H. EDWARD "ED" FLENTJE: This oral history interview of Patrick Hurley, former majority leader of the Kansas House of Representatives, 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.

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Mr. Hurley, originally from Leavenworth, has worked as an attorney and an independent contractor representing clients before the Kansas legislature for most of his career. He graduated from Benedictine college in 1963 and Washburn School of Law in 1967. He was first elected to the Kansas House of Representatives in 1974 and reelected twice but resigned his seat in 1979 to serve as secretary of the Kansas Department of Administration in the administration of Governor John [William] Carlin. He served as majority leader of the Kansas House in the 1977 and '78 legislative sessions.

Is that reasonably accurate?

PATRICK HURLEY: It is accurate, yes.

EF: Good. Well, you have a wide-ranging career, and we want to cover as much of that as possible.

PH: All right.

EF: And why don't we start out by just asking what motivated you to run for the Kansas legislature in 1974?

PH: Well, actually, I had never given it any thought at all. I was practicing law, raising a family, and had only been in private practice three or four years by then, having served with the federal government. And about ten days before the filing deadline, I got a series of calls, first from the executive director of the Democrat [sic] Party, saying that everybody said I was the one that could beat the incumbent.

EF: At state level?

PH: Yeah, mm-hm. Ron Smith, whom I didn't know, and I said, "I don't have any interest in running." And they said, "Well, don't that"—they kept saying, "Don't let that be your last answer." And so a day or two later, I get a call from another at that time total stranger, [James C.] "Jim" Slattery. Same pitch. You know, "People tell us you can beat the incumbent, and so we want you to run." And again I said, "No, I'm not interested." Then—

EF: Now, Jim would have been in the legislature?

PH: He was, yeah.

EF: The Kansas legislature.

PH: Yes, he was. And so then I get a call—the next call I get a day or so later is a fellow named John Carlin. Same pitch, you know, and my same answer: "I'm not interested, but I'll find somebody." And so the next time I talk to them, it was [Richard C.] "Pete" Loux [pronounced LUX] that called me. And I said, "Well, I've got a guy that once served as a Democrat in that seat, and he's interested in filing, so thanks for all the calls, but I won't be filing."

And then guy calls me—he was a friend of mine, and he as the head of the Leavenworth County Health Department, City-County Health Department. He said, "Well, the attorney general's office called me and said that I'd be violating the [federal] Hatch Act, because we got some federal funding," which I later found out was not an accurate characterization. And so I had told them, "Well, this guy's gonna run, so I'm not filing." But then, you know, when he calls me to say, "I can't run now because of the Hatch Act," I didn't say yet that I would, but I finally did. And the long and short of that, I filed about eleven o'clock on the last day, when they cut off at noon.

And they had promised me two things: one, I would have no opposition in the primary, and they would raise money for me. And so I go back to my law office, get a call asking if I know So-and-so, and I said, "Yes, he's the guy that I wanted to get to run, who has served in that seat before. Why?" "Well, he filed fifteen minutes after you did." And I said, "Well, I think I can beat him." And then he said, "Well, do you also know So-and-so?" And I said, "Yeah, he held the seat about ten years ago. Why?" "He filed right after the other person filed."

So anyway, I ended up having to defeat two former legislators in the primary and the incumbent in the general, and I didn't get a dime of financial support to help. But I was young enough that I went door to door in the primary and door to door—and I didn't do it just Democrats; I did it every door. And because my family went back more than a hundred years on both sides in Leavenworth, it seemed like almost every door I knocked on, if they didn't know me, they knew my cousins or my parents or something. So anyway, that's how I got in. I really had never, ever given any thought whatsoever to running.

EF: Sounds like a full-court press. How did you get on their radar?

PH: I later learned that a very, very good friend of mine, whom I had grown up with, that later became chief justice of the Kansas Supreme Court, [Robert E.] "Bob" Davis, had recommended me and said, you know, "I've known him all my life, and I think he can defeat the incumbent," and so I had Bob to thank

for all these calls I was getting. And I also later learned, through my years in politics, that if the first guy tells you no, then the next guy you call, you say, "Everybody says you're the guy that can win the seat," so anyway, it's—

EF: A hundred years. Was there any political history in the family?

PH: No, not that I am aware or recall, but, again, I know my father's family went back to the 1860s, and my mother's went back to the early 1900s, and I had a lot of cousins, an awful lot of relatives, not all in my district, a lot out in the county, but because they had lived there and grown up themselves there, truly I seemed to, you know, know about everybody in the city and was practicing law there and so forth.

EF: Were you a committed Democrat?

PH: I had been. First president I was old enough to vote for was John F. Kennedy, and I had the good fortune of getting to see him in person and hear him speak when I was in college. He was speaking in Kansas City, and carloads went down from what was then Saint Benedict's, all boys, now it's Benedictine. And from then on, I just was kind of hooked to politics, it seemed like.

EF: You win, defeat—there was a Republican incumbent, too,—

PH: Yes, right.

EF: —as well as the primary.

PH: Yes, that's right.

EF: And was there some issue in the campaign?

PH: Yes, there was one issue aside from people's familiarity with either me or my family. The incumbent worked for the Leavenworth School District. He was a friend of mind, and he's deceased now, long deceased. But he, having worked for the School District, and still was working for them, was against due process for teachers. And if you remember Bob Wooten—Bob was with KNEA [Kansas National Education Association] then, and they came over and interviewed me. And basically, I said, "Well, if I run"—or this may have been after I filed, even—"I want two things to happen. One, teachers in every audience where we jointly appear and two, to be asked the question as to my position on due process for teachers." And that occurred every place we jointly spoke. And my answer was: "As a lawyer, I can't imagine denying due process to anyone." And the incumbent struggled for any kind of answer that sounded at least that logical, and never could come up with a good answer."

EF: Well, it doesn't sound like you went into this without some political savvy and skills.

PH: I think it was more the legal training. I had tried a lot of cases. The five years I was with the federal government, I had the good fortune—I had an awful lot of good fortune in my life, things happening by happenstance, but because I went to work with the federal government in the middle of a school year, in January, I was assigned to the designated trial attorney, whereas all these other young attorneys were doing work that never got them into a courtroom, and so I was in a courtroom the whole five years and then got called by judges within a month of going into private practice in Leavenworth to take some major cases out of the penitentiaries or what have you, so I had had a lot of—an awful lot of trial work. And, you know, that gives you an advantage, I think, the education does. And this person that I ran against was educated as well, but that seemed to be an issue that would make a difference.

EF: So you're in the legislature. [Robert F.] Bennett is governor. [Duane "Pete"] McGill is [speaker of the House]. What do you remember about the first two years? You're a back bencher. You're a freshman.

PH: That's correct.

EF: You're not supposed to speak or anything, are you?

PH: Well, no, and I learned that pretty quickly, too, that you could speak too much, and then people paid no attention to you, so I was selective about when I would go down and what issues I would address. But I had the experience of—do you want me to tell a story that I was telling you at lunch?

EF: I think you should.

