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INTERVIEW: LANA OLEEN (REVISED)

- Q: We are here to make a taped oral interview and I am going to begin by asking you how long have you served in the Kansas legislature and for what years?
- A: I was elected to a four- year term in 1987 and have completed two years of that four-year term.
- Q: OK, and you are in the Senate and you are a Republican. Why did you affiliate with the Republican party?
- A: It goes back to, actually, my parents are Republican and Democrat. I was born in Missouri and in Missouri you are a Democrat, so I sort of had the exposure to both sides growing up. However, when I moved to Manhattan, a good friend of mine was running for Congress and he was Republican, so I began to help him and got involved in the local party as a precinct person and then Vice Chairman and then Chairman....
- Q: Where was this?
- A: This was all in Riley County.
- Q: All right here. How long, then, have you been affiliated with the Republican Party?
- A: That would have been...as a registered Republican, since 1977. Before that I was unaffiliated.
- Q: Can you describe your first election or appointment? How did you run for office? What were some of the strategies and techniques you used? What helped you get elected?
- A: The first office that I ever ran for was the Senate. I have never been elected to anything else other than within the party, making that bid for vice chairman and then chairman. But there are many people, particularly in the Senate who have a background of city commission or school board or county commissioner or something, but I don't have that particular background or baggage with mine, but simply as chairman of the Republican Party in this county. Part of my responsibility was to identify candidates for office and for one reason or another people were not willing to run for the Senate, so I quit my job in Topeka and ran.
- Q: That is interesting. What type of an election campaign did you run? Was it a door-to-door, person-to-person...?
- A: It was a very grassroots campaign in that the year that I ran I was the only senator who filed for office by petition rather than paying the filing fee and I have seven communities that I represent, and I made certain to go to each one

of the seven to gather signatures. So that it truly would be representative of the entire district.

Q: Did you have primary opposition?

A: No, I had no primary opposition. There was discussion of someone else running, but that person once they found that my intent was to file, within a few days decided that he was not going to run against me, so there was no opposition. However, in the general campaign, the person that I ran against had already run for this office four years before and, of the nearly 16,000 votes cast in that office, he had lost by 17 votes against a six-year incumbent. So everyone knew that it was going to be tough sledding once that person announced he was going to try again because he had already had the exposure at the district level.

Q: You were active in the party and you say you couldn't find someone to run from the Republican Party. Was there any other reason why you decided to run? Had you thought about this for awhile and said, well, if the time was right or....

A: I had been a classroom teacher in Pottawatomie County for a number of years and had then accepted an appointment in the Hayden administration with the Department of Human Resources and I was commuting to Topeka and, in that position for a year, I also served as a liaison with the department to the legislature. Through my volunteer years of Republican politics, I knew a lot of the legislators and was able to see what it was like first-hand rather than sort of the eggs and issues follow-up that happens because as a classroom teacher you don't see the operation. I really felt that once I knew who the opposition was to be that I felt very confident that I could do at least the same type of job as he, if not better, and felt that I had that experience with the legislature that he didn't have.

Q: Now, I think I sort of interrupted you but you were telling about your grassroots type campaign. Was it a door-to-door type campaign? Who were your workers and how did...?

A: Yes, very much. Many of my campaign workers...in fact, we were meeting weekly for a number of months and trying to attract and convince a candidate to run for that position because our Senator was going to retire. So we knew the seat was coming open and there were a good cross-section of people from this county who would meet on a regular basis and I remember once my husband and I made the decision that I was going to run--I announced it to these people who were my friends and everyone just sat there in silence and I thought maybe I should rethink this. But there were many people who were actually convinced that that seat could not be kept by the Republicans because of the very strong showing this other gentleman had evidenced and he was back and his opponent

wasn't anywhere around. It was a brand new open seat and, as I talked to someone later, they said that it was just a sense of shock and a few of them felt sorry for me because they felt like it was just going to be an uphill battle and that's when they resolved to help even more. So much of the help came from the people that I had worked with in Republican politics. A lot came from my church and many from personal friends, but it was....In fact, 'Common Cause,' which deals a lot with ethics and campaign ethics and so on, interviewed me last year because in the Senate, again, not only [was I] the only person who filed by petition but I also had the highest percentage of contributions from within my district versus political action committees and they wanted to know how that was done. I had read that the hardest task for a woman candidate is to ask people for money and so I made a resolve that that would not be my stumbling point. It was a very expensive race, one of the top ten in the state that year of 1985. Between the two of us more than \$115,000 was spent for the seat, so we had to raise a great deal of money.

