Mark Tallman: My name is Mark Tallman. I've worked for the Kansas Association of School Boards on education issues as an advocate, lobbyist, researcher, and writer since 1990. I'm conducting this interview with Connie Hubbell on behalf of the Kansas Oral History Project, a not-for-profit corporation created for the purpose of interviewing former legislators and other state leaders who had a significant role in state government, particularly those who served through the 1960s through 2010. The interviews will be accessible to researchers, educators, and the public through the KOHP website, ksoralhistory.org and also the Kansas Historical Society and the State Library. Transcriptions are made possible by generous donors. David Heinemann is the videographer today.

Today, we're talking with Connie Hubbell. This is our chance to go back a little farther than some we've done and really look at the function of our State Board of Education in a little more detail. Connie, you served on the State Board of Education from 1985 through '95. You were also active with the national organization. So, we're going to kind of take a little bit of a stroll down memory lane for that. We'll also want to hear a little more about—You've been active in state government since then in a lot of other roles. I'd be interested in hearing on some of the things you've done since then. So, thank you for joining me.

Connie Hubbell: Sure.

MT: Before we dig into your work with the State Board, tell us a little bit about just your background. We're always interested in knowing how and where people grew up and what got them interested in state government. Tell me about yourself.

CH: I was born in Lincoln, Nebraska, moved to Topeka when I was two years old. So I've been raised in Topeka, went to Topeka High School, graduated from Kansas State University as a high school physical education teacher. I taught high school PE at Washburn Rural High School.

Then following those years of teaching, I really became a community volunteer. Having been involved with education, a former member of the Kansas State Board of Education, Alicia Salisbury, was running for the State Senate. She called and asked if I might be interested in running for the State Board of Education in probably 1984. That's how I got involved.

I grew up in a family where my father was an attorney and also a lobbyist. Many of you know I have a husband who's also in government as a lobbyist. So, political activities have been part of my life, but I really got involved because Alicia knew I had an education interest and gave me the opportunity to run for the State Board. So, I ran and was obviously selected. I ran and started in 1985.

MT: Let's review a little bit of our state governance history. I want to share with you an overview and feel free to correct me or give any more detail. From statehood in Kansas until the late 1960s, we didn't have a State Board of Education. At least we didn't have one in the role that we have now. For most of our first century as a state, there was a single elected superintendent of public instruction. That was the individual who I guess gave accountability to the voters, and then there was a system under that of county superintendents who were really

responsible for oversight at a more local level, and then underneath that were local school boards.

Of course, again, my work with KASB was to note that at various times in the last century, we had thousands of local school boards. To a large extent, pretty much every school or every little district or every corner of a county had its own local board. It wasn't until the 1960s, it went through several changes, both legislative and a constitutional amendment, we changed to a different system. One was unification of local school districts. It gave us our current system of somewhere around 300 or less local districts, K through 12, and a constitutional amendment that passed in 1966, removed the elected superintendent of public instruction, replaced it with an elected State Board of Education, ten members. The State Board then hires a commissioner to oversee a department, and I believe the constitutional term, I'm sure you remember more than I do is, the State Board has "general supervision of the educational interest of the state except for those assigned by the State Board of Regents."

So, we sort of divide education on a K-12 and higher education basis although that was not always entirely clear, which we can talk about, but there has been that division. But we were only about fifteen years into having an elected State Board when you would have joined it. Tell me a little bit more. You kind of talked about, I assume your interest was maybe more civic than a particular set of issues. What did you know about the State Board of Education at the time? How did you find it when you joined this still relatively new body in 1985?

CH: A very good question. I think the difference back in those days was everybody who ran for the State Board we had an education interest, not a specific interest. I'd obviously been a teacher. I had no specific issues, but I knew the State Board of Education oversaw and governed public education in the state of Kansas. Each State Board member represented four senatorial districts. So, we had large districts to campaign in, which was a very interesting philosophy, too, when you're campaigning with a very, very low budget versus what people have today. I actually sent lots of postcards to homes that had at least three electors in their home. I knew I didn't have much money, and I wanted to hit those people, especially Lawrence and Topeka, when I was campaigning for my very first time.

I think we saw that the State Board was there, in my opinion, to do what was best for public education. We also in those days had the community colleges and area vocational technical schools under us until there was a change legislatively to move the higher ed under the Kansas State Board of Regents.

