producer, Kansas Governors Recorded History and Documentary Project



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Washburn University**

Governor John Anderson, interviewed 12/15/03

Q. I wanted to start at the beginning and ask you to tell us where you were born and where you grew up and your experiences as a boy growing up in Kansas.

A. Well, I was born on a farm on May 8, 1917. That farm was located north of Olathe here, just five miles. I attended grade school at Cherry Lane Grade School and that was one room, one teacher for eight grades, and I went through eight grades there. I attended high school here in Olathe and graduated in 1935. The city of Olathe had a 4,000 population in the entire city then - today it's over 104,000. The city has grown and the school has grown. And Cherry Lane School that I went to is no longer a school - the consolidation it was brought together with other schools adjoining it. And they have-- Meadow Lane School included Cherry Lane and I think two other schools.

Q. What did your parents do?

A. My parents, they were farmers. My dad farmed all of his life and milked cows, dairy cows for a living and worked his way through the depression years of the 1930's by selling milk into Kansas City, Missouri. And I helped milk those cows from the time I was five years old until I started college, and that would have been about 14, 15 years. I didn't start to college right out of high school. I laid out four years and stayed home on the farm. And then I enrolled at Kansas State College at Manhattan, took one year and then transferred over to KU. I determined I wanted to go to law school. So that's the place to go to finish the undergraduate work and then law school. And I graduated from law school in 1944.

Q. What is it that prompted you to want to decide to go to law school, anything happen?

A. Well, when I lived at home on the farm I thought I wanted to be a veterinarian and take care of cattle and horses and animals of all kind. I had a good friend, Dr. Stewart, who lived here in Olathe and he had a former professor out of veterinarian college in his younger years. He encouraged me to go to a veterinarian college. I thought I could get that at Kansas State College at Manhattan. But my health problems intervened a bit. I developed a heart murmur and I thought I didn't want to play with wild horses if I was going to have a heart problem. And so I transferred over to go to law school and finished that in 1944.

Q. And then you ended up running for the county attorney?

A. Well, yes. When I was in law school, the dean of the school recommended me as a law clerk to Judge Walter Huxman. He was Governor of Kansas back in the 1930's and had been appointed to the Circuit Court of Appeals of the United States, which is just under the Supreme Court. And I worked for him for two years as a law clerk right out of law school. That brought me up to 1946. In May of 1946 I decided to come back to Olathe and practice law. I ran for county attorney, which was a county prosecutor back in those days in the 1940's. The county attorney was also the legal advisor to all county offices, the county commission, and the other county officers like county clerk and superintendent of schools. I was the attorney for all of them, and also the prosecutor in the county. I was prosecutor for three terms, 1946, 1948 and

1950, and that carried me over to January of 1953 as a matter of fact.

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When I was prosecutor I decided to keep a hand in politics, so I ran for the Kansas State Senate. I was elected to the State Senate in 1952 and took office in '53 and served in three sessions of the senate. By that time we had adopted a law for the state to provide for the budget sessions of the legislature and I think I was there for the first budget session. You see, the regular sessions were held every other year in the two-year terms and then the budget session provided for a one month session every other year. So I served three sessions, I served until 1956 in the senate.

In 1956 I was appointed by Fred Hall - who then was Governor - I was appointed to the position of Attorney General of the State of Kansas. I held that office under the unexpired term of Justice Fatzer, who was elevated to the state Supreme Court. I took his position, finished the term and ran for a regular term as Attorney General. So I stayed in politics pretty well throughout the entire period from 1946. I served nearly five years as Attorney General of the state and then ran for Governor in 1960 in the fall election.

Q. Let me go back. Walter Huxman: What was working for him like?

A. It was a wonderful job. I was very fortunate in getting that position. A law clerk for a federal judge - my work was to take the cases that were brought on appeal to the Circuit Court from the District Courts in the Federal system and when it was appealed, went to the Circuit Court, they would come up through the court to the judge with docket papers being the record of the case, the transcribed pleadings and the facts of the case. If it was tried with evidence and all of that and then the briefs of the appellate on the one hand and the appellee on the other hand. And all of those papers come to the judge and when they come in he would just hand them to me and say work me up a brief and what you think would be a good opinion. And I would work each case up that way. And it was a wonderful task. I don't know of a better starting post out of law school before you practiced law than to do that kind of work. And I did that for two years.

Then I decided to come down home here to Olathe and ran for County Attorney after that. My-- it's unique, but it's true and good. My grandson now, the oldest grandchild, is enrolled in the University of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia, which is a good law school, one of the large ones in the United States. And he's now in his second year there in law school. Last summer during the time between his first year and his second year one of his professors recommended him to do clerk work for a federal court judge in Philadelphia just like I had done 50 years ago. And he liked that work. He did.

Q. Did Walter Huxman give you any advice? It's interesting, he was a former Governor.

A. Oh, I don't know. About political advice you mean? Now that would be a little early maybe. I would guess that would have been just a little early. He was a good man. Walter Huxman was a genuinely good person and I liked him very much. I got along with him very well and he liked me. And I enjoyed that two years with him, I really did.

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Q. Were any of your family or parents involved in politics or are you the first one?

A. I'm the first. My father was a farmer and my mother was a housewife and mother and a wonderful one. Now my dad did sit on the school board of Cherry Lane School for many years and helped with the school work there. I wouldn't call that a political position, but certainly it's a position with responsibility and with the ability to help out. And dad did that for a number of years. Otherwise, they never took any part. And my older brother, he never participated. Well, he did get into the political world - he was Mayor of the City of Mission here in Johnson County for eight years or something like that. And that's quite a task, really, a mayor of one of these cities in Johnson County, because Johnson County has grown, as you know, with more and more cities and bigger and bigger cities for the last 30 - 40 years.

Q. Some people who become Attorney General stay in the job - some stay 15 or 20 some years. Why did you decide not to stay Attorney General and, why and when did you decide you wanted to run for Governor?