Q: How did you do it? You just asked people?

A: Well, I had a couple of fundraisers. We started out....With the exception of one, all of my fundraisers were geared toward family and always indicated that children were the guests and that the parents would be the ones who paid. Little \$10, \$15 ice cream socials; a chili supper that people at my church helped coordinate. Senator Kassebaum came back, Jan Meyers. I had a great deal of help from other women who came into Riley County that were in the legislature and they did a blitz for me in Aggieville. Senator Dole came back. Republicans came through, again, because it was an open seat and they knew the history of how close we had been before on that race and trying to keep that seat. In addition, I did some direct mail. I put two women in charge of my fundraising.

Q: Did you have a vigorous campaign?

A: It was very intense, and partly because my opponent and I were the same age. One letter difference in our last names. We moved to town the same week. He was an attorney and my husband's an attorney, so they knew each other through that. Both of us were active in the Parent Teacher Organization for our kids. We lived two blocks from one another. He is a precinct committee man for the Democrats and I was the one for the Republicans, so there were a lot of things that overlapped and I would say that it was not only vigorous but, for the most part, we were able to keep it pretty positive by today's standards.

Q: Did your husband--you mentioned him when you were talking about making your announcement--did he encourage you to run and help you through the campaign? What was his role?

A: Well, at times through the years, he has felt that the volunteer efforts are a way of people using people and that all the hours I was putting in, what was that 'going to get me?' I explained that you derive your pleasure as you do things, not always looking to see what else is going to happen down the pike. But because of that decision in looking to the consideration for running for the Senate, he was surprised, first of all, that I would consider it. Secondly, he was happy that I would. It was pretty emotional because of the kids, too, but since I had a job in Topeka and I was commuting every day anyway, our lifestyle had changed a bit. He had more responsibility with the kids and with the home and that type of thing, so that part wasn't going to be changed whereas a year before, with teaching and being home at 4 pm every day, it would've been a definite change from what it was in working in Topeka. So we'd already made part of our change the year before.

Q: You say you financed your campaign through donations mostly from within the district. Was there any large outpouring from any particular occupational group or women's group or voter's group or was it a partisan thing?

A: Well, not really. I would say, in looking at contributions, most of them came from a wide variety of people. However, my treasurer had been a treasurer for a couple of the state-wide candidates in the past, and I purposely asked a number of people, who should I have for treasurer? If you were to pick the most honest person in my county, who would it be? Well, when three people said the same person, I went to that person and met him. Had never even met the man. Within a couple of hours, he had committed that he would be my treasurer. And I remember him making a few comments later in the campaign that he had never noticed or had never seen so many women's names being listed in writing the campaign checks and there were a lot of families that we knew but the woman was the one who either writes the checks generally, or made that decision to contribute. Not big checks, but for Senate races \$25, some \$50.

Q: And that was mainly how you financed?

A: Yeah, we had more than 500 individual contributors which is a big number for a statewide race.

Q: Let's see, you had a couple of newspapers in your district and probably some smaller ones. How did the media treat you overall?

A: Media was pretty good. The supposed politics of the two major papers, which would be the Junction City paper and the Manhattan paper.... The Manhattan paper has a reputation by some as being a Republican paper and the Junction City paper has a reputation of being Democrat, and I would say that I

received equal treatment from both and that still continues. In fact, if I were to put one, as far as their coverage of me, over another, the Junction City paper covers more of what I do than the Manhattan paper. But the editor of the Junction City paper called me the day after the election and he said, 'You knew where I would be on this. You knew who I would endorse, but you are the Senator and for four years I will work with you and when you are up for election again, you know where I will be.' And they have been very fair in that respect. The other paper that is a local paper is in Riley County and there is a woman editor there and she was very easy to work with. As far as advertising and that kind of thing, it is pretty well split between the two major ones.

Q: So, the media really didn't play any strong part.