MT: And if you're interested, we have done interviews—people can find the website—with some university presidents talking about that change, but I think the idea was because community colleges and technical colleges had local boards, and in fact, community colleges really grew out of high schools some decades ago, junior colleges as opposed to maybe the community college title that they have now. So, at the time, the distinction was the State Board really governed everything that had a local board and the Board of Regents only oversaw the state universities in their roles as state institutions.

 

I guess it would have been probably after your time that that's what occurred. So, you were not only overseeing K-12, you were also overseeing, I guess you could to some extent say, what would that be, Grades 13 and 14 in a way for those institutions before they became part of the Board of Regents.

CH: That's correct.

MT: And then at the time, as you came on board—who would have been your commissioner then, if you remember? Who was the first one you really worked with in some extent?

CH: I worked with Dr. Blackburn and with Lee Droegemueller are two I worked with. We hired the Commissioner of Education. It was an elected State Board of Education of ten members who then chose and hired the commissioner, thinking that this gives you a very quality individual, somebody you hire that has an education interest, not somebody who's elected by the public.

MT: A similar model to at local school boards, you have kind of lay board members.

CH: Correct.

MT: They may or may not have education, but then they hire the superintendent who is the professional that oversees on a full-time basis. So, that model is kind of the same way.

Again, I know this is looking back a little bit, but in the late eighties, I guess, let's look at that as we move into the nineties, do you recall what were some of the big state issues that you and your colleagues on the state board were dealing with?

CH: Probably two of the largest issues were we redid school finance formula, and we also talked and supported a program called Quality Performance Accreditation, both at the state level. Schools had been accredited on the number of hours that students went to school. We felt it was much more important to accredit schools on outcomes, on Quality Performance Outcomes. We called it QPA.

So, those were two very big issues. Of course, school finance being led by Dale Dennis in those days, still working there, was just a huge undertaking to be able to redo the school finance formula to in what our mind made it more equitable for all students and especially those at-risk students by district. So, those were two of the large things we did in the late eighties and then moved on into the nineties. There were some other major issues that I think I helped take a lead on.

MT: Let's talk a bit about some of those around funding and the quality. Again, a little bit of history since this is kind of what this is about, my involvement, I had worked for college students as a lobbyist was when I think when I met you during most of the eighties before I went to work for KASB. But one of the key things that was happening at that time or one of the major events in the early eighties in the Reagan administration was a document or a publication called A Nation at Risk report. Not for the first time in American history, alarm bells were raised about

 

the quality of education. I guess I only note that because in the decade since then, that issue of "What are we getting? How well are our schools doing? Are we facing an educational crisis?"

It seems we always were. That was the most recent one. So, to some extent, QPA, Quality Performance Accreditation as it came to be ultimately known, was a desire to say, "We need to put more focus on outcomes," and one of those measures was standardized tests by the state as a way to give us some sort of standard measure. So, those would have been part of that discussion, as I would recall.

CH: Definitely. We didn't want to talk about seat time. It's more, "What do you learn while you're at your educational institution, the grade schools through high schools." And it wasn't easy. It was a very controversial issue. We had some supports from locals, not a lot of support, but the State Board knew I think that we had to improve the outcomes after the Nation at Risk reports came out and were more concerned about how the students were doing academically versus sitting in their seat 1,080 hours.

MT: Right.

CH: So, that was the thinking. Let's prove that our students are learning and that they are graduating with specific skill levels.

MT: Then also talking about school finance, so, again, you kind of correct but just to kind of set the stage a little bit, there's actually an interview available where we talk about school finance litigation. One of those was in the early seventies. The state went to a system called the School District Equalization Act. It was primarily about property tax equity and budget equity, but the concerns about that—I guess the simplest thing to say, many people felt it wasn't doing its job by the late eighties, early nineties, and another round of lawsuits were filed.

Ultimately in 1991, a Shawnee County district court judge made a preliminary finding. It never went to trial that our system probably was unconstitutional. The legislature responded. I don't recall whether the State Board was also named at that time. I think you were.

CH: Yes.

MT: And that ultimately led to the School Finance Act of 1992, which dramatically changed the funding system to one more controlled by the state, more equalization of taxes, but in order to get the votes to pass that, the legislature added some things and legislatively requiring quality performance accreditation or what they called an outcomes-based system also became a part of state law. So, something that you were working on was added into that as a way that some legislators felt would add accountability.

CH: That's correct. A state board was named in that lawsuit. I actually followed those hearings under Judge [Richard] Rogers. Dan Biles was the attorney for the State Board of Education and represented us at all those hearings.

MT: Now on the State Supreme Court.