PH: Okay. Well, being a Democrat, I was in the minority those first two years, and we were advised that there was going to be a debate on a bill that would give the attorney general, who was a Demo- —or, excuse me, give the Legislative Council the same powers that the attorney general had by statute, and the attorney general was a Democrat, so the Republican majority was going to run a bill. And they were only going to allow one person to speak from each side of the aisle, and the majority leader, then majority leader of the house, Representative [Donn James] Everett, from Manhattan, who was a lawyer, was going to speak for the Republicans. I was asked by the minority leader to be the spokesperson for the Democrat side of the issue, and so I went to the law library here and did all kinds of research and brought all kinds of books down with me, and I took it very seriously. The majority leader, who was a good friend, did not take it that seriously, and so I was grilling him and interrogating him, and the whole body, explaining different powers that the attorney general had that made no sense for Legislative Council, whom, by the way, I had also talked to and didn't really want the bill passed. And so then when they voted, it was a straight party-line vote. But interestingly, when I went back to my back row, I got a

standing ovation from both sides of the aisle for the work I had put into it. And so that was my very first session in the legislature.

EF: Was that early in that session?

PH: Oh, I don't recall when it was, but—

EF: You remember it well.

PH: Well, one of the other things is I commuted every day to Leavenworth because I had family, went into my law office at night, would dictate and leave stuff for my secretary, and Fridays I'd go back and—I had law partners but, you know, I had to stay somewhat involved with clients, so I—as I recall, I stayed with somebody, [James C.] "Jim" Slattery or somebody overnight in order to stay and do the research. So that was kind of the highlight of my first—very first session of the legislature.

Then in between my first and second sessions, still in the minority, the minority leader [Richard C. "Pete" Loux, pronounced LUX] was appointed by Governor Bennett to the Corporation Commission, and the assistant minority leader was John Carlin. And he was moved up to minority leader, which put him in the front row, and he called me one day in between sessions and told me that he was going to move me to the desk right behind him, and he wanted me to study, between sessions, four major issues. I don't recall all of them right now, but he knew were going to be issues that Governor Bennett was going to be seeking legislation on and that the Democrat Party would be opposing.

And so I functioned as a result of that—and these issues did come up and were debated. I was functioning like a floor leader in my second session in the legislature. An so then, in the next election—it would have the the '76 election—I got a call about two o'clock in the morning by one of the Democrat legislators telling me, "Believe it or not, we're in the majority."

EF: After the '76 election.

PH: Yes. And I said, "I don't believe it. Put somebody else on the phone." And so it was confirmed that we went from—we had been 53; we went to 65. Of course, a majority is 63 in the House. And so, again, by way of John Carlin having become minority leader just for the one session, he and I talked, and he said he was going to run for speaker and pretty logically, as minority leader, suggested that I ought to consider running for majority leader. And I did and was unopposed and was elected, and so in '77 and '78 we worked very, very closely together as speaker and majority leader.

And also, you might recall, it was 21-19 Republican over Democrat in the Senate. And Senator [Norman E.] Gaar pretty well controlled 21 votes. Senator [John Francis "Jack" Steineger would the 19 Democrats, and there were about five, including Senator Gaar, from which they could draw the other

two and effectively send about any piece of legislation that we wanted down to Governor Bennett. And the majority leader, when he would call us down to tell us what he thought of legislation that was either coming or already on his desk—I had a great deal of admiration for Governor Bennett. Just two attorneys. He didn't take anything personally, at least not to our faces. But then he would—and the bills that we were talking about—I mean, it was a handful, but they weren't, you know, radical. One of them was setting certain rates for income tax where it had been a flat rate for everybody, for example.

And he would write these scathing messages on those particular pieces of legislation that would read just like a veto message, and it would go on and on, and I loved his messages. I loved his State of the States because he was so articulate and very bright. But then he would allow it to become law without a signature. So he never did veto any of that particular set of bills that we sent down. They got through both houses and went down to his desk, so—

EF: I think that bill you're talking about allowed the highest income tax rates in the state's history, and later got reduced, but—

PH: Yeah. I'll tell you a funny story—I hope not to be digressing—about that. I had, later that year, during the session, being an Irishman, 100 percent Irish—we had a St. Patrick's Day dinner, and I had John Carlin, Jim Slattery and Bill Reardon as guest speakers there. And Slattery had carried the bill.

EF: Which?

PH: The tax bill. And he was explaining, and, of course, Jim's a smart politician, and he kept saying to the au- —we had a couple of hundred people there, and he kept saying, "And so you'd have to only be in the top five percent of taxpayers to have an increase." And there's a guy that I knew well in the audience, who keeps waving his hand while Jim's speaking, and Jim leans over to me and says, "Do you know that guy?" And I said, "I know him very well." He says, "Well, who is he?" And I said, "He's one of the five percent."

EF: [Laughs heartily.]

PH: So anyway, it was a very enjoyable period. And I actually was reelected to a third term unopposed. I was unopposed after I won the first time, I was unopposed a second time in '76, and then I ran again when John Carlin was running for governor. I ran for my House seat again before I resigned, and was reelected. And then, again, he and I—I was very involved with his campaign, and in those days, they didn't provide any space for an elected governor before he was sworn in, so we had to run the transition from the speaker and the majority leader's offices. And I remember that was one of the first things he said he was going to do as governor, is provide funding for future governor-elects to be able to obtain

space, and I think now they even provide some in this building. But—so, again, we worked through that transition together, and as a result of that, we began talking about whether I would be interested in going into his administration. And ultimately I did, as secretary of administration.

EF: I'm going to come back to that.

Based on what you described, John Carlin is assistant minority leader. He gets elevated—

PH: Right.

EF: —to minority leader. Then he becomes speaker.

PH: Right.

EF: You and John Carlin must have hit it off real quickly. I mean, you're a freshman. I don't remember how long he was there, but he'd been there—

PH: I think he'd been a couple of terms, at least, before that.

EF: Yeah, he'd been there a while.

PH: Yeah, and I didn't know him at all previously. You know, I didn't know him well my first—

EF: Was it this defense of the—

PH: Well, I think he observed that, you know, I would work hard and apparently could handle issues, because, as I said, I was still happy with freshman in the far back of the chamber, and when Pete Loux went to the KCC [Kansas Corporation Commission] and John was going to move up as minority leader, that's when he contacted me and said that he was going to move me from my back seat to right directly behind where the minority leader sits.

EF: That sounds like an assistant minority leader.

PH: Almost.

EF: For that one—

PH: Functioning that way.

EF: —year.

PH: And that's, I think, what led to my running for majority leader and not having opposition, because I had really functioned that second session on major issues virtually as an assistant minority leader or floor leader or what have you. And actually, in those days, as anybody that was in the legislature—and you were around the process—both sides of the aisle really got along well. I always used to describe the process in those days as one in which in the House they locked up 125 people for ninety days, made them deal with a whole lot of issues, arrive at compromise on those issues and leave as friends. And that's really how it worked in those days. So you know, I interacted with people on the other side of the

aisle, no matter which—whether I was in the minority or when I became the majority leader. Still worked—Wendell Lady was the minority leader then. Wendell and I worked very well together. And just any number of—[John Michael] "Mike" Hayden was in the legislature then. We were friends then; we're friends to this day. I can't say whether that's different today than it was then, but that's really how the process worked then.

EF: Let's focus a bit on your second term. You're majority leader.

PH: Mm-hm.

EF: Your colleagues have elected you to majority leader of the House. How do you remember that—those two years, those two sessions?