A: Well, I feel like the media did make a difference in my campaign and that was television media. I decided early on that I was going to buy time on WIBW, Topeka, and was the only person outside the Topeka area that used that. It goes into Manhattan and Junction City and a couple of Democrats following the campaigns said that they felt that was the turning point.

Q: You're opponent didn't?

A: No, he bought local cable time. Both of us did. But I bought time before the primary and let people know that I was going to be doing the door-to-door because my strategy was to get the Republican vote in the primary, for them to invest, then stay with me through November, because I had seen four years before [that] many people had voted their town and not their party. So that was part of our strategy and I also did my work with some other women who were running for office and we did all of our filming in the Senate chamber and were able to share those location costs. It costs a lot to get started and have WIBW go to the Capitol. And we looked like we belonged there, even though we hadn't been elected.

Q: Good idea.

A: So that is where I do think media did make a difference.

Q: Has anyone in your family been in the legislature, either here or in another state?

A: No. My dad's father from northeast Missouri said he used to run for County Tax Assessor and that would be a political office. He was a Democrat and ran a number of times but that is really the only one. However, my mother through the years as I was growing up in Topeka, she worked for the legislature during the session so I was aware of that. In fact, a number of people that she worked for were still there when I was elected and so it was a real treat for her to....

Q: Does she still work there?

A: No. She works for the state. She's chief of licensing for ABC. Soon after I was sworn in...well, a number of people the day that were sworn in, about 100 people from Manhattan went down to the swearing-in ceremony. My mom and dad had a reception and stuff afterwards for a lot of my volunteer workers, and people in the legislature saw my mother there--the day of the swearing-in--and they said, what are you doing here, Fran? Well, my daughter is a Senator and they never had gotten the connection because the names aren't the same. We were at a party...a couple of weeks after session started there was a dance and you go into this room and I had gone with my mother and someone whisked her away to the dance floor and when she was brought back, my mom said, well, I would like for you to meet my daughter, and she was dancing with Senator Feliciano and he looked all around to meet me and I said, 'Here I am' and he said, 'Well, shoot, I knew I liked her even though she was a Republican. Now I know why.' But mom had been secretary to him and Dan Thiessen and Jim Francisco. So I had that fringe. However, when she did most of that I was in college and I really was not down at the capitol with her, but I think that may have had some influence. I was always involved in student government kinds of things.

Q: Your district has not changed since you were elected since it's just had been two years. How would you describe your district, besides the fact that you have K-State and all the student body, Fort Riley, etc.?

A: I really believe that....There may be some other districts like it. Everyone believes their district to be unique, but to me it truly is a microcosm of Kansas. There are two good-sized towns that have more in common than they would ever admit. There are some smaller communities. I have rural, a major military installation, and a state university and that's basically Kansas. So it's a district that is very, very dependent upon outside dollars whether it be state dollars coming in or Kansas State University or whether it be federal dollars for Fort Riley. And when you have those strings, that umbilical cord, attached to somewhere outside your own district you find it to be a very time-demanding position. I have good friends in the legislature whose job is to go to Topeka and make sure that Topeka leaves them alone. And my job is to go to Topeka and make sure Topeka notices us. And the same with the Federal level. There is a lot of action with the fort, particularly right now--Operation Desert Shield and unemployment.

Q: Besides these issues, what other issues--besides the issues connected with finances and that type of thing--do you think this district...?

A: Well, again, the diversity of populations within it, I think, cause a variety of issues that surface. There is a very high degree of education. Everybody runs around with a couple of degrees it seems, particularly in the Manhattan area and part of that would be access to K-State University for continuing ed, the Vocational Technical school. But because of that, people travel quite a bit or people who have lived in other parts of the country come here and they will see that something is maybe not the same or they would like to see Kansas improve in this area, so there's lots of ideas coming up as to what they think should be changed. High level of concern for the agricultural community, partly stemming from the fact that K-State and the extension, how that figures out. Also a very high concern for environmental issues to be addressed, not only statewide but in a global perspective. We also have a section within the district that is very low socio-economic condition, so we have both going. Junction City is an area that has a very high percentage of minorities and usually you find that in very urban settings, so it has its trials as well. A very strong focus on public education with a high concentration of people who feel that higher education is important, public education is important, but what are we going to do about our taxes? Are we going to be able to cut those and do it all? That's pretty symbolic, I think, of the entire state. No one wants their service cut, but they don't want to see the funds increased.