A. I suppose I don't think I gave much attention to the idea of running for Governor much prior to the end of the second term that I was Attorney General. But I had been Attorney General five years and I thought that there was an opening and an opportunity to be Governor and so I just elected to take it. I ran against George Docking in 1960 and he had held office for two terms. He was finishing his second term in 1960 and he ran for a third term and we never had had a third-term Governor in Kansas before in 100 years. So I thought he was asking for more than his share and I decided to run.

Q. Was it a process of you looking at the situation and saying 'I'm going to run' or was it also people coming to you and saying 'John....'.

A. Oh, I had a lot of support. I had support from all over the state and it's only practical to think that the Republican Party wanted to get a Republican elected and defeat Docking for his third term as a Democrat. That's politics - pure politics for the party members throughout the state to want to take over the highest office in the state. So I had support from everywhere throughout the state.

Q. Did you have a tough primary?

A. I had a real tough primary, the toughest primary that I had ever had in a statewide election. I ran against Huck Boyd and Huck Boyd had been in politics as an activist, active in politics in the state for many years and had served as state chairman of the Republican Party for a number of years - I'm not sure he wasn't state chairman when I ran against him. He ran against me in the primary so that wasn't an easy primary. You know, in Kansas, it's been a usual thing for a person to announce on Kansas Day if he hasn't announced prior to that time, or even if they have announced prior to that - they've got a gathering of the party members on Kansas Day. And I told the group that gathered on that Kansas Day meeting in Topeka, on Kansas Day of 1960, I said I'll visit every county in the state of Kansas before the primary election in August. And I did. I tell you, it's a task, 105 counties and going into them! I would make two or three counties in one day when I drove on that state trip. But this state is 200 miles wide and 400 miles long and 105 counties. But I did it, I visited every single one of them in 1960 before the primary

election.

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Q. Boyd was a chair of the Republican Party. Why do you think you won that primary? You mentioned traveling to the counties. Was that the key, you just hit every county? Why do you think you won?

A. I don't know. I had friends in every county in the state and I had friends in the party. I don't like to state here for your program anything in a bragging sense at all about why I won, I mean I won because I got the most votes. I think I got the most votes because I had a background. Now this is talking about running for the first term as Governor. I had a background of three statewide elections as Attorney General and I had a background as Attorney General of law enforcement for the benefit of the people of the state.

One of the first things that I did within a week after I was appointed as Attorney General back in 1956 was to bring an action against a small finance company and join them for collection of a promissory note that was given by a youngster that had been taken into the Army and sent to a Great Lakes Naval position at Chicago on The Great Lakes. He was home and he bought a car here in Olathe and he just signed the papers they gave them and they charged him over 20 percent simple interest and had it spread in his monthly payments he was to make on that car. Well, when his father saw the note and the amount of money he was to pay for car and the amount he would pay finally by the time he paid it out all in monthly payments, he was paying a tremendous overcharge. It violated the usury laws of the state at the time. I tied that company up on that case and by the injunctive process I tied up every finance company that was financing automobiles or whatever else they wanted to finance in the State of Kansas until we got this case straightened out.

Commercial Credit was one of the big companies that in that kind of business and they were involved in this case because they took the paper from the first company that took the paper from this little motor car dealer here in Olathe. So I tied Commercial Credit up so they couldn't do any business in the State of Kansas until that was straightened out.

The upshot of it was a lot of publicity and it affected the car dealers throughout the state and the sale of cars. We got the case straightened out here in court to put a stop to that and they gave the kid the car and they gave a whole series of other contracts that they had to the buyers because they had done the same thing to a number of people that bought brand new cars - and they just gave them their paper free. We cleaned out a lot of the actual overcharge and violation of usury laws. Then the motor car dealers wanted a special session of the legislature and the Governor called one. So, you see, all of that publicity and that type of publicity had worked its way until I was pretty well known as a law enforcer. I think that had something to do with it winning, I'll say that humbly.

Q. And you probably got a reputation of a bit of a fighter?

A. I had done that throughout with the prosecutions -- prosecutors do that, and I had done that all the way through as a prosecutor. I prosecuted people who violated the law instead of patting them on the back and saying "Don't do it again."

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Q. In the general election with Governor Docking what was your main message when you would go out campaigning? What did you tell the voters?

A. Well, every speech I made I worked in at least a little part of it that George Docking was not the type of Governor we wanted for another term in his handling of his authority as the Governor of the state dealing with the death penalty and commutation of sentences. George Docking commuted the sentence of a person that had been tried and convicted in Wyandotte County, Kansas way back prior to 1960 and had been ordered to be executed. He had killed a woman by breaking into her house, stole all the money he could find in her purse and around the house and her jewelry and then he beat her to death with a hammer and killed her. He was convicted of it and the jury in Wyandotte County found that he should be executed.

Well, you know now how long it takes to get the appeals and all that like that done. It didn't used to take nearly as long as it does now but it did take quite a while. By the time this case got to Governor George Docking the guy asked for commutation of the sentence and to break it down from death penalty to life imprisonment, which Docking did. He said "I am conscientiously," - that's the word he used - he says "I'm conscientiously opposed to the death penalty." Well, you know, the Governor has that power of commutation of a sentence but it is supposed to be used to correct errors or wrongs of some type that have happened back down in the trial of the case or in the appeals - in other words, in the handling of it and if there is shortage of propriety and correctness in the trials and the appeals. The Governor shouldn't substitute his conscientious objection for the rule of law and the finding of a jury of twelve of his peers.

So that's what happened and I criticized him for that. I said we don't need a Governor who is going to think he is bigger than the jury system that we have in the law. I full well know that this is a problem that is never settled in the minds of some people and is a problem nationwide that's brought up by these people that say that we shouldn't ever kill anybody. You understand? They say it's no deterrent. Well, I've never seen a man that's been executed go back out and pick up a little girl and rape her and kill her, see? It deters that much. And those types of people should never walk the street again. Up in South Dakota a lot of news has been on one killing up there. If they find out she was killed by that guy, he hadn't been out of jail more that a month or so from doing the same thing with another little girl ten years ago or something like that. Then they let the guy out and here, they got him charged in the jail again.