PH: Well, very fondly. More importantly, again, John Carlin being the speaker, and as you know, the majority leader and the speaker's offices are back behind the chamber, so we interacted and discussed the agenda, discussed how we were going to get bills out of committee. I mean, we discussed virtually everything every day of the session. And, you know, I think that led to that kind of a close working relationship.

Jim Slattery was the speaker pro tem. He was very actively involved with us in a lot of those discussions, although his office was not behind the chamber, where we could see each other any time we wanted to, or visit. We set the calendar jointly. Really did everything jointly. Just came to understand each other. Thought very much alike. I know later, when I became secretary of administration and was in the Capitol, down the hall from the governor, I got to where I felt almost like I could finish his sentences, because we were so close and so compatible. And just very enjoyable.

EF: You mentioned the tax issue. Other issues that come to mind in that—

PH: I'd have to give thought to—

EF: Death penalty?

PH: Oh, yes, I certainly remember—

EF: And, of course, that comes over again.

PH: Yeah, that had actually come up while we were in the legislature, both of us. We both voted against it, just on our personal beliefs, but then when John was running for governor, somewhere during his campaign, where he was out around the state, he had indicated that he would be willing to support the death penalty if—if he were governor. And I don't remember the words exactly, and I wasn't there when he said it. We certainly had discussions about it after he said it, only because I anticipated the box

it would put him in. And not surprisingly, as a result of that, I think—he was governor eight years, two terms. I believe they put a death penalty bill on his desk every one of those eight years.

And an interesting little sidebar to that is then he was succeeded, as you well know, by Governor Hayden, and I don't think they put a death penalty bill on Governor Hayden's desk one of his four years. And obviously, what that was a reflection of is they knew that Governor Carlin would veto it, so you'd vote for it, to put it on his desk. And some of the same people that were personally against it but voted for it, for political reasons or whatever, no longer voted for it when Mike Hayden was governor.

To go back to the first time that happened, because of—he really—I'm talking about Governor Carlin now—really struggled intellectually when the bill—the first year the bill was put on his desk because of what he had said when he was campaigning, and yet he was personally against it. And one of the processes that I established with his policy people was that—I had two rules—because I met with them every day, because I was in the Capitol—my office was, as secretary. And, one, that I never wanted them to give him a policy recommendation that had any inaccuracies in it, and, two, I never wanted them to talk about it publicly before he did. Logical rules, but rules that I was serious about.

And so when the bill—and to evaluate bills as to what—not only what the effects were but what the options were, and we literally established a process and went through it whereby there might be two or three options on a particular bill that led to whether to sign it or whether there was a problem with it. We had I think seven people that read every bill that was passed. I was the last one to read every bill. And we had a chart where you checked if it was okay to sign or if there was any question about it by any of the seven that read it, they checked another column, and that meant you were going to discuss it with the governor. And if there were controversial bills like the death penalty, we would analyze options, and I would present those to him in meetings. But the policy people would be there, too.

And on the dea- —I'm telling you all this by way of the first year the death penalty was put on his desk, we had a really lengthy discussion about the particular bill. And as a lawyer, I had analyzed it, and you could have made an argument that it could be vetoed because of the way it was written, or you could veto it because certain things were included or not included, or you could veto it for all time. And we must have debated that an hour or more and had several staff people in there, and he—John Carlin was a great one for listening. And he just listened to all the arguments, and finally he said, "I'm leaving for Cedar Crest [the Kansas governor's mansion] for dinner. Prepare a veto message."

EF: To you.

PH: To all of us.

EF: To all of you.

PH: And I said, "Which one?" And he said, "The absolute." And so we did that. And he vetoed it, and, again, not surprisingly, literally every year thereafter, a bill was put on his desk, and he vetoed them all. That was probably one of the more intense issues.

EF: Went on for quite a while.

PH: Yes, it did.

EF: Another issue that comes to mind during your second term you're majority leader is corrections—

PH: Right.

EF: —and building a new prison—

PH: Right.

EF: —and community corrections.

PH: Yes.

EF: How do you remember that?

PH: Oh, I remember it vividly. We knew that Governor Bennett was intent on proposing building a new prison, but at least at the first part of that if not through its entirety, he had indicated he was going to build it in Osawatomie. And I was aware that senior Senator Wint Winter [Jr.] represented Osawatomie. And I guess there was some consideration of eliminating the state hospital at Osawatomie and therefore build a prison there so that Wint wouldn't lose, you know, that many jobs. And so I was practicing law in Leavenworth. I was very familiar with the state prison. I had been in it scores of times, and I was aware that every cell house—there were four or five cell houses, and every one of them has five tiers, and literally the top two tiers of every cell house were vacant, so I was personally aware that it wasn't nearly at capacity. And so the long and short of all that is Governor Carlin—or then Speaker Carlin appointed me to chair a corrections interim committee.

And we met for almost 200 hours over a period of probably nine months, as we started right after the session and ran right up to November or December, and introduced fourteen pieces of legislation, one of which was community corrections, one of which allowed businesses to be started outside of the prisons and employ inmates and reorganize the parole board. There was a whole series of things: travel to some other states to see what they were doing that was progressive. And recommended renovations at Lansing rather than razing it.

One of the things I remember, and the reason I say it was Osawatomie was always my understanding is where he was going to recommend building it. In the State of the State, for the very

first time, when he was delivering it here in this body and he mentioned the new prison, he said, "And I'm recommending that we build the new prison in Leavenworth," which was my district.

PH: I do. And if you recall Ambrose Dempsey—when we were carrying—I was carrying all that legislation, and, I don't know, somebody raised the issue that, you know, "Well, Leavenworth is your district." And actually the prison is in Lansing, and Lansing was Ambrose's district, Ambrose Dempsey's. But I made the comment from the floor that "I don't care if he recommends putting it in my back yard. This was an objective, thorough process we went through and a unanimous decision not to build a new prison." Ambrose comes down to the mic. He's deceased now, bless his soul. And he says, "It makes a difference to me." Because it was going to be in—you know, in Lansing. Well, it didn't get built, and now they're talking about it again, so I have vivid recollect- —and we had Dr. Karl Menninger, for example, as a conferee, who really was famous in that area, so—

EF: Well, let's move on or actually go back a bit to an earlier discussion. You, in '78, run for reelection.

PH: Mm-hm.

EF: You're unopposed.

PH: Right.

EF: You're elected –John Carlin is elected as well—

PH: Right.

EF: —elected governor.

PH: As governor, mm-hm.

EF: You've kind of been a team for that term of the legislature.

PH: And had been through his campaign. I was very actively involved in his campaign.

EF: A surprise to many folks, maybe not to you, but you decide to leave the legislature.

PH: Right.

EF: Talk about how you made that decision.

PH: Well, because I was offered the opportunity to not only be secretary of administration but to remain—it was clearly understood I would have the opportunity to remain fully involved in policy, work as closely with the governor—I'd probably never have that opportunity again in my life. And that was attractive to me, and because we had spent four years working closely together—and so, you know, I discussed it with my family and so forth and considered it, you know, every way—and with my law partners and what have you and, anyway, decided to do it.

EF: Did you decide almost immediately, or was that—

PH: No, I—

EF: —for a while.

PH: Well, again, I gave consideration to making a final decision—

EF: I mean, you could have been minority leader.

PH: Or speaker, and we remain in the majority.

EF: Yeah.