Q: Taxes are a big issue this year. During the campaign, did you focus on any issues like these or did you have debates with your opponent?

A: There were a couple of issues that we varied on. Most items it seemed as though we were very similar. However my opponent really tried to push that somehow I would be a 'yes' person to the governor and that he would not. That went on for 6 to 8 weeks that I would not be able to stand on my own. One example was the Washburn University question and I indicated that I would not be able to support Washburn coming into the system until we completed the margin. Many times he would publicly say, 'well, but she'll get down there and the governor will convince her otherwise.' So finally I decided that I would explain in as big a public meeting and with media present that in my profession, which is education, a person's word is good and in his profession, lawyering, he might look at it differently. I know that it was not the nicest thing to say, but it stopped the comments from his side. There were a number of people who felt that that kind of notion that he was playing also was a bit sexist in that women maybe could have their minds changed but men couldn't. So we were able to deal with that. I could have dealt with it earlier but not as big, so we waited. We had a difference, too, on the death penalty and that was.... I used to my advantage--particularly in the Geary County area-Junction City area--the tough stand on crime and his was a little

different than mine and he was against the death penalty and I was for it. So we had some differences but, for the most part, it was a matter of who could do the job and I stressed my experience in working with the legislature.

Q: Sounds like you were very successful in doing it, too. How would you, if you had to characterize your stance on some of these issues and you named a few, how would you characterize yourself just in general? Are you a liberal or conservative or down the middle in some respects?

A: I would probably characterize myself as a moderate. I am comfortable with that situation because, coming from the party perspective.... There are many people who have nothing to do with party and then have to fit in afterwards. And I have been able to fit in the way I was with the party to start and I think that it is an advantage. I don't agree with everyone that is right-wing or left-wing or.... You know, I think that there is a lot of reasoning that goes into situations. However, I strongly believe in the two-party system. People who are unaffiliated, and I used to be one, I think that they are missing the boat on how to really identify and make government work and be accountable.

Q: Now, there are sometimes issues people label as women's issues. How do you characterize yourself or how do you fit in to those issues? Are you mostly concerned with women's issues?

A: Well, I am not real certain what the women's issues are. I guess I have used the word family issues some and family can be with or without kids and so on, but I don't know what the men's issues are. If there are women's issues, what are the men's? I think employment covers a spectrum, education. If there's one issue that many people term as a women's issue, it is on abortion and if you want to talk about that issue and refer to it as a woman's issue, I guess they can. But I also see that as a bigger scope because there is a man and a woman that deal with abortion, so I don't use the term women's issues.

Q: As a freshman legislator a couple of years ago, did you have a mentor or someone that kind of helped you out and made recommendations to you?

A: Well, I think what's really nice about the Senate is that I almost would parallel it to the classroom. There's always going to be learning in that environment. There are going to be some people that you get along better with than others, but you are old enough to not form cliques or to try to avoid them and, because you work with everyone for the most part sometime during the day, with all these committees you're on, you really know one another. There is a lot of camaraderie, I think in the Senate. More so than in the House. In the

House, you could be there for six years and never work with some people because it is always changing but here you are tied in for four years, so you had better get along. As far as a mentor, I see a kind of camaraderie with people who are elected at the same time--ten of forty in the Senate when I was elected. We are the freshman class. We had a fairly sizable...25% brand new and six Democrat and four Republican. So we don't really call ourselves a freshman class, but when we didn't know the answer to something it wasn't one person going to a senior Senator, but several would go at the same time. And I have always have been one who was not afraid to ask for help, so I can't say anyone was assigned to me. I felt like I had a great deal of support during the campaign from the man who I was to replace, Senator Woertz, and he had such respect in the Senate that when I got there I already had some credibility because he had occupied the seat before. So that was a plus for me.

Q: What committees do you serve?