 

CH: Yes, definitely, and we actually won that case, of course, but it was not easy. It was very well argued and discussed, but I sat in the courtroom and listened as a very interested State Board of Education member. I don't know if I was Chair at the time. Most likely, I was Chair of the State Board.

MT: So, during your ten-year time, you both served as Chair at some time, but I believe you were also a legislative coordinator.

CH: I was.

MT: Was that the term? So, you also more than some of your colleagues on the board were kind of responsible for that relationship with the legislature. I think it's fair to say that over the State Board's history, the relationship with the legislature has not always been completely smooth. Am I remembering that correctly?

CH: I think that's very true. I was fortunate that I was able to be there for ten years, work with the state legislature all ten of those years. I lived in Topeka. So, it was convenient for me to be there. I will tell you that Dale Dennis and others told me, I grew in those ten years from beginning to testify to the time I really felt much more confident after ten years of testifying in front of the legislature.

Overall, I think we had a very good relationship with the Kansas state legislature. Of course, we worked with the education committees, worked with the finance committees. But, needless to say, that's not always been the case.

MT: And in fact, in those first, I'm going to say twenty-five years of the State Board's existence, there were several efforts by the legislature to change the board in some way through constitutional amendments which would be required. Am I remembering that you were on the board for at least one of those?

CH: I actually was on the board for two of those constitutional amendments. We fought those hard, and we won both of those. They wanted to make us State Board appointed, thinking that would be a better system than elected. We always felt elected State Board members meant we were responsible to the public just as legislators and other elected officials and were able to argue that. The constitutional amendment failed the two times that we had it while I was on the State Board.

MT: The interesting kind of split we have in the state constitution as amended in '66 is we have a Board of Regents, which is appointed by the Governor, but our Board of Education, the State Board, is elected. The other, and I don't know how much we can try to go into this, but the other thing as I remember has been a bone of contention is the so-called self-executing power of the State Board. Is that ringing a little bit of a bell for you? Self-executing to me is such a grim term, but what the court really said is that because of the wording of the constitution, there are certain powers that the State Board has which are self-executing, meaning there's things you are given

 

directly by the constitution as opposed to most state agencies, which only get their authority when the legislature passes a law saying you can do this.

So, that tension between—that's why I talked about with the legislature because for the most part, the legislature could say, "We don't like what this agency is doing. We can pass a law to change that." The Supreme Court said, "There are some things" without really clearly defining them, they gave some examples. They basically said, "The State Board, that's their constitutional authority. The legislature shouldn't be involved." Legislatures being what they are, I mean no disrespect, they sometimes feel "We ought to have a role in that." That's human nature of any elected official.

So, one of the things the State Board talked about that the Supreme Court said was your power to do teacher licensure. One of them was school accreditation. And that's really where your interest in QPA came about even though the legislature kind of came in and said, "We like that, too. We're going to put that in the law as well."

CH: Sure.

MT: So, those are things.

CH: Right.

MT: Then another area has to do with your setting curriculum standards. So those were all examples that our Supreme Court has said, "Our State Board has more power than some of your colleagues around the country as I understand."

CH: That's definitely true. In fact, I don't know the numbers now, but back in those days when I was involved, there was only about a third of the State Boards of Education that were elected. The others were all appointed, and many of the superintendents of public education were elected, not appointed.

And the self-executing powers, you're right. You reminded me. That really was an issue that the legislature did not support and did not want us to have that power. We still could never—they had to allocate that funding. The State Board of Education was not under the Governor. So, they could ask for whatever they really thought was appropriate financially every year, but we still had to get the actual funding and the funding formula unless it was amended through the legislature.

MT: And that has over the years sometimes created tension. But the legislature, I can't remember an effort to change the State Board in many years now.

CH: I can't either. I think you're right.

MT: Apparently, it weathered some of that. So, part of your work on the State Board then, I'm a little interested, you were also active at the national level.

 

CH: That's right.

MT: I think you mentioned. What got you interested in that? Why did you kind of take that step? What were some of the issues you dealt with there?

CH: Early on, I think about my fourth or fifth year on the State Board of Education, I became active at the national level of State Boards, representing Kansas as one of the board members. At the National Association of State Boards of Education, my interest was probably more looking at larger issues, looking and learning about the other states and identifying how we as a nation could improve public education.

We had tremendous leaders at the national level and some excellent members at the National State Boards of Education. We were selected by districts and appointed to serve on the National State Boards, and I was able to actually turn in to be the Chair of the National Association of State Boards of Education, I think 1993 to 1994. I'd been on the board for like four years prior as a board member and then as the Vice Chair and then moved up as the Chair or President.