PH: That would have been an interesting decision that I would have had to make.

EF: If you—if the House had not stayed Democratic_

PH: Yes, right, because we did flip right back to the—to the minority again in that election. That really didn't have a bearing on my leaving the legislature. It was the opportunity to work on policy and work closely—

EF: Did the governor-elect say, "Pat, I want you to join me?" I mean,—

PH: Well, ultimately.

EF: —immediately.

PH: No, not, like, day one. But, again, I had been so involved in the campaign—I mean, with him an awful lot, certainly in meetings where you're discussing how to campaign, what issues and all that. And then during the transition, which begins in November, until you're sworn in in January, again we were working in this chamber, because we were not given any additional space. Fortunately, we had these offices—

EF: And the defeated governor probably wasn't cooperating fully.

PH: He was actually—I'm not going to use names, again, but he actually was very cooperative. Indicated that—one of the things, for example: We knew there were a couple of thousand or more appointments that a governor makes to boards and things, and he offered to make any information available to us that we would need to deal with. Turned out that was never delivered to us.

EF: Offered but not delivered.

PH: Well, I don't think he was aware that it wasn't. I know why it wasn't, but I'm not going to go into that. Some of his staff was more distressed at his defeat than he personally was.

EF: So you're almost immediately, after—

PH: We're working together—

EF: —working on that transition.

PH: That's correct, yeah, mm-hm.

EF: When did—I mean, did the position of secretary of administration immediately emerge in your mind?

PH: Well, he—he either asked or we talked about performing some work almost full time during the transition, which was, in retrospect, almost like a prelude to coming into the administration, so it was kind of a natural evolution, and I can't honestly recall at what point he talked about secretary of administration.

EF: At what time did you vacate the seat?

PH: David may recall this. I think I actually—it wasn't right—it was before the session started. It was either, like, if we were having some meetings before the session. I made it clear that I was going to resign, and then they had to appoint a successor, the central committee did, of Leavenworth. And did. So I didn't—I didn't serve any days of the following session.

EF: Now, I've actually run onto two different dates as to how long you served as secretary. One is '82 and one is '83.

PH: Eighty-three, about November of '83.

EF: So that was a year into—

PH: The second term.

EF: —Carlin's second term.

PH: That's correct. What I had told the governor, again because I had six kids by then and I'd, just in a friendly conversation, said, "You know, my oldest will be ready for college if I stay eight years." I had told him that even before he was reelected, in that last year of the four-year term—you know, that "I won't be able to stay another four years." And so he knew that. And, you know, you get into a session, and the session runs on, and then you get into other things, so it took me most of another year to actually transition out. Ironically, if you remember Bill Hoch [pronounced HOKE], the press secretary—Bill and I left in the same month, but unrelated to our personal decisions as to why we were leaving. But that was why I did. Really, that was the primary reason. I essentially said, "I need to get back into law or something to make money to send my kids"—my kids are close enough together that six of them were in grade school one year, and all in private schools, so—

EF: Let's focus on your time with Governor Carlin, in the administration. Carlin, in an interview not that long ago, a few years ago, said, "Eighty percent of what I got done was done in my second term." Obviously, you were around the first term.

PH: Mm-hm.

EF: How do you remember that first term? I mean, you were intimately involved—

PH: Right.

EF: —in the governor's—and we talked about the death penalty.

PH: Mm-hm. Well, I wasn't—I mean, again, one of the really fortunate things in my life is I—from politics, as I look back on it, was because I was in the same building, because he didn't have a chief of staff by name, I was almost functioning that way as well. I'd have days where most of my day was in the governor's office, and almost every meeting he would have with anybody, association heads or whatever, I would attend, as well as then meeting—I met every day with his policy staff at the end of the day, about four o'clock. I'd go down and say, "Where are we on this issue or that issue?" and, you know, "Are you ready?" "No, we're not ready." And whatever.

The other thing I focused on in the first four years, solely from the perspective of secretary of administration, was—and I believe, Governor Bennett saw the same thing and began down this same road—and that was that prior to Governor Bennett becoming governor, it was my impression that government—state government was almost totally decentralized. Every major department was like their own fiefdom, and I spent an awful lot of my time as secretary—and I had some really, really good staff people.

One of the things that I inherited or was able to was that [Robert T.] "Bob" Stephan was elected attorney general at that same time. Curt [T.] Schneider, as attorney general, had what I considered maybe the best staff of lawyers that I've ever seen an attorney general assemble. And John Martin was one of them, who any lawyer would know wrote every opinion for years and was relied on, you know, to take calls and all that. Well, I hired John as my general counsel. I hired Chuck Briscoe, off of Schneider's staff, as another one of my attorneys; Roger Walters as another one of them, all three off of that staff. And then John left after about a year and a half, and so I hired Art Griggs, who was one of the senior revisors, and the person that was, like, number three in the Budget Division, a fellow named Gary Howland, I moved up to my office and made a deputy secretary.

And the reason for all of that was that I wanted to centralize everything in state government through the Department of Administration, where, I used to say in speeches, you want [control]—and we did—and one of the impetuses to that was that Governor Bennett had created a committee headed by—the head of Martin Tractor and—

EF: Bill Martin.

PH: Yeah, Bill Martin and I think the then-head of Southwestern Bell.

EF: Yeah.

PH: And they had finished their product and had, like, 125 recommendations. I met with them three or four times. I was very impressed with their recommendations, saw that it would take me in the direction that I wanted to go to gain control, almost like a business, over—you know, why should every department have its own IT [information technology] department? Why should their personnel be independent of the Personnel Division?

EF: That was a loaned executive taskforce that Bennett created.

PH: Well, we implemented all of it and more, even, as we built on it through those first four years. And as a result, when Governor Carlin was first announcing he was running for reelection, we were being attacked. I was called before a couple of legislative committees on, you know, "Well, you all haven't done anything." And I produced that study and had it scored by Gary [M.] Howland, who was both a lawyer and a fiscal expert, and so we had a whole volume of—so one press conference—laying all that out. That issue never rose again.

But truly, we centralized everything to where I used to say, not arrogantly but factually, "You can no longer hire, fire, lease, do anything without it having to go through the Department of Administration." Over the many, many years since then, in my opinion, unfortunately that has reverted back to where most departments are operating almost—

The biggest obstacle that I initially got, or objection, was from a person, a player we all knew well and became a very, very, very close friend of mine over the years, and that was [Robert C.] "Bob" Harder, who had been in SRS [Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services] from day one, back in [Robert B.] "Bob" Docking's days, through Governor Bennett, et cetera. And, you know, he pretty much ran SRS with an iron fist, and I'd get all kinds of objection: "Why do you insist on this" Well, over time, Bob came around to the point of where he said, "You know, I like this because everybody is operating by the same rules now, and as long as it keeps going that way, you know, it'll work fine."

And so—so that's what I was—in addition to all this other stuff—as secretary I was really focused on that. And we had it by the end of the four years and were able to demonstrate it and illustrate it by a lot of facts. We were called into a Senate committee one time, laid it all out, and it was, like, no questions. So anyway, I don't—it's a long digression.

I stayed close to the governor through his second four years. I mean, we still discussed things all the time, policy things. And I would agree that his accomplishments his last—his fourth year, he had seven constitutional amendments. I mean, I was still, you know, visiting with him regularly, if not daily.