A: After the election win, that campaign was over. So then you start your next campaign which is the campaign for your assignments and I didn't know at the time that I was campaigning for assignments for four years. I thought maybe we switched around every year, but you have your assignments for four years. And I felt that Assessment and Taxation with reappraisal and classification was going to be a very visible and very influential committee. I also would like to have had stronger consideration for Ways and Means, but freshmen are very seldom selected for that, so I pushed that with leadership and, then, my fallback position should they not be able to grant that was Tax. So I was assigned to Tax and Judiciary and was the only freshman legislator who was assigned to chair a committee which was Governmental Organization and my background in working for the state was helpful on that. I am Vice-Chairman of the Confirmations Committee which, again, is a very interesting committee in that you really get to meet the players and know who's helping to form policy in the state and this year it should really be enlightening because there will be so many new appointments. Also Labor, Industry and Small Business. I am Vice Chairman of that and the people that I worked for in state government--it was the arm of labor--Department of Human Resources. So I had a lot of background as far as JTPA programs and all of the federal lingo. I knew all of that and had worked with Senator Salisbury before in another capacity, so that worked well. Then Economic Development, I think, is going to be happening with research and development through regents' institutes, so I pushed hard to get on that. Then have had a couple of other appointments since then, one by the governor and one by the president of the Senate, for commissions.

Q: That's a lot of committees.

A: It really is. My first committee when the session is on starts at 8 and I have one break between 8 and 4 o'clock and that is at 9 to see who is there. That is another interesting aspect on demands of time during the legislative session. Again, it's going to vary as to where you are from in the state, but we are only one hour from Topeka and have I-70. A lot of people who have jobs they can take time off and come on down to the capitol to see us. So I have constituents there all the time and then, with extension which is across the state of Kansas and representing K-State, there are demands. There's demands for the evenings and the different receptions, but anyplace that I go there are going to be people from home, whereas people who live far away don't see their constituents unless they go home to see them.

Q: Can you think of anything that has been a major victory or major defeat, or something you remember being really involved in in the legislature?

A: Well, there were two items, one each year, I guess. The first one dealt with commitment to a campaign promise that I had made. And, again, it regarded Washburn and the affiliation and when the bill came out of committee, Washburn was to be associated with the Board of Regents and full funding for the margin and none of the senior Senators would cross the governor on that. So it was up to the freshman to bring the amendment forward to take Washburn out, which again was a little tough because I attended Washburn. My husband's a graduate of Washburn. But I had made a commitment to the people of Manhattan until year three was there, we were not going to have that consideration. So my seatmate and I led that campaign and were able to amend the bill and it took some effort as a native Topekan to rebuild those fences with the Topeka delegation, which it is ok now. This last year, I had a bill that was out of my committee that regarded some auctioneers and I knew that I was in the minority. And went into a debate situation of nearly an hour on the bill with Senator Gaines, knowing that I was probably.... I knew I had two votes going in and I knew he had the majority, but when he suggested killing the bill procedurally, I prevailed upon him to let the system work. We did debate it and I only lost by four votes. But we were able to procedurally bring that bill forward and have it discussed as it should have been. So I did not consider that necessarily a loss as much as being able to indicate that legislation should be considered.

Q: Have you introduced any legislation?

A: Yes, and been a part of some that dealt primarily with the margin of excellence. This year I have a number of bills that I'm pretty excited about. One of them is a new concept. I am referring to it as 'learn fair,' but it will deal with AFDC recipients. It's a controversial issue and I don't know how well it will fare this year but I want to bring it out.

It refers to children whose parents are on welfare and if the children do not meet the attendance requirements of the school, the payments will stop. And the reason...I'm not trying to punish the children as much as send the signal and, as a teacher, I see that there is a direct correlation between success in school and attendance. And that the investment of public dollars in people is to help them so that they can get an education which is free. So we will see how that bill goes. It is a new concept and we will see what happens. Some of the others deal with...I think one that is rather important, we do not have any kind of inspections on automobiles and I think there are many unsafe ones on the road. So I have a bill that is going to be dealing with that, and one with the coding of plastics for recycling and environmental issues. So I pretty well cover the gamut, I guess--traffic, environment, children and education. Many legislators tend to major in something or become an expert and that is what they tell you you should do. I guess I'm still in the undecided category that everything is of interest and, with the variety of committees that I have, I feel that I've got different things that will fit and the interests aren't tunnelled.

Q: Now, you mentioned that you had participated or at least have gone to some of the meetings of the women's coalition or women's caucus. I don't know if that was real or the press just called it that, but....