MT: Looking back roughly thirty years or more from where we are now, what were some of the topics then?

CH: One of the big topics—and I'm very proud of this as I look back—well, two. One of the topics at the state level was when I was on the State Board of Education, we mandated Human Sexuality, AIDS Education in public schools. Kansas took the lead before we had a need. We did not know of any student in Kansas that had AIDS. But I especially took the lead on that and saw the need for some education of our youth.

So, in third grade and seventh grade, we wrote a curriculum for Human Sexuality, AIDS Education. It was approved. It was signed by the governor, and Governor [Mike] Hayden even funded it in those years to do that curriculum for Human Sexuality, AIDS Education.

From that leadership in Kansas, I then was able to testify in Congress, and I was one of four states invited to speak because as I said, we were a conservative, Midwestern state who took the lead before we had an identified need. We did later realize we had a student in one community who was intravenously affected with AIDS.

But that was quite an undertaking. We had to have a preliminary vote. It was 6-4 with a doctor on the board voting against it. But when it came to the final vote, it was 9-1. So, it was approved to have Human Sexuality, AIDS education back, most likely '89, '90, '91, I'm not sure of the exact year.

My big issue that I was very proud of at the federal level was when I was president of the National State Boards of Education was when we started the program called Inclusion. We were working to include special needs students in the regular ed classroom, which still exists today. As it turns out, I had worked later in my life with developmental disability students at the state level, not knowing at the time I would, but we saw a movie on "Peter" that I think came out in 1992 or 1993. Peter was a Down syndrome young man who in third grade was integrated into his

 

regular ed classroom and got invited to birthday parties, got included in things he'd never been included.

So, Inclusion was a huge issue that we were able to approve at the national level that started across the country. Washburn Rural School District was one of the first ones in the state to start Inclusion in Kansas.

MT: And as I remember my history, and that's what this is for, Kansas was an early adopter of special ed and was doing some things even before the federal law was passed. And Kansas I think—I don't know if this is still true, but it was certainly the first and for a long time, the only state that mandated gifted education as part of their special education law, which is not part of the federal law. It never has been.

CH: Right.

MT: So, Kansas has typically, even though often complaining about not getting the funding that was maybe promised, has tended to be even a little bit out in front, I guess you could say, of some of these movements in special education. So, again, this is 2025 we are recording this. I imagine more and more people will not really remember a time before special education.

CH: That's right.

MT: I would have been a child and have some vague memories of it beginning to happen in the sixties and seventies. Obviously, it's something that's had a tremendous impact, and certainly it's important to remember that this is something that probably people who are not directly involved maybe as parents or students or teachers along the way, things like Inclusion has had such a major impact in terms of a system that said, "Well, you have to provide special services," but often done in a separate classroom or a separate facility to have pushed to saying to the greatest extent possible. That was essentially the point, was it not?

CH: That's correct. And we are required to educate people who are identified as special needs through the age of twenty-one. That opportunity though to give them every opportunity to succeed to the highest level possible and be as much included as a regular student as they could was a great outcome for the state and for the federal government.

MT: So, you served about a ten-year period. Obviously, a lot of things were happening. I think in any ten-year period, we could probably point to a lot of those things happening. Are there any other issues from that time? I'm kind of doing the same thing. Those were years when I was just beginning to get involved in public education and advocacy. I'm kind of trying to remember whether there are any other issues that kind of stood out at the time to you, either issues or changes in the State Board Department or anything else.

CH: You know, I don't know if I can come up with any major issues. We think so much about funding. The relationship, and I've already said this once, but the relationship we had with legislators was generally very positive. So, funding was probably not quite as controversial every year as it has been in the last few years of funding public education. Funding really was our

 

mainstay all those years, both working with educators, with school board members, with teachers.

Those were things that I was very comfortable doing, and I spent a lot of time out and about with either staff members from the Department of Education or other State Board members. I did a lot of speeches, of course, and things like that—graduations, community colleges, and high schools, but it was more just promoting public education. But I think when you think the main issue forever has been school finance. It will always be a major issue—adequately funding public education to adequately educate our kids.

MT: And that to some extent means having some idea—maybe this is a bit the problem—what do we mean by "adequate"?

CH: Right.

MT: That can both be in terms of "So what should the expectation be for funding?" but I think legislators may turn around and say, "Well, what should our expectations be of how well they're doing?" And that, of course, means you get into questions of "How valid are test scores? What are they saying? Why aren't we seeing more improvement?" and some of those other measures.