One of the things I remember about those seven constitutional amendments was it was after they were all going to be put on—on the ballot, I guess. I think they'd already passed. But anyway— Art Griggs or somebody came along and said, "No, there's a statute that says you can't put more than four on in the general or the primary," so we had to have a discussion about, well, which ones have a better chance of passing in a primary, where less people vote, et cetera, so—but he passed seven constitutional amendments in his fourth year. And did a lot of other things, too.

EF: A couple issues related to that: I know one of the campaign issues is utility issues, and that seemed to happen—I mean, once the election was over, I think that got done the first session, early on.

PH: Right.

EF: Removing that sales tax [on utility bills]. Of course, it still bounces around.

PH: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

EF: Were you involved in—

PH: Oh, yes.

EF: Did you—

PH: In fact, we had people, close friends of his, some legislators, saying, "You don't need to do that right away," and I was adamant that, "Yes, you do. If you're gonna do it, do it immediately" because right or wrong, there was a lot of identification with that issue in the campaign. I don't personally think that's what caused his victory, but—

EF: As secretary of administration, de facto chief of staff, did you have a lot of direct work with the legislature, or were you more—

PH: Yes. One of the things—of course, we both had just come out of the legislature, and so we knew everybody in the House and the Senate, and, again, it was a different time, where you had been used to, as legislators, working things out with the other side of the aisle, whichever side you were on, and then getting them passed. You compromised, and so one of the things that we did is meet during the sessions with legislative leadership separately, not both parties at the same time, and would discuss the major things he was trying to accomplish legislatively and reach consensus and allow flexibility, you know, so that they could amend it within reason and we'd reach an understanding to that effect. I remember those discussions would usually end: "Okay, we're in agreement. Now you guys have gotta go get the votes." But we'd do it separately with the two parties. We just figured we weren't going to accomplish much if we had them all there together.

So that worked very well. Again, you know, we knew them so well. We had worked with them. I think there was value in the fact that there was a different majority in each house in '77 and '78, so we—you know, we even then had to do compromising on things so that each house could feel like they had their imprint on major—

EF: Was there ever at time over that five years with the Carlin administration that you were adamant in telling the governor your [words missing; 1:01:17]?

PH: Policy. But particularly because of this process that I described, that we established, whereby I would always sort of drive his policy people towards: Come up with two or three options on whatever the issue was—you know, do this much or this much or this much, whatever it happened to be, and we would not recommend to him then, you know, "We think the second one is the best," because if you did that that way and you did it objectively, the way it would work out almost every time was by saying, "Well, here's an option, here's an option, and here's an option." Once of those options was pretty clearly, intellectually, the best option. And politically and otherwise. And so that's how most of those things would be presented to him, and you wouldn't have to say, you know, "Go with the second one." He'd say, "Well, it looks to me like the second one" or "the third one" or whatever "is the best." Both can we get it done practically or politically, through the legislature, but is it good policy?

The other thing I was always emphasizing to his policy people is you have to look ahead at the—a year or more, long range. I was insistent on that, that something that looks good today, resolves an issue for today may not—not just fiscally but from whatever perspective—may not work as well or look as good three or four or five years down the road, so you always want to look at it that way. And that was always built into the presentations on the options.

It was really an interesting process in that he would make a decision, then, as to "we'll go this way" with whatever it was. I don't know if that would work today or not, but that's how we—

EF: One of—Bob Beatty did the interview of John Carlin, a fairly extensive interview, and there was a great bit of discussion of internal Democrat Party politics.

PH: Oh, yes.

EF: And the Docking folks and the Carlin folks and—did you help kind of sort through all of that? I mean,—

PH: I was certainly involved in it and aware of it.

EF: Appointments, for example,—

PH: Mm-hm, yeah.

EF: —judicial appointments.

PH: Any kind of appointments, frankly. I will give Governor Bennett credit again in that— I don't mean to say this in a negative way about Governor Docking's or his predecessor's days, but there was a lot more patronage. I knew people even in Leavenworth when I was practicing law that were supposed to be full-time this, that or the other, and they were back doing their jobs, and I'd see them daily and say, "I thought you were head of" this, that or the other. And that's the way things were then. And, again, my perception was Governor Bennett was determined to change that and started down that road. We were not the favorites, as a result.

EF: "We," the Carlin administration?

PH: Right. Of that system, and I'm not going to name names, but, you know, there was a person that was responsible for patronage in southeast Kansas. There was one in the Wichita area. There was one in Topeka. There was one in Wyandotte County. And they expected to be able to name people that we would appoint to pretty important positions, and that—you know, that was kind of a continuing confrontation as a result. John Carlin wanted the best people. I mean, it sounds easy to say, but in fact, as, again, my observation was, Governor Bennett did, that he could put into important positions and that they were expected to do it full time.

I had a—(be careful what I say here)—within the first month or so of being secretary, I had a person that had been—held a pretty important position in the Docking administration—come in to see me and said, you know, "Would you tell Governor Carlin I'd like to be the head of either this agency or this agency, but two conditions: (1) I'm not gonna move from"—and he was from somewhere out in western Kansas—and the second condition was "I want to continue to spend my winters in Mexico, because I own a home there." And that's how he had functioned. And I said, "Well, I think the governor intends for these to be full-time positions." Didn't offend him. He said, "Well, then, I'm not interested."

And we had, you know, a few issues where we would learn that people that were on this board or that b- —important boards that were supposed to function full time—were still either practicing law back home or one thing or another, and we'd have to deal with those. And so, again, quite frankly, my—and I think John had the same view of things, is that government was a much more complicated and business-like activity. And, again, I've always given credit to Governor Bennett for recognizing that and being absolutely intent on seeing that things were run that way.

In my mind, at least, and I think John shared it, we wanted to continue and establish and lock that in, because, you know, as you well know from your own experiences, it is very, very complicated,

and there's an awful lot of money involved, and there are an awful lot of responsibilities to the citizens through a variety of programs. I don't know that we're right on point on some of those things anymore.

EF: Well, let's shift gears again.

PH: Okay.

EF: You talked earlier about your decision to leave the Carlin administration, and a little bit about the considerations involved. And I can track your career pretty much when it's in the public sector, but not as much when you're in the private sector. But it looked to me, like, from '83 through 2011 you were in the private sector, representing clients.

PH: Right. That's correct, yeah.

EF: And as you look back at that, how would you explain it? What were you doing then for that—I mean, that's thirty years.

PH: That's correct. Exactly, yeah.

EF: How would you characterize that time?

PH: Well, actually, I did not—that was not what I thought I was going to end up doing when I left. I thought I was either—I mean, I knew I was going to leave, and the governor knew that. I thought I would either go back into law practice, whether back in Leavenworth or here or Kansas City or somewhere. I have a brother that's a lawyer in Kansas City, and—but almost immediately—I mean, maybe within weeks, I was contacted by a prospective client that was bidding on a state contract, and would I have an interest in representing him, and that's kind of how I ended up in—I had—also had a couple of opportunities to go into the corporate sector, which—in an administrative capacity, and I was very interested in that opportunity, but it was going to be delayed a few months for internal reasons in the corporations that were approaching me. And so almost be default I was already doing these other things by the time those opportunities were open.