I'll get back to our state. During the 1960 gubernatorial election every crowd I talked to wanted to hear about the death penalty, and they would clap when I would tell them what I thought it ought to be. I told them I believed in enforcing the law and I tried a man when I was County Attorney and he got the death penalty and we hung him, hung him with a rope.

Now let me tell you what the short history of this State of Kansas is on the death penalty. During the time I was Governor I denied executive clemency to five people who were charged and tried and ordered to be executed. Two of them were the Clutter family murderers, Hickock and Smith, and then the other two that were executed were Latham and York. Those two young fellows, Latham and York, had started out in Louisiana and just went in a car and went driving and went on a spree and drove through Louisiana and stopped at convenience stores and would rob and kill in Louisiana, in Arkansas and in Missouri. And they went through

Kansas out I-70 straight west of here and out past Topeka.

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In the last county in the state next to Colorado they were driving along the road and they saw a man walking the railroads and checking the tires the way they do for seeing the rails are tight and don't need help. They saw him so they stopped their car. They got their guns and they went over and they walked up to him and they - I read every word in the records on these cases - they walked up to him and they said, "Old man, if you can dodge bullets you live. If you can't dodge bullets, you're going to die. Now you get started running because we're hunting". He started running down the rails and they just filled that poor old fellow full of bullets. They were convicted and the jury said "Execute both of them, Latham and York". They applied for executive clemency, I denied that.

One other man - besides the one I told you I tried right here in this county and executed - was from Leavenworth. His case came to me while I was Governor and I denied executive clemency in that case. This was a young fellow, college student going to KU, and he wanted to use his dad's car for a date. The dad said he had abused your right of using the car. He had been caught speeding and didn't bring the car home as he was supposed to. So his dad said no. This kid went upstairs, believe it or not, in his own house, got a gun and went downstairs and he shot and killed his father. He killed his mother. And he killed his 16 year old sister, all three in the same room. The jury said execute him and I went through on that.

Those are the last six people that have been executed in this state and none have been executed except for the first week or two after I went out of office since then. Because, you know, the Supreme Court changed that law and then the states changed their law. We've put it back into effect, we've gotten it in Kansas. I think 40-some states now have reenacted the law.

Well anyway, in the campaign I talked about those things. I carried Wyandotte County running for Governor in 1960 on the Republican ticket and it was the first vote in the county since statehood that a Republican had carried the county.

Q. Once you were informed you had won the election, what did you think to yourself that you wanted to accomplish'? What were the priorities that you had as soon as you were told that you were the Kansas Governor?

A. Well, I've been told and it was said that I was an "education Governor" after the first two or three years that I was in office. In 1961 I addressed the legislature in a joint session of the House and the Senate. Insofar as education is concerned, I recommended that we increase-- now there had been, there had been a little bit of state aid out of money collected from sales tax and the property tax collections that went to the state distributed back to schools, but nothing like enough to give good support to the schools so that they didn't have to levy such a high tax against the homeowners, because that's the basis for the support of schools, traditionally it's from the property tax. So I recommended that we give substantially higher state aid to elementary and high schools in the state and that to do it in a manner that the state Education Department had recommended: That we get rid of by consolidation of schools all of these little schools throughout the state. I think we had well over a thousand of them then - well over a thousand school districts, little schools where the whole district would only have ten students in it. So by consolidation we brought them in.

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I called the State Superintendent of Public Instruction at Topeka this morning to be sure I knew what I was talking about it. And she told me that we've got 303 districts for schools from grade 1-12 for the entire State of Kansas now. 303. We had well over a thousand in 1961. With the small schools they were unable really to properly utilize state aid in a manner that would make it an equal type of distribution for the districts. So I recommended consolidation and got the schools started on it and it's been improving every year since in the way of consolidation. So I brought it down now as I say to 303 schools.

I recommended the first support by the state in 1961, the first year I was Governor, to support the municipal universities. Washburn was one of them and Wichita State was one of them. Those schools were giving higher education and support to the municipalities and I recommended state aid for them. And the legislature brought state aid for the junior colleges, for the municipal colleges throughout the state. And, of course, all of the state schools like Manhattan and KU and Hays, they were all aboard as state supported, totally state supported schools. And I also later, after the first or second year, recommended that they bring Wichita University into the state system. You see, Wichita was the biggest city in Kansas then by quite a few people, and they were maintaining that university at Wichita, and from the standpoint of budget and money expenditures they were going broke every year, truly. So I recommended we take Wichita into the state system just like Hays and Emporia and Pittsburg, those are the three besides KU and Manhattan. And we had a scramble on that. But we got it done.

Q. Is education something you wanted to do as soon as you entered office?

A. It came along one thing after another.

Q. You didn't head into office saying "I'm going to be education Governor"?

A. No, not at all. Not at all. All of these things simply worked their way to the top of a need to be expressed and accepted and handled and have something done about it, that's all. And we did.

Q. What would you say was your gubernatorial style? How did you approach the job? As an activist? Or, as you said, sort of someone who assessed things that needed to be done? How did you approach the job when you were Governor?

A. Oh, if I look back on it and try to look at the problems and look at myself, I was the holder of the office that those problems simply came to, that's all. And I had to get them done. I just tried to take the problems as they were brought to us and tried to find solutions for them and work with the legislature to do it. The legislature has the power. You know, the Governor can propose and suggest but the legislature enacts and carries out the work.

And I worked with the legislature. We had a Republican majority all four years I was in office, in the House and the Senate. But we had active democrats that knew what they wanted on many things and played a role. When you get a problem that might seem to be political, many times is not as much political as just a genuine problem of something needing to be done and needing the money to do it. That's not Republican or Democrat, that's just a problem for the

people. And we had a number of those.

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I considered that problem of whether to bring Wichita into the state university system. I considered that a problem for the students that wanted to go to college and lived in Wichita and around Wichita, and Arkansas City right below Wichita and Kingman out to the west and people in Newton and McPherson, they are closer to Wichita than they are to KU or Kansas State. And if they could live at home and go to college they could go to college. If they couldn't live at home and go to college then many of them dropped out. That's the problem we tried to solve and we did it by bringing them in the state system and for the students then at Wichita they got a much, much cheaper way of going to college then they otherwise would have. There is no other way to put it.