So, I think what you're talking about is that in many ways, the issues that you were facing in the eighties and nineties have kept coming back in different ways.

CH: That's true.

MT: And even issues like the Human Sexuality AIDS mandate continues really to show up in issues of legislative debates over parental opt-out issues or over who sets curriculum or questions of surveys, and are we being too intrusive? The balance between what you might call a focus on academics, reading, writing, etc., versus "Well, what role do schools play in some of these other issues.

CH: Sure.

MT: Addressing other social needs has always been there.

CH: That's true. I think the whole idea of educating to have specific opportunities to do some—I can't think of the right word, outcome education, in math to go out on the football field and measure it that way versus just looking at it so that the kids had some experiential opportunities to learn part of the outcome process.

It is very difficult to determine how ready somebody is when they graduate from high school for work or for future education. The test scores are important. The outcomes are important, but also the social indicators are very important. So, I don't think there's any easy answers for legislators or for funders or for the State Board of Education on exactly what is the perfect expectation of a youth. But we need to know that they have those academic skills to succeed either in the vocational world or the educational world once they get out of high school.

 

MT: I guess what we might want to take a few minutes—you left the State Board in the mid-1990s, but you didn't leave state government. So, I'm kind of interested—talk a little bit about some of the roles that you had since then, how you've kept busy after that service, and then maybe if you can link back to some of that work. As you said, you've done work with disability issues and those sorts of things. Maybe what you've seen that either connects back to some of the work you've done or ongoing challenges that you see.

CH: Sure. I left the State Board in 1995. Some people recall that I had the opportunity to run for Lieutenant Governor with Fred Kerr. We got beat in the primary by Bill Graves and Sheila Frahm. It was an experience I thought I'd never, ever experience. It was fabulous. I didn't sleep for months. Other people in the audience know exactly what that's like.

But because of that, having lost at that, I was ready to do something different. So, I actually left in the middle of my third term, and then I went to work for Governor [Bill] Graves. After we lost in the primary, I then started helping Governor Graves with his education issues in the general election.

So I was fortunate enough to go to work at SRS [The Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services]. Actually, Janet Schalansky and Rochelle Chronister were my first two bosses at SRS, and I started working there, first in welfare reform. Then I moved into being like a Deputy Secretary overseeing the mental health programs, developmental disability programs, the physically disabled program. I had all the state hospitals under me and on and on.

I went to work really at SRS with no true work experience other than my teaching. But the State Board of Education gave me that I think confidence to be able to lead a group of individuals that I really knew very little about work force development back in those days and obviously very little about mental health and developmental disabilities. But when you have good staff, you can learn it, you can do it, and I was the leader more than the implementer.

MT: Right.

CH: So, that was what got me out of the State Board of Education and into other government programs. I was just ready for a change. I worked for SRS for a few years. I ended up leaving there and went to be Secretary of Aging. Governor Graves appointed me as the Secretary of Aging for three years. It was a fabulous opportunity. We accomplished a lot in those three years, even at the Department of Aging. At that point, it was only the Department of Aging.

MT: Right, before some of the restructuring that took place.

CH: Right. So, I was the Secretary there for three years. Then I left and started doing some of my own work because I didn't stay on as Secretary of Aging. I worked for a couple of other programs in town. One was called Kansas Foundation for Medical Care. We were a quality improvement organization which is much like when you talk about quality accreditation for schools, this was quality improvement in the health care arena.

 

And so, KFMC, then I was there for like five years. We were improving the quality of health care and nursing homes and hospitals and home health agencies and doctors' offices. Then I left there and went to work for the program with the safety net clinics, now called Community Care Network of Kansas. At that point, it was the Kansas Association for the Medically Underserved.

So, my first half of my life, I say was in education. And the second half actually was in health care. And I really had no professional training in health care, but I was able to learn and participate and lead some of those programs.

I finished my career, going back to the Department of Aging, which was then called the Department of Aging and Disability Services doing the legislative work for Secretary Laura Howard, and then did that for three years under our current governor, Governor [Laura] Kelly. I went through all the COVID times, and when we were ready to go back to the office, I think because of my age, by that time I was ready, and Laura knew I wasn't going to stay too many years, both Lauras, Laura Kelly and Laura Howard. So, then I retired officially in 2021 from the Department of Aging and Disability Services. I've been retired since then.