And it just—because I'd been so deeply involved in policy, I was interested in more statewide issues. And the first big statewide issue that I did was multi-bank holding company legislation. And I was approached by Jordan Haines [chairman and chief executive of Wichita's Fourth Financial Corporation and Bank IV] and Tom [sic; John] Clevenger [president and CEO of Commerce Bank in Wichita] and people like that, whom I knew from my time on the Pooled Money [Investment] Board. And anyway, I passed that legislation, worked with Gary Sherrer on it, because he was at Fourth National [Bank] then, and the infamous Jordan Haines, who got things done. And it kind of just evolved from there.

And then the next big thing I was in was Governor Hayden had become governor, and you'll recall one of his top priorities was a transportation program, and he didn't get it through the first session, then he had a special session and didn't get it through, and I had talked to Jordan and some people in Wichita and said, "I think if you put it together strategically, the right way, you can get one passed," and visited with the governor and some of his people, particularly at KDOT [Kansas Department of Transportation]. I think Horace Edwards was at KDOT then. And so I got hired to do that, and we passed a new program.

EF: Burdett Loomis wrote a book about that and interviewed you extensively.

PH: Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

EF: At the time, or in the book, it describes you as a principal of McGill and Company [sic; Pete McGill & Associates].

PH: That was—

EF: Is that accurate?

PH: That was the second one. No, wait a minute, that was the first one, yeah. I had—of course, I had known Pete from my days in the legislature, and we had talked—because I was a sole proprietor when I was on my own.

EF: Yeah, I was wondering.

PH: Yeah, yeah.

EF: Were you—

PH: Solely by myself.

EF: For the whole thirty—

PH: No. No, no.

EF: Early on.

PH: Yeah, when I first started into it. And Pete and I had talked off and on about working together on things, but for the first year or two or whatever, we always had conflicts. It seemed like we were on the opposite si- —well, he was on the opposite side of the multi-bank holding company. And so, I don't know, whatever year it was, it was when Governor Hayden was in office, we talked at one point and didn't have conflicts, and so I joined with him for about five years. And it was during that period that the '89 program was passed. And I visited with the governor, and he said, "You know, fine. I've tried twice, and if you've got a strategy to get it through"—and I developed a strategy, which was two half-cent

sales taxes plus motor fuels and registration; and one half -cent was going to go to education, and one half-cent part of the funding for the transportation program.

And the irony is that we got it out of the Senate. I arranged with Senate leadership to run it in the right order, to where people that were for the half-cent for education but didn't care about transportation were going to have to vote for transportation first, et cetera. And so anyway, then it got over here, and unbelievably, the education supporters couldn't get together the votes to support their half-cent sales tax, and we carried—and [James D.] "Jim" Braden was the speaker then, and I'd served with Jim. He and I had come in the same year, and so we were good friends, and he kept calling me or visiting and saying, you know, "I can only carry it over so long. I mean, the bills are over here." I remember, then, that finally the lobbyists for KNEA I went to and said, you know, "Do you have your votes put together? Because I can get the votes from the other side. And if not, I'm gonna have to cut your half-cent—just let it go." And he finally came back and said, "No, I can't produce the votes." They wanted more.

EF: And you're talking about Democrats supporting it.

PH: Well,—

EF: Basically.

PH: —the organization that they support was the one that had to give them the word, and they were holding out for me, the association was. So anyway, that's how it got passed.

And then I did it again in '99, when Governor [Bill] Graves was—I was hired by Economic Lifelines. I had built that into about a fifty-board—fifty-member board organization.

And the second one, the strategy was we're going to take this state-wide and hold a dozen hearings across the state. Mary Turkington [head of the Kansas Motor Carriers Association] was the head of it. And, you know, two-hour meetings or more, and bring in every community and every chamber and et cetera, saying what they're transportation needs were. And we were very careful always to say, "There's no guarantees, but if the program is big enough"—and, of course, the point was "get your legislators to support as big a program as possible"—"If it's big enough, you'll have a good shot at what you say your local needs are."

It was pretty amazing. I mean, we were having two and three hundred or more people at each one of these meetings. And, boy, I mean, they were city after city, county after county being allowed to testify before—I don't remember—a twenty-or-so-person committee of lay people. And so that's how the second one got passed.

And then I was still with Economic Lifelines when the third one, in 2010, got passed, T-Works [Transportation Works for Kansas]. But then, as you know, that's—I mean, when you take $3 billion out of the highway fund, you can't—

And anyway, my point of that was I did a lot of—I liked statewide issues. I was involved with—when Bob Harder was no longer secretary, he and I did mental health reform one time. I did the cigarette tax increase with Governor Graves, did some statewide things with Governor [Joan] Finney. I just liked those big issues, as opposed to "get this little bill passed for"—

EF: Probably—of all the things you were involved in, the highway, transportation issue is probably the most significant?

PH: Yeah. I mean, it was a few billion—

EF: And it went on for quite a while.

PH: Right. It was a few billion dollars each of the ten-year programs, yeah. Billion. And bonding and—

EF: I don't recall your being high profile as much on other issues, but maybe I'm just missing—

PH: I don't like to be high profile. I know the process. Used to know virtually all the players and would work predominantly with leadership, because I knew them, had worked with them on a variety of issues. And I think it's the lawyer training, again, and I had tried a lot of cases when I was practicing. And understand, you're going to be successful if you've got a strategy that'll work. So I always looked at the strategy of how do you pass this?

When I did the cigarette tax, we had the largest cigarette tax increase in the United States that one year, and I got the American Associations of Heart, Cancer, Lung—Robert Wood Johnson [Foundation], a variety of those together to where they had such a network of constituents that—I mean, I think what I understood from my time dealing with the legislature, better than anything, was that if you can apply pressure from their own constituents, that's where you have the greatest chance for success.

EF: Now, you started out as sole practitioner. Did you add staff then, or were you always—

PH: Well, I joined Pete somewhere during Mike Hayden's years, maybe early on. I don't remember. I stayed with Pete for about five years, into the early part of the Finney years.

EF: Were you an employee then, or—

PH: Technically, I was, but our arrangement was I was responsible for two things, essentially—because he had several young people working for him—(1) identify the issues that were coming down the pike that we may, you know, be interested in working, and (2) then develop the strategy for how to do it.

And it just kept getting bigger and bigger. I just didn't want to stay. I think one year we had eleven registered lobbyists.

EF: You had—I didn't catch that.

PH: I think we had eleven registered lobbyists, counting Pete and myself and others. And so I just—it was a, you know, friendly, mutual agreement that I said, "I'm just going to go back on my own."

EF: Okay.

PH: And that would have still been, oh, maybe '91, '92, something like that. And from then on, I would more work with other lobbyists, as opposed to hiring, you know, staff. I probably worked projects with about every lobbyist that's been around here a long time. John [C.] Peterson and I did a variety of things together.

EF: So you had contracts with others.