We helped the Johnson County Junior College. That school is just a wonderful junior college down here in this county. And I don't know the exact number of the students now, but a year ago they had just short of 1,000 less than the number of students at KU. 25,000 go over to this junior college over here in Johnson County, 25,000! Now if they don't have a good school like that to go to then many of them won't get a higher education. I proposed that we give state aid to all junior colleges in the State of Kansas back in 1961. That was the first state aid that went to junior colleges.

Q. Didn't taxes have to be raised for this proposal?

A. I don't know if they had to, but we did it. But I don't think it was with a great amount of additional tax. You see, they were paid out of the state funds for the state aid. And it wasn't all that great amount, but every nickel of it helped them.

Q. What was most rewarding part for you of being Governor personally?

A. Rewarding?

Q. Yes

A. Personally? Well I don't know, that's a hard question to answer. Rewarding? I enjoyed being Governor of Kansas. If that's a reward, I enjoyed it. I enjoyed being reelected and being accepted by the people for a second term. That says in effect you did all right the first term so you get another one, and I enjoyed that. I enjoyed a number of the things we did while I was Governor that were semi-governmental as compared to what we've been talking about, like education and the cost of it, and the creation of different aspects of it and the cost of it.

President Eisenhower finished his second term in 1961 and I was elected in the 1960 election and took office in 1961. We knew ahead of his even leaving office that his library was going to be at Abilene. The state undertook the expense and the job of setting up that library out there and acquiring additional land. They took the old Eisenhower family home site but that wasn't enough land for that library and for the museum, a separate building, and for the burial spot for Eisenhower and his wife, so the state undertook that task. I appointed the commission to handle the general work and the collection of money for it. The state paid a lot of it but a lot of it was paid from contributions. I appointed Harry Darby from Kansas City, a former senator for a while, but a friend of Eisenhower's who had known him well - I appointed him as chairman of that commission. And we had a few people I would call to meetings at Abilene. Eisenhower,

Ike and Mamie, would both come to Abilene and we would have a dinner there with them and **Kansas Governors Recorded History and Documentary Project. Dr. Bob Beatty and Washburn University, 2005. Governor John Anderson, interviewed 12/15/03**

have meetings with the commission and the members from all over the state who had been appointed to that commission. I enjoyed that type of social event.

I enjoyed the travel that went with being Governor. I went to Governor's conference meetings and met many people that way. I had lunch with Jack Kennedy, President John Kennedy in the White House. He did a nice thing. He invited every one of the 50 Governors - not more than two or four at a time so he had just a very few people and a close-type luncheon - to the White House for lunch over a period of weeks. That was a nice thing. He was executed in that assassination in Texas not too long after I had lunch with him.

Q. What were the parts of being Governor you found frustrating?

A. There probably were some, but I don't remember them. Probably some of it was frustrating.

Q. Is there anything you would do differently looking back over the years?

A. Well that's a good question. But I don't really recall. I might have done a few things differently now from then. After the fact you may see what it amounts to but after you do things you can't back up on them all. There were a few things but they didn't turn into big problems, put it that way. I didn't have much of a fuss.

But...in 1964, I'm trying to think now how that turned out...I was Governor and usually and ordinarily, regardless of whether it is the Democratic Party or the Republican Party, the Governor would be chairman of the delegation that would go to the national party convention. Barry Goldwater was the candidate in 1964. But during the work-up period before the national convention Nelson Rockefeller tried to get the nomination. I supported Nelson Rockefeller. I thought he was a better candidate and I thought he would have made a better president. I thought he would carry nationwide as a stronger candidate than Goldwater. And Goldwater did get beat in the election in all of the states and didn't even carry five states. He carried Maine and he didn't even carry Kansas. I told these guys it would happen. They were a bunch of the Republican committeemen but they were bound for Goldwater. And so they wouldn't even give me a place on the committee that went to San Francisco for the national convention! I mean, I went out there, but I wasn't a voter. Now you say things I regret, I regret that they didn't let me be a member. But I don't regret what I did, not at all.

I knew Nelson Rockefeller quite well as a Governor. I tried to support him in 1964 and then again in 1968. He tried two times and he didn't make it. He didn't have the right support at the right time. Nixon, you know, didn't he bring Rockefeller in as vice-president for a short time? And then --.

Q. Ford did.

A. Ford did. Ford brought him in. You're right. And then didn't support him when he really needed it. And didn't give him the full appointment.

Q. Bob Dole got it.

A. Yeah, Bob Dole did, that was a mistake.

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Q. Why didn't you run for a third term as Governor?

A. Oh, I considered it but I had criticized George Docking rather liberally for running for a third term and I thought that would be a bit of a leap to change just when I wanted to run instead of him running for the third term, so I let it go. I came down here to practice law and I've never regretted it.

I could have run for Congress any one of two or three different times but I didn't want to do it, obviously. I could have been a United States senator by just signing my name. When Senator Andrew Schoeppel died in 1963 I was Governor and I appointed Charles Pearson. I could have had that appointment. Harold Chase was Lieutenant Governor and he wanted me to do that. You know, personal matters and personal problems are always present no matter what the political problems or political factors are. At the time that Schoeppel died in 1963 I had three children in grade school and high school at Topeka. If I left the office in Topeka what would we do? We would have had to come home here in Johnson County and we had the farm home out there. But I didn't want to take the family and those three children at their ages and put them in schools in Washington D.C. or Virginia. They may have some very nice schools, but I had been there to Washington enough to have the idea; right or wrong, that I didn't want to take the family there. And I sure didn't want to leave the family here and me go to Washington and come back and forth. So I didn't appoint as many people have done in the Senate.

Q. It was really family considerations?

A. It was pure family consideration. And I have never regretted it one minute, because the youngsters all came through here and went through school here in Olathe and went on to college. All three of them went to college at KU and graduated and have all done so well. We've never had a single problem of any kind with our three children with drugs or breaking the law or any kind of problem. I think I made the wise choice and I've lived with it.