A: Well, because of some issues that dealt with the funding for children, Republican women and Democrats on the House side formed a group called the Steel Magnolias on the House side. And we did not really have that kind of a counterpart thing, you know, on the Senate side but a couple of women legislators, Republican and Democrat, had an open house at one of the houses that they rent and we went over for sandwiches and stuff. I don't know if they met more than that or not. I do know one of the lobbying groups hosted a dinner for women legislators and women that were in positions in state government. I did not attend. I come home some during the session, too, but there is not a formal group that I am aware of and I particularly know, speaking from the Senate side, that there's not a women's group where the nine of us are unified in some way.

Q: I think some people feel like there is more of a unified effort there and others don't, so it's interesting. I am going to ask a few real quick questions about your private life and where you grew up, a little background. Are you a native of Kansas?

A: No, I was born in Kirksville, Missouri and moved to Topeka.

Q: What was your childhood and growing up like and your education in Kirksville?

A: I just lived there for a little bit, mainly until Junior High. We lived in the Kansas City area and I was the oldest of four children. We are all six years apart, so we each had our shot of being the only child.

Q: Where in Kansas City did you live?

A: I lived in north Kansas City, Missouri and, then, in 6th grade we moved to Topeka.

Q: And you went to Topeka West?

A: I started out at Wanamaker and then we moved into the city limits and went to Capper Junior High and graduated from Topeka West.

Q: Did you go to Washburn?

A: No, both my undergraduate and graduate degree are from Emporia State University but I had...at the end of my sophomore year, I quit college and started working for Santa Fe and after a summer and semester decided that I really needed more school. So I quit Santa Fe and went back to school at Emporia and then lived out in San Francisco for awhile and went to San Francisco State, K-State, and took some classes from Lawrence. I covered most of the schools.

Q: Did you major in education?

A: Majored in education and then, in five years of commuting, or living out of state, so I have my Masters in Curriculum Instruction and then I have taught mainly in small schools and, in 1985, I was selected Kansas Master Teacher.

Q: That's right. I remember that.

A: That's when I was at St. George. The first time we'd ever tried for it in that district, so it was kind of neat. We had another Master Teacher last year out there.

Q: What organizations have you belonged to that you felt like might be influential in propelling you into the legislature?

A: Well, I served on a negotiating team when I was teaching and member of the Kansas National Education Association, and a little bit surprised that they would not endorse me after being a member twelve years and a master teacher, but they didn't. I was president of my association and also political action coordinator. Been active in the League of Women Voters, Kansas Teachers of English, and also have taught speech and drama and belong to Speech Communications Association, belong to the American Legion.

Q: Any women's federated clubs?

A: American Legion Auxiliary, La Leche League which is a women's breast-feeding support group, and League of Women voters. But I am not really too much into women's clubs.

Q: Your occupation before your election was teacher, and what did you teach?

A: I have taught, at one time or another, grades 6-12. And then the year I was named Master Teacher I also later that year was named to an endowed chair. So I taught at the university in Education--people who were just going out to do their student teaching and that was real interesting, too. But I primarily taught English. I remember as a junior at Emporia State, going in to see my advisor and my plan was to get a degree in Political Science, a BA, and he said, I don't know what you will do with this, Miss Schrimsher, unless you go into politics. And I said, well, I am not doing that. So he reminds me of it, too. He's still there. He indicated that since I had very strong grades in English that maybe I should pick that up as a second and go into education, so I have primarily taught English.

Q: How old were your children when you were elected?

A: The kids were 9 and 11.

Q: And how old were you when you were elected?

A; Thirty-nine. I am forty-one now.

Q: Who cared for your children? You went to Topeka and came home some. You had an apartment down there. Who took care of your children?

A: Well, after I announced that I was going to be running, my mother came to town and the two of us interviewed some people to help care for the kids because the hours are so crazy when you are doing door-to-door and that kind of thing. I had a couple of students from K-State who came in. In fact, the one is still with me and she plugs in in January when the session starts and she is over three days a week. And the kids, our kids are walking distance. School is two blocks from here and our house is another two blocks from here. So everything is here. I've never been the mom in the station wagon. Burke now goes to middle school and it is four blocks away, so we are right downtown Manhattan and yet it's not a city because we are a town. My husband helps a lot. The kids come here after school and do their homework in the office somewhere and the secretary is there. Everybody just kind of works together when mommy is in Topeka. Then usually every other week, they will come down one night and we all camp out at the apartment and they get up and go back early. So it works out fairly well.