PH: Well, or we'd reach an agreement on a particular client that we both work it, and how we'd divide the- —

The other thing that I got more and more into, from my experience as secretary of administration, was contract procurement work, where I would represent large companies, nationwide or worldwide companies that bid on service contracts, whether t they were computer services—I like, I represented Accenture for twenty-five years, probably, and companies like that, where every time there'd be a contract that would come up that they were interested in bidding on, I would be retained or continued—most of them would continue to retain me just to watch for contracts that they might be interested in. And I would say the last ten years, before I went back to Leavenworth as county administrator, probably 80 percent of what I did was—

I was also being referred. There was a company in Washington, D.C., that really was like a clearinghouse. They would have companies come to them that were the kind of companies that bid on statewide contracts all over the United States. And they looked for someone in every state that they could contract with. And, because of my years of experience, I worked with them for years. And they would send—they'd say, "Do you have any interest in representing this company that's going to be on such-and-such?" I represented GTECH [a lottery vendor] on the lottery contract for twenty-six, twenty-seven years, probably.

EF: And as a sole practitioner, basically.

PH: Yeah, right. And there, the value was that I was a lawyer and then simultaneously knew the purchasing process. And most of that, you really didn't have to get directly involved in the legislature. I

mean, I'd be involved every session with one thing or another, but I didn't like to take a whole lot of little stuff. I was always more interested if not on the contract stuff, on big statewide issues, if I could get it, you know, into the—

EF: Not that different than working for a governor and strategizing.

PH: That's right. Yeah, really, mm-hm. Yeah, I just believe you should have a strategy for everything, to be successful. And that's why you—I was never offended, and wouldn't to this day be offended, if I went to a legislator and said, you know, "What is your position on this particular issue?" You know, if they said, "Well, one, you better learn in a hurry if you're in this business"—if they said, "I'm undecided," don't count them as anything other than that. Don't think they're a yes until they tell you they are.

But, you know, the other thing is that I would rather have an unequivocal "no" so that I know I don't have to work on that legislator, and when I say "work," again, I try to work from the grass roots up on anything that I can. You know, I'm not going to persuade them as much as their constituents are.

EF: Yeah. My impression early on, say, with Jordan Haines or McGill, that you would—obviously, McGill would work one side and you would work the other side. Is that accurate?

PH: Well, our approaches were probably different in the sense that Pete was much more the politician, and so he'd—whether he'd call in favors or whatev- —however he would do it, because he went back so far with them. My approach was much more—while I knew them, I wouldn't—I don't know that I've ever "Would you"—

EF: "You owe me this."

PH: Well, I'd never say that. But I don't know that I'd even say, "Would you support this?" There'd be a reason. You know, "Here's why this is good"; "This is good for your constituents because" whatever. So kind of—I don't know. I mean, we got along fine, Pete and I, but our styles were certainly different.

EF: It sounds, just based on what you've said, if you had a niche, it sounds like legislative strategy.

PH: Really.

EF: And state strategy.

PH: Yes, absolutely. I would agree with that, that I just—and I keep saying, you know, it's the lawyer training, but, you know, that's how you try cases. I mean,—and my experience here is that that's what passes stuff. You better figure out—you know, when you've done it so long—I could sit in a committee, (1) I would already know, you know, the general inclination of every member of that committee on any particular issue. I mean, not just ideologically but even down on the merits of the issue. And, you know, I

used to leave committees a lot, or I wouldn't be there, or the common joke used to be "Something big must be going on today because Hurley's in the Capitol." But I didn't need to—because of the way I approached things—I just had a good sense of if I put it together strategically, the right way, and know that I've got support locally or organizationally or association wise or whatever—whatever your resources are, that that's how it was going to get passed.

EF: Did you turn away business?

PH: Yes. I would never represent a tobacco company, for example, even before I passed the increase. My wife's a nurse. I'm absolutely convinced that—my mother and my sister had cancer, and I just wouldn't. Religious reasons. I'm Catholic. I wouldn't take certain issues. Growing up, I had seven priests that were relatives, so I was always looking over my shoulder. But, yeah, there—I'd never promote anything on the death penalty side, for example.

EF: I'm going to shift gears again.

PH: Are we still on?

EF: "Is the tape still running?" I think it is.

You get to 2011, and you shift gears.

PH: Mm-hm.

EF: And, you know, I did go back and look, and you were still representing a number of organizations in 2010, '11.

PH: Right. Yes.

EF: You had, I mean, thirty years of experience,—

PH: Right. Yes.

EF: —success. What was going on?

PH: A couple of things. One of the things I've learned in this business, and it's pure politics, is—and probably I benefited from it like others have when I left Governor Carlin, and he was still governor for three years—you know, what—particularly companies or industries or whatever outside of the state itself, and maybe within the state that are sophisticated about how politics works is kind of the crassest question that they ask themselves is, "Who's closest to this administration?" And probably their—as I said, I'm sure—probably I benefited the three years that John Carlin was still governor, because, you know, it would be common knowledge that, well, Hurley is as close to him as anybody. I didn't ever ask him to do anything, but I also, because we remained so close, I knew what issues he was interested in and so forth.

And so with the change of administrations from the 2010 election, I began having some clients that I had had for years say to me that "we think we need to get representation from the administration that's going into office." That did not occur to any great adverse effect when Governor Hayden came into office or Governor Graves came into office. But anyway, I started getting some of that.

But then the other thing that simultaneously occurred was that I was approached by—whether I would—

EF: That you were?

PH: I was approached actually by—you wouldn't know Clyde Graeber. He had been a legislator and a variety of things. And he was on the County Commission in Leavenworth and called me literally and said, "We're looking to hire a county administrator. Would you have any interest?" And, of course, my roots being there and all, and—anyway, long and short of it, I had a couple of meetings back there and thought, Well, yeah, you know, I'll do that. So I did it for five—so I left here for five years, and I worked out arrangements for the first two or three years with different people that—with clients that I had had for some time, to do cost sharing and that I would assist them. And I was allowed, under my contract with Leavenworth County, to do other stuff as long as it didn't interfere with—not be over here constantly, but particularly contract type work, even though I may have reached an agreement with somebody to share with me Company X if they needed assistance in the future on bidding on something. I was allowed to do that, and I did some of that. And I've gotten back into that since I—

EF: You didn't sign up as a lobbyist at all.

PH: I always did, every—even though they weren't directly in the—now they're talking about requiring it, but I always registered for every contract procurement company that I represented. I just didn't ever want to be questioned about it.

And the stuff that I did when I was still in Leavenworth—I had two or three times where—well, one of them was a company that I had represented twice previously over the years, and they had gone to someone else, and in the course of discussions with that person, then, they realized, "Well, yeah, Pat Hurley is still around, still alive," whatever. So I went to a couple of meetings with them, only to discuss, you know, how are you going to bid it and so forth.

What I used to do is go through the procurement process. I mean, I would go with the company right to the table. I'd often ask questions of the state represen- —I don't mean legislative representatives but agency folks. You know, it's just a dialogue. It's a competitive bid process. In fact, we wrote that law when I was secretary because the low-dollar bid—you know, statute—wasn't working on

a complex bid for a software system or something. I learned that very quickly when I had somebody with three employees and a little tiny company tell me they were going to bid and they were going to low-ball it on some big multimillion-dollar contract and that if they didn't get it, they were going to hold a press conference in the rotunda. And I said, "Go ahead and hold your press conference, but you've got to be qualified."

And you had write these incredibly long RFPs [requests for proposals] as a result, and so we passed the procurement statutes, which is a different set of statutes from the low-dollar bid one, and it's worked really, really well in that you write a pretty generic RFP and then all the dialogue goes on between the state and one or more bidders. So I just got more and more into that.

EF: Back on Leavenworth County, as you look back on your five years there, how would you characterize that line of work?