Q. You decided to run again for Governor in 1972, is that correct?

A. 1972, is that when it was? Yeah, I did.

Q. What helped you make that decision?

A. Oh, I don't know, I just did. That tells you I enjoyed the four years I did have up there enough that I made another try. But that didn't work, and our candidate didn't make it either. Who won that year?

Q. Morris Kay for the Republicans, Docking for Democrats.

A. Bennett wasn't the candidate. It was either Docking-- Robert Docking won when he ran for a third term. But he beat-- I didn't lose in the general election, I lost in the primary.

Q. And that would have been your first loss of any contest?

A. Of any time I ever ran for public office.

Q. That was your first defeat?

A. Yeah. It didn't break my heart completely.

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Q. Who was the Republican candidate?

A. I can't remember. (NOTE: It was Morris Kay)

Q. A different name.

A. You'd remember if I would tell it to you but the name doesn't come to me.

Q. It wasn't that hard to take even though it was your first loss?

A. No, really not. Really it wasn't. I made more money practicing law than I ever made in politics. Do you realize that the highest salary I ever drew as Governor of Kansas was \$20,000 a year. \$20,000 a year! Maybe someone would be quick to say well, \$20,000 then was a lot more money than \$20,000 now. It is, but it's still only \$20,000. If you earned it and could save all of it and put it in the bank, it doesn't draw as much interest as a higher salary would, and that's all that amounts to. It's not money that you run for when you're running for an office, not back then. Now what's the Governor make? \$100,000 or \$120,000 I would guess.

Q. I'm finding this interesting because you didn't want to go to Washington D.C.

A. I didn't.

Q. You were not broken up by not running for a third term or by losing in the primary in 1972? A lot of politicians want that power and can't get enough of it. Apparently you didn't have that great desire for power?

A. Oh, no, never did. No. I enjoyed the work but not as a matter of enjoyment of any exercise of power in a public office. There is some power that goes with being a Governor, of course, or being a judge. I have practiced law 59 years now in this county, counting the time I gave to public service - as Attorney General and making laws as a Senator and enforcing laws as a prosecutor. But I didn't enjoy it in the sense of just exercising power over someone and saying you've got to do this because I say so - never. That never entered my mind. I enjoyed working the type of work. I enjoyed working with the legislature when they came into session every session. I've read and known of Governors having a hard time getting their legislation through, getting bills through that they support and then can't get them through the house or the senate or both. I never faced that kind of a problem with any degree of it being a great problem.

In four sessions of the legislature I worked with them with what you call a liaison agent between the Governor's Office and the legislature. Other Governors have done it the same way. I had one of the best of those types of officers that anyone could ever have in a man named Robert Anderson from Ottawa. He was a lawyer from Ottawa all his life. He's deceased now. He had served in the house as Speaker of the House and retired from that. I then asked him to come up to Topeka and work in between the legislature and the committees of the House and the Senate. He worked both houses of the legislature.

When we would have a problem of thinking about getting a bill through the legislature or whether it needed amendments of a type that would get it through, I held meetings in the Governor's Office. We had however many meetings we needed to get the job done. We brought in the chairmen of the committees of both the House and the Senate, other members of

the committees, any legislator that introduced a bill that was going through both committees of **Kansas Governors Recorded History and Documentary Project. Dr. Bob Beatty and Washburn University, 2005. Governor John Anderson, interviewed 12/15/03**

the Senate and the House. I would bring all of those people in to lunch at the Governor's Office and order up trays of sandwiches and drinks and cookies and whatever goes for a lunch like that. I would do that in the Governor's Office and we would talk about the problem and how to solve it. We had both Democrats and Republicans there, you understand. We'd meet with them and if they had a problem I would talk about it. I'd say "What are we going to do to make this change that will get us the legislation we need and still get it through?" And that was one of the most successful things I did, to work with the House and the Senate, and I did that all four years I was there.

Q. So you were really a hands-on Governor with the legislature?

A. With the legislature. Bill Mitchell from Hutchinson was Speaker of the House. I don't know whether he was there for all four years or two. I know he was there as speaker. And he's a good man. He's still alive, he's in Hutchinson, he's a lawyer out there. Bill was an easy man to work with, he was a good legislator. He knew how to get these problems worked out. I think that's one of the best methods that I worked with. Other Governors have done the same thing but I just doubt that any of them used the meetings as much as I did. And I know we got the problems worked out.

Paul Wunsch was the leader of the Senate for how many years, goodness sakes, 20 or more. He was there all the time I was in the Senate, when I was Attorney General and was Governor. Paul was leader of the Senate for 20 years and he was a very, very able legislator, very able. He was easy to work with and knowledgeable, that was the main thing, and experienced. Paul was a good man. He's passed away now, Paul has. You probably knew him, didn't you?

Q. This is very interesting because this is not something that all Governors do. You literally as a Governor got in a room and hashed out how you're going to get things accomplished?

A. Yeah. With the people that were going to work with it or pass it or kill it, one or the other in both houses, and we had Democrats as well as Republicans at these meetings. You've got a chairman and vice chairman in these meetings and you've got the Democrat members of those committees also. We didn't keep any secrets with them. We made them part of the system of resolving the problem. I found it to be practically more workable to get those differences aired out and to try to resolve them in a group, by way of talking about it rather than to fight about it on the floor of the House or the Senate. If you had it worked out between both parties or the leaders of them, why then, they didn't go back on their word once we got a resolution to it. And if you get a bill killed out there sometimes it's hard to revive them. See, we tried to avoid that.

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Mark Peterson: You were Governor and Attorney General during some very tumultuous periods. You were Attorney General following the Brown decision and Governor for the unified public school system. You have the One Man One Vote ruling from the U.S. Supreme Court coming down while you were Governor. How did those sorts of social changes and background changes in the rest of the country affect politics and your job in Kansas?

A. I suppose just like it did everywhere else. You know, the One Man One Vote thing meant adjusting the boundaries of the districts from which the members of the House and the Senate were elected. And we did all of that in there. Actually, I would have to say that those problems that arose that affected individual members of the House or the Senate worked the redistricting down to where they had to do something one way or another with a district. And if it affected one member's district so that he felt it might wash him out, that's really what it comes down to. I don't recall that I ever participated in a so-called dog fight to get a solution to one of those. They worked them out pretty well between themselves and came up with their boundaries. And we didn't have a great problem.