MT: It's interesting that you—I guess what just strikes me a little bit as we've done this kind of series after you leaving education, working in areas like mental health and disability and in some of those, I think a big theme in education is how schools have had to try to respond to those issues. Certainly there is a perception and a lot of data which talks about the worsening mental health needs of students.

CH: Yes.

MT: The same thing, the number of students identified with disabilities has continued to increase nationally and particularly in Kansas. I guess the point is, what educators often say is that those factors have so much influence on what a child is able to do in the classroom.

CH: Yes.

MT: So, how the school or other agencies respond to those issues really is tied to the education system in certain ways and certainly schools have done more with mental health. They've added more of these issues often although the legislature sometimes talks about wanting to get back to the basics, has funded more mental health services.

CH: Sure.

MT: And those kinds of things, I think recognizing it. So, it's interesting how your career has continued to track with what have been big issues for our school system.

CH: That's very interesting. I really never put two and two together for that, but you're right. Because of my experiences in mental health now, I've been a huge mental health advocate and disability advocate as well. But you're right. They do tie together. You've got to provide mental health services and services for the developmentally disabled and physically disabled in the public education arena and in the higher education arena for those individuals that qualify. So,

 

yes, it's a very good analogy that there is a lot of collaboration and coordination, and probably I had more interest in that than I realized, even coming out of education to try to educate that whole person and serve that whole person.

MT: I think it's one of the things that makes our ability to sort of measure education over the decades more difficult is because the needs of students today by a lot of measures are just so different than decades ago. So, being able to evaluate how well kids are doing academically or making progress or that sort of thing is kind of complicated. If we had the same type of student body as we did in the eighties and nineties, the results might very well be different.

CH: That's true.

MT: We don't know for sure, but that would be a part of it. As we've been doing these interviews, I've kind of reflected on a little bit with all the people that I've talked to is for all our debate over test scores and challenges and those things that are out there, we have continued to see the overall education levels in Kansas and nationally—we have never had more people who have graduated from high school. We have never had more people earning a post-secondary degree, and we've never had more I guess you could say economic rewards for getting more education than we have right now.

So, in a broad sense, our educational outcomes have improved over this time. It's just sometimes hard to see year to year because there continues to still be gaps and problems and things that people can point to. So, something to reflect on maybe. So, now that you've heard that, I'll give you a chance to see, as you kind of look back on your career, if there's any other things that you, I guess, are particularly proud of, or maybe things that you look back with a little bit of regret that you didn't quite get done.

CH: I think some of the opportunities I had I would have never expected to have. I was thinking when you were talking, I was on one of the very first Parents as Teachers National Board. When you were talking about the difference in education, now there's a difference in the family make-ups than there were when I first started, when Parents as Teachers started, and that was a rewarding opportunity.

Later in life, I actually was a lobbyist for Parents as Teachers. There are connections that you don't even put together always as you think back on some of those programs, but one of my other opportunities that I hadn't mentioned was I was Chair of the Kansas Health Policy Authority, which was something established under the Governor [Kathleen] Sebelius era. I was appointed by actually Doug Mays, but then Governor Sebelius appointed me as the Chair of the Health Policy Authority.

So, the connections between education and health care are probably much greater than I even in my own mind had ever put together, and the learnings that you probably had clear back as an educator—you know, when I was on the State Board, we were very congenial. We worked well together. Actually, it's interesting. Nine of us were Republicans, and one was a Democrat, but you would have never known when I was on what political party we were in because you did run as a Republican or as a Democrat, different than the local School Board.

 

Now it's much different. In those days, we were very congenial. We still had differences of opinion, of course, and worked diligently to make things happen, but times have changed. As you were talking, I think the reflection on just families, opportunities that I had both at the state and at the national level were something I could never, ever repay. It's been a great experience and a great learning process.

MT: You've certainly spent decades working for the people of Kansas. You're to be thanked for that. I'll give you one more chance before we wrap up to see whether there's anything that I missed, we missed in this discussion that you want to leave our viewers with.

CH: I don't think so. I do want to thank you all for thinking about the State Board of Education. Obviously to me, it's one of the most important groups still in this state and in this country. I am such a huge supporter of public education and know that without public education, adequate public funding and public support for public education, our youth will not succeed and will not be able to continue in the realm they are now.

So, this has been an eye-opener for me. Thank you all for inviting me to participate. I will always be a strong public educator. I will do everything I can to support our youth and our adults in their education endeavors.

MT: Thanks for your time and your service. I obviously want to thank the viewers who have made this possible. Connie, I appreciate your time.

CH: Thank you so much, Mark. Thank you.

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