PH: Well, I enjoyed it, probably more because I was from there and still knew, you know, so many people. And almost everybody that was in local government, I knew. Even if they were another generation after mine, I knew them, the families. At the end of five years, I told them I didn't want to renew the contract. I was on annual contracts, and the primary reason was that local government is different enough that it's—it can be frustrating in that commissioners get calls. They want something done that's not on the agenda or on the order of—I tried to establish a whole lot of processes, again. You know, "Here's how we ought to be doing roadwork"; "Here's how we ought to be doing" this, that and the other. "Great idea. Adopt." You know, "This is how we'll do it." And then I don't know how many times a commissioner would come in and say,—

EF: I was wondering if your ideas on centralizing administration—

PH: Yeah, yeah, very much. Well, we established the rules, but then what happens—and, you know, I understand local politics, but I don't know how many times a commissioner would say, "Well, I know it doesn't meet the criteria, but, you know, I got a call from a guy I've known forever, and, you know, they had to get everybody to sign up on this particular road for us to do it, they're short two, and can't we do it?" I said, Well, where's it stop, then?

And I had to be so careful because the press was at every meeting, and I was very conscious of not wanting to embarrass a commissioner, you know, with the headline that said they wanted us to go violate our own policy. And then it got very political, for a variety of reasons, among the commissioners, and I saw it was going to get worse, and I just said, I don't want to do it anymore.

EF: Well, kind of a wrap-up: You've been able to watch mostly state politics, state government for—we're going back forty—

PH: That's right, yeah.

EF: —forty-five years. Obviously, a lot of change in that time frame. How do you assess all this? Is it—I mean, you've been able to work through it probably as well as anybody. Obviously left it for a while here recently, but—

PH: Yeah. The biggest change that I say I would observe over all those years and decades is—and it's true in Congress, it's true here, probably in most states—is there are such deep ideological divisions that drive the voting patterns on major policy, and there's just absolutely no give and take, no compromise. It has improved a little, it appears, here by the change and makeup of—and as I think I said at the beginning, maybe at lunch—you used to work across the aisle, easily. And no hard feelings at all. Nobody held grudges. Some of the people I respected most that I came to know were on the other side of the aisle. But you could talk to them about anything, and they were reasonable, well-educated and well-intentioned. And that changed for a while here, in what I view as bad policy was made, significantly bad policy. And then it kind of began to change back again. You know the issues I'm talking about.

But I see it even worse at the congressional level. And, of course, the big difference there is that they aren't bound to balance the budget, and it's just unbelievable to me that, well, they just keep spending and spending. I have my own strong views on the tax policy changes, and I anticipated what was going to result from those and did. And it's going to take a long time—

And then we've got the courts. That's a split that doesn't work well, in my opinion, in that—you know, the courts aren't—it isn't their responsibility—I don't mean legally, just by the nature of their job—to make fiscal decisions and decide how you fund things. And if you look only through the prism of "well, everything's got to meet these two standards, regardless of cost," is there ever an end to that? And then the legislature—you know, it's up in arms about it, and—

EF: I'd be interested in any comments you might make on it. You may not want to. In '94, Democrats lost fourteen seats in the House. They lost—

PH: And that's after they had been in the majority?

EF: Actually, it's two years after that.

PH: Okay.

EF: That was when Graves was elected, but I think Bob Miller was put out of the speaker's job. Democrats lost two congressional seats. Didn't lose. Lost one, and Jim Slattery vacated his seat to run

for Congress. They lost those seats. And then 2010, Democrats lost fourteen more seats, to the point where the Republican majority in the House is 92-37.

PH: Yeah, well, we could go a long time more.

EF: What—

PH: I have some very strong views on—

EF: I mean, the early years, we're talking about—you mentioned 21-19 in the Senate.

PH: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

EF: The House flips twice in about a fifteen-year period. It was a competitive time.

PH: Yeah. Yeah. I think they were—

EF: Interpret this for us.

PH: Well, I think—it was always my opinion, right or wrong—and certainly, you know, no proof of it—but when we took the majority in '77 and '78, the Democrats in the House, I thought that was more a reflection of post-Watergate than anything, right or wrong, because that happened around the country. And then particularly because it flipped back to I think the exact numbers. I think we went from 53 to 65, and then I think back to 53 two years later. Now, I know that some of our incumbents didn't work as hard as they should have and all that, but, still, this is a very, very Republican state, and always has been.

Amazingly, we have elected a lot of Democrats as governor, but it's a difficult state for a Democrat to run in, period. Jim Slattery and I are very, very close friends. And I remember Jim always saying that when we lost the 5th Congressional District—and he picked up all the way down to the Oklahoma border and over the Missouri border—how much more difficult that district became because, you know, there had been pockets of the state that were heavily—you know, used to be Sedgwick County. If you're running as a Democrat for governor, you counted on carrying Sedgwick County because of the heavy concentration of labor down there, more than anything else.

That's changed significantly. The whole ideology of the county has shifted, seemingly to me, pretty signif- —much more conservative than it was. Now, whether that's the absence of the large labor influence or not, I don't know. But truly you counted on carrying Sedgwick County. If you had a chance as a Democrat, you counted on carrying southeast Kansas.

If you went back in history, I don't know when you'd find the last—until recent years—a Republican senator from Crawford County. Jim Barone was the last Democrat senator from—aside from the particulars, the thing that—this will get me in trouble if I'm in the—anybody reads this—I think the Democrat Party in the state of Kansas, to the extent to which it has or had the potential to win elections,

whether they be legislative, congressional, gubernatorial, relied on a much broader base of—it was made up of labor; it was made of minorities; it was made up of Catholics. And over the last ten, fifteen years, I've observed that the party has taken more and more positions as though we were California or New York, ultra-liberal positions, and has eroded the base tremendously.

And almost by default, while it was a Republican state to begin with, it just handed to—and I think nationally this is true, too—handed so much of what would be [President Donald J.] Trump's base. I don't think Trump personally, any more ideologically, held those views all of his life, but captured, you know, that significant base that is strongly united on certain issues, much of which used to be part of the Democrat base, certainly in this state.

I mean, I studied demographics all the time, and Leavenworth County, my county, is a good example. You always—again, a candidate running, whether for the 2nd District, for governor, for what have you, would count on carrying Leavenworth County, and it was Democrat by registration by 10 or more percent. It's no longer even Democrat by registration. And you can look at county after county after county that you used to count on. And you'd be amazed, if you haven't looked at the demographics recently, the different—Crawford County, again, is an example. It is still by registration slightly Democrat, nowhere near what it once was. What's the cause of all of that? I have views, personal views about it, some of which I've already expressed, as a result of which I couldn't predict this governor's race.

EF: Yeah. I don't have any more questions. Anything you want to add for the record?

PH: No, I don't know. I've enjoyed it very much. Probably went on way, way too long about things.

EF: Well, thank you for sitting down with us and walking through this—

PH: Thank you for having me participate.

EF: —piece of history.

PH: I think it's a worthwhile project, and whether anybody learns anything about it or whether any of us agree on anything—

EF: In time, your grandkids can click on the historical site and find out what Grandpa did.

PH: Yeah, that's right. Well, I've enjoyed it, Ed, very much.

EF: Thank you. Thank you for your time.

[End of interview.]