We split off part of Wyandotte County, which was a big county then, and still is. We split off part of that and put it in different congressional districts and in the Senate and House districts. Now another county that had a bit of a problem on that was Douglas County. And part of it, you know, came over into a district, Eudora, on the east side of Douglas County, and it just worms its way west right alongside of the university and takes that university block of votes back to the backside of Lawrence. And it is still that way.

I see no political problem or practical problem out of those things if they can get them resolved. They do a little meandering. They do it to catch the votes. If they want the Republican votes they get a Republican section of it. They do it everywhere.

Q. What kind of skills do you think any Kansas Governor needs in order to succeed? What skills or traits would help any Governor?

A. Now you want to get me shot, huh? Well, I think that is a matter of opinion of individuals and everyone has a right to their own opinion on it. You see, a Governor does many things while in office. They make many appointments. They appoint judges - all of them all over the state and if they have a vacancy, the Governor makes an appointment. Our system that was developed by the courts and by the legislature allows for and provides for a committee or a commission that is set up in the various judicial districts of the state. When you get a vacancy in there by a judge that dies or retires or is promoted and moves on they take a District Judge and put him on Circuit Court of Appeals on the Court of Appeals of the state or the Supreme Court. Then the Governor has to appoint not only that one up there but to fill the other post. And the committees make these appointments. I think that our judicial system has to be maintained as a good judiciary that sees that the laws are enforced and makes decisions and resolves disputes between people. Judges have to try to do that and we need good judges.

We need a Governor to give us good judges. So it's an important responsibility of the Governor to appoint good judges. Now they're limited to a degree so they can't get anybody other than the three that this committee sets up, so the committee has a good deal to do with

carrying out the important business of getting all qualified members from which one of three is **Kansas Governors Recorded History and Documentary Project. Dr. Bob Beatty and Washburn University, 2005. Governor John Anderson, interviewed 12/15/03**

appointed. So you can't say that it's all left up to the Governor, it isn't. It's left up to this committee. Even out of all of that, we sometimes get judges that turn out to be not so good judges. Now your question really goes to the business of whether or not the Governor has a proper task and then is properly able to fulfill it.

Now, being a lawyer for 59 years, I have dealt with many, many, many, many judges. And I've dealt with many, many more lawyers. And I think to carry on a good government and a good system I like to see the system give us good courts. I will say this: Notwithstanding that some might think I'm being critical, but as much as a Governor deals with making laws, enforcing and executing - that's the job of the Governor to execute and see that the laws are fulfilled and carried out, and to appoint these judges - I like to see good lawyers become Governor. Now I understand that doesn't always happen. And I'm not critical of the way things come out, but you asked a question of what I think could be done. But I know we're not going to do that. If we were to submit a question, yes or no, to all the voters of the State of Kansas, should we have all lawyers for Governor, I don't have any doubt about what the answer would be. They would say no, we don't want all lawyers.

Q. You mentioned a personal quality that you were willing to take off the jacket and get in the middle with it, get with the legislature. Not all Governors will do that. So are there some personal qualities that you think the Governor wouldn't hurt to have? I think you mentioned flexibility in negotiations as one.

A. A knowledge that the basic need to be Governor is just a basic knowledge and experience of dealing with the day-to-day problems in our society and that the only way we're going to improve on these problems that we have is with good laws and good execution of them. I personally think that we are heading into a situation in this country where we've lost the morals and the basic understanding of the difference between right and wrong. And we've lost the family unit of government. The family is where children are supposed to learn the difference between right and wrong. They're not getting it. And too many of these children are growing up like animals instead of human beings. And the papers are full of crimes every day.

I don't know that I'm positively right on this, but I don't think there are many countries out of all the countries of the world, there may be a few of these small ones, Iraq would have been an example for many years, but I don't think there are many countries in the world that have as much on the street and in the home type of law breaking that we have right here in the United States of America. And that's sad. That's terrible. And I think that we need people in government who understand that we've got to make some corrections. We've seen a movement where we've lost the family to take care of the children.

My goodness, I think I've got one of the best families that anybody in the world could have. And there are many like them. But the percentage, if you look at it across the board, not only in New York or in Los Angeles where you have huge cities but right here in Kansas, there are too many crimes of murder and rape and theft and assault and battery and all of those. So many that we've got to start correcting them. Only way we're going to do it is having good people in government.

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Q. So that's part of a Governor's job now is to address those sort of problems?

A. Of course it is. It should be. To encourage and bring about a correction of those types of problems. I'm not telling you anything new. You've read it and you know it as well as I do that it has been an increasing problem now for a number of years. I've read that they go back 20 to 30 years to watch these changes. The number of children in this country in the United States that are born illegitimately now is unbelievable. And that is the start of where they have the need of the care that will show them the basic difference between right and wrong. It's wrong to kill somebody. I read in the paper, it's been quite some time ago, a youngster was charged with killing a fellow. And when they arrested the kid he was 15 years old or something like that. He says all I did was what I saw on TV.

Q. Is there anything unique about Kansas that makes the Governorship job here different than maybe in other states as you know it?

A. No, I don't think there's any difference. I think the Governor's job in all of the states is basically the same. It, of course, is a different task here than it is in California. They have a terrible task out there with the budget alone. And the budget is what they pay for things with. If they don't have money, then they've got to start taxing the people. And they've got to figure out how to tax them, where to tax them and what to tax them on. I think the tax on cigarettes is just going to keep climbing and keep climbing until finally some of these people say my goodness I can't afford them, I can't buy them because I can't afford them.

Q. There's talk about three parties in Kansas. And of course also, Kansas is a Republican state. Is that a challenge for a Governor to have a split in the Republican Party or is it not that difficult of a thing?