Q: Interesting arrangement. You go back and forth?

A: I usually come home either Tuesday or Wednesday night and I am home Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. The people who had the most concern about that were people who are in their 60s and older and wondered how I could leave my kids. During the campaign, that came up quite a bit. In fact, I will never forget the week before the campaign voting and I was in Milford, Kansas which is the very northwest part of the district, walking door-to-door with Speaker Jim Braden. And people started asking me about my children who were 4 and 5 and how could I leave them, and this happened at several doors and finally I asked them, where did you get this? Well, we've just had phone calls come in to tell us that, this afternoon. I said, 'We have children but they are in the 4th and 5th grade.' So we weren't certain how to combat that, but there were a lot of older citizens who lived in Milford. So I went immediately to the radio station and it was on a Thursday and the election was.... We missed a Sunday paper to take any kind of ad and so we went on the radio--my husband and I--and explained about our family and I carried Milford by the highest percentage. So whatever the plan was to try to bring a feeling that somehow it was not going for Lana and we were able to dissuade that.

Q: That is interesting. I think that's a common tactic. I am going to ask you if you were a debater. I think you would have told me by now. Did you debate at all in high school?

A: No, I was a class officer in high school and knew the debaters, but that really wasn't me. Then in student government in Emporia back in the days when you had three people per class that represented you, so we were a student governing association for the University. It was twelve people and again that smaller kind of interaction.

Q: And you were one of the elected representatives?

A: Yes.

Q: All the years you were there?

A: The years that I ran. I ran two years and then I was out of school. When I came back, they had changed to a student senate. I ran and served that second semester, but there were like ninety and I didn't like it, so I didn't run again. I like little groups.

Q: Do you think your service in the legislature has or is changing you or the way other people see you or treat you or talk to you?

A: Well, I don't know. I feel like probably the thing that bothers me the most is not being able to remember names as

well as I would like. My family thinks I change when the session is on because it's a higher gear and there's a lot more messages to take and everything gets real hectic. And they say that I tend to demand a little more when the session's on. But they all recognize that and it seems like it goes okay. I don't think it really has changed me much. I still scrub my kitchen floor and, you know, wish I could iron while I drove.

Q: Do you think that it costs your family anything? Do you think they have sacrificed or given up anything so you...?

A: I think they feel like they are on vacation when I am in Topeka. They eat out more. Here's these kids...both of our kids are 5' or taller now, moving right along since Kent and I are tall. But, you know, they'll sleep with their dad when I'm gone. They sort of bind together and then I come home and try to wade through the house. My goal is always to get the house in shape before school is out and I usually have a month and that is how long it takes, but we don't worry about it. So it's pretty relaxed.

Q: It's just a different atmosphere.

A: There is a feeling, though...there was a situation this year with one of my daughter's classes and her grades and she was hesitant for me to really follow through on it because I was a Senator and I explained to her that I was also her mom and a teacher and we were able to resolve that, but the kids don't want any special favors. They are real...my son had a situation where he lost some papers and the teacher told him he could make it up and he didn't and he got a lower grade. When I asked him about it, he said, well, I think she was going to let me do it because you are a Senator. So we just took the lower grade. Even though several kids had that same opportunity.

Q: Is there anything I haven't asked you about that you think has been an important influence in what you've done or what you are going to do?

A: I think it is important that when people are elected to public service that they remember--and women have wonderful memories. I can remember who supported me and who didn't. The bottom line is after you win, you work for everybody and you have to put your partisan politics aside in delivery of services, but I don't think that you have to put your partisan politics aside in what your philosophy is. And there are times that spill over. Again, primarily I'm a person who strongly believes in fiscal responsibility but as an educator and from a community such as this, I believe in spending money for education. You see some differences there. But I always tell people that are considering public service, whether it be state, county, local, or whatever,

that you are never going to have everyone support you and be with you. My dad thinks that 51 percent is always safe and it could be, but if you just rule and think you are ruling with the 51 percent majority, I don't think you are going to have a very fun time. I think you have to continuously broaden what your perspective is and know more and more about your district. The more people that you know and the ideas that you hear, whether you can support them at a state-wide level or not, is immaterial. It's knowing that people have that comfort zone and share them with you.