A. Well I think the Republican Party has a bit of a problem with the split in the party. In this county that I live in right here there is probably the seat of much of the split you might say between your conservatives and ultra conservatives and some call some of them do-gooders, if you will, the way they operate. And I think that has a detrimental affect upon the party state- wide. And I think we've seen a little of that in the last election right here in Kansas. See, who was the-- who was the candidate for Governor? [Tim Shallenberger]. His defeat felt the split here in this county. I think it was more of a split up here than it was in Wichita.

Q. Was this evident when you were Governor, this split?

A. Not as bad, not as bad, no. It wasn't as bad then.

Q. What would you like Kansans to remember about John Anderson and John Anderson's two terms as governor?

A. Just don't get mad at me. It's all behind us. Along the way it's history. I don't know of any special fact or problem that one might think of really going back. See, it's a long time since I was Governor, 1965. And that's 38 years ago now. And you add the four years onto that to the point when I started, it's 40 years, 43 years as a matter of fact.

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Q. Governor Avery still complains about the deficit you left him.

A. The deficit that I left him? Well I didn't leave him a deficit. You know, it's interesting talking about individuals and the political thinking. You know when I was in office in 1964 and then in the election in 1964, we had candidates in the primary election for Governor. I don't know that I can even name all of them. Avery was a congressman in Congress and came back and ran for Governor and he ultimately won. But Paul Wunsch had been wanting to run for Governor for 20 years and had talked about it. He would get right up to the starting gate, you know, and not run until in 1964. I went out in 1964 and the election was in 1964. So Paul decided to run that year and he did.

Talking about the deficit, I didn't leave Bill Avery a deficit. But by the making of the budget for the year when he went in, why, the cost of government was increasing every year, so he had to have a higher budget than I did. The last budget that I had in my last year as Governor was a little less than half a billion dollars, just about \$500 million was the total budget. Now what is it?

Q. Five times that.

A. Yeah, about \$3 billion.

Q. Almost \$5 billion general fund.

A. See, it's way up there. Paul Wunsch was good, I had a high regard for his ability. He came in to see me during the last legislative session and the submission of the budget and the address to the legislature. He says, "John, if we can arrange for it and get a bill in the legislature I want to know whether or not you will give approval or disapproval. If you disapprove it I don't think we will do it. But if you don't mind, I'm planning for running for Governor, for this job this fall in the election. If I am elected I would rather not have a great big increase in the budget in my first year or second year as Governor." We had two year terms then. And he said, "If we can increase these taxes a little bit and build up a reserve I would like to do that." I said, "Paul, I don't think we can do that."

You know, we had a budget director in the state agency. They've got one now. And there was one that was in office during all the time I was Governor for four years and he stayed there for Bill Avery after I went out and he was in there before I went in. His name was James Bibb and he was one capable CPA is what he was. And he did all the budget work of what needs to be done according to the means of setting up a budget from all of these demands from all state agencies. When the reports came in you added them together and you got your budget. Now to throw in and get a reserve would be to add it on. Well, I said, "We can't do it, Paul. I'm sorry."

Well, Paul didn't have to worry about it because he didn't get elected. But I didn't leave a deficit either. Those deficits grow by an increase in the cost of government and you know how they've grown. They've grown tremendously in the state because of inflation, for one thing. That's the way it works.

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Q. Is there anything else you would like to add?

A. Oh goodness. I don't really know of anything. I've enjoyed your program here. And by the time you add the comments of five former Governors and the present Governor Sebelius, you ought to be able to put and take enough to get an expression of what Governors do and why they do it. You know, yesterday I saw a bit of history of Kansas that I had never seen before. My son, John, who is a judge here in the county, we were out west of Desoto. And Johnny said let's drive over to Vineland. Vineland is a little settlement of about 100 people, maybe less than that. I think only four or five houses in Vineland. And it is between Paola and Ottawa...what's that city?

Q. Baldwin.

A. It is straight north of Baldwin four miles on a county road there. The reason Johnny wanted to drive out there is they've got an airport there with private hangars. And he and my other son have a small cub airplane that they bought and they've worked it over. They fly it. Fly if they want to up to Minnesota or down to Oklahoma. And we drove out there to Vineland and Johnny said look there at that library. Cole Creek Library. The words were on top and over the door of a little one-room stone building about 18' by 20'. And that library has been there, it was created, it's got the date on it 1858. 1858 the building was built. And they made a library out of it. That's history. It was built before statehood, two years before statehood.

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Governor John Anderson, interviewed 5/5/07

Early political career in the Kansas Legislature

When I was in the Kansas Senate I was part of a group that was called the "Young Turks." It was John Rolk from Russell, me and about six other younger fellas in the Senate. We would get together and talk about certain issues and then usually vote together. In a 40 member Senate a group like that can make a difference. Patronage and political deal making and cronyism were a problem in Kansas politics, and we had lawyers in the group, including me, and we wrote legislation to put a damper on the patronage. Indeed we did. And by God we passed the legislation and put a stop to those insider deals and even cut some of the worst ones down when they ran for office.

The old guard opposed all this. They opposed legislation that would stop public officials from using their positions for private benefit. The truth of the matter is that we ended up winning by being patient. Within a few years they didn't have lawyers to fill the judiciary committee so they had to appoint us. And from there we could get some reforms passed.

Governor Fred Hall was a political friend of mine and I had many political dealings with him that you typically have. He came on the scene very fast. I helped him campaign when he ran for Governor. He was able. You see, the political powers from the Governor Alf Landon period had controlled the Kansas Republican Party for years. Hall was able to break that all up as he was independent of what we called the “Old Guard” that usually selected the candidates that they wanted to run for the offices. He ran a good campaign, was personable, and attracted a lot of supporters and got good crowds on the campaign trail. But boy oh boy, the old group of Kansas GOP power brokers did not like Hall at all. He would not work with them and they really opposed him.

As for the so-called “triple-play,” where he resigned the governorship and got himself appointed to the Kansas Supreme Court – which really caused a huge stink and led to changing how we pick Supreme Court judges here in Kansas – I never figured out why he did that. Why would he do it? I still wonder why the Hell he did that for.

As Johnson County Attorney

I was Johnson County Attorney and Prosecutor from 1947 to 1953. I received a fair amount of notoriety when I was County Attorney that I think helped me when I later ran for statewide offices such as Attorney General and Governor. I became pretty well known when I tried a murder case that made the news around the state for three weeks. It was against a lawyer named Casey Jones. The charge was second degree murder for an incident that happened in 1952. Jones was a lawyer in Johnson County and a very well-liked man by any standard. He had served in the state legislature and actually wanted to run for Governor. He was a nice guy and I liked him. But, he made a big mistake.

He was married with three children but also had a secretary that, shall we say, he was close to, and she was the daughter of a banker. He had the habit of going with some of his friends to Kansas City for the weekends, since in those days there was no liquor in Kansas City, Kansas. And they would eat and drink whiskey all weekend and have quite a time. Those two or three men would go with their secretaries and do that, usually drinking much too much. Well, one night in the fall of 1952, after drinking, Jones and his secretary headed home. Casey didn't want to get stopped by the police so he drove home via a side road. I think what probably happened is that the secretary opened the door of the car, Jones reached over, and the car went into the ditch, which was full of water. She had the door open and she got caught between the door and the door jam and By God it killed her.

Now, I could have charged him with negligent homicide. But he was drunk so I charged him with second degree murder. Jones hired the best defense lawyer in the state and we tried the case. Thirteen days it went on and it was in every paper in the state every day. Actually, on the front page every day. So it became a state-wide topic. That was close to the end of my term as County Attorney. I ended up convicting him of negligent homicide with a vehicle, one degree less than what I charged him with, and it was seen as a real victory by many. That made my name state wide.

I also tried a guy when I was County Attorney for the murder of a deputy sheriff. His name was Merle Martin and he ended up being executed in 1954. As they say, we hung him “with a rope until dead.”

Martin was a thief and he some other guys he was with liked to break into houses and steal jewelry and other valuables. Well, after one robbery they had stopped their car and going

through what they had stolen and while they were doing that a farmer called the Johnson County Sheriff's office and reported them. A Deputy Sheriff went over there and they were stopped on a bridge. The Deputy had a flashlight and she shone it at them and asked them some questions. Miller shot at the flashlight and killed him. I charged those guys with murder and convicted them. The trigger man, Miller, got death. By God that's what happened, he was executed and hung with a rope.

So that was another pretty well known case.

On running for Governor and defeating George Docking

The death penalty was not the main reason I won Governor - I was pretty well known for my other work – but it played a part. Governor George Docking just did not believe in the death penalty. He would commute the sentences of those on death row to life in prison. And during the campaign I just hounded him and hounded him for that. When I'd tell people about Docking and his stand on the death penalty they were all on my side. Every speech I'd make I'd mention it and get a good reaction. So Docking had what I thought were real problems in the area of pardons and the paroling of prisoners. I didn't think he had the experience to deal with those kinds of issues. He also had some problems in working with the legislature and getting along with them. I thought I could do a better job. But I liked old George Docking. I never had any trouble with him myself. But I thought he issued too many pardons. I think the voters did too.

The day after the election I had a unique experience with Governor Docking. We actually had offices right across the hall from each other in the capitol building. In those days the Attorney General's office back door was right across the hall from the Governor's office door. And there was an elevator near there as well. Well, the morning after the election, in which I had defeated Docking, I was on the first floor and I went to the elevator and walked in and who should be standing in there by himself but old George Docking! So it was just me and him in the elevator as it went up to the second floor. So I said, "Hello Governor, how are you?" I swear to God his face turned a bright red. He looked at me and didn't say a word. We went up together and then got off.

Later that day I saw him and he said hello and was very pleasant. It just took him a while to get over the defeat. He just wasn't ready to talk to me earlier in the morning after losing the election, which I perfectly understand. I don't blame. It must have been very disappointing.

On Civil Rights and the civil rights movement in the 60's when he was Governor

I remember the NAACP coming to see me when I was Governor. They wanted to have a meeting on the East steps of the statehouse. I said of course they could and I spoke to the group. Of course! Racism is a terrible thing. Every person as a citizen of the U.S. should have equal opportunity to succeed based on their abilities, to push themselves forward. If a black man succeeds, even if he overcomes whites, then he should have the opportunity to do so based on his abilities and efforts. That's what I call equal rights.

On his not getting appointed to be a federal judge after leaving the Governorship

Charles Pearson was Senator when a federal judgeship opened up and I hoped he would recommend me for appointment. Through my career he'd been helpful as my campaign manager,

and he was my friend. And I appointed him to the open U.S. Senate seat when it came up when I was Governor. But he turned out to be less of a friend than I thought he was. Once he went to Washington, D.C. and the Senate I would never hear from him much. I had that ambition to be a Federal Judge in federal court, and I must say I thought he would help me get the judgeship. I didn't think there was anything wrong with that, all I wanted was to serve the public. But, dammit, he got out to D.C. and forgot about where he had received his help along the way and who his friends were. I never heard from him and he didn't end up recommending me. I was very disappointed by that.

On Nelson Rockefeller and the split in the Kansas GOP

In 1964 I went to Florida for a meeting with Rockefeller to try to help him with strategy on winning the presidential nomination. He was a very smart man and a good man. It was around that time that the moderate/conservative crap started happening and we've had it going ever since. We've still got these special interest and one-issue matters that are dividing people, such as the issue of abortion. They're one-interest or one-subject oriented. I don't particularly like the effect it has on politics.

Change should be in the interests of the general public, not just a few interested in one or two issues. Do things for the benefit of the people, not to harm them.

Reflecting

I enjoyed my years of public service and my four years as Governor. It's far behind me now, but all along the way its history, and I was part of it for a short while. I might have done a few things differently now from then. And to this day I can still remember looking out the window of the Governor's mansion at Cedar Crest – we were the first family to live there – and seeing our Shetland ponies out on the lawn munching on the grass. Can you imagine, ponies wandering around the Governor's house? It was a unique time and a great experience, and I hope some of the things I did people will remember.

I did not get into public service for the money or any personal gain. I'm also not a "bible thumper." I thought I could get some things done and improve the state. I'm proud of some of the things we did.



Kansas Governors: Avery, Sebelius, Anderson, Hayden, 5/18/2005