

[This is one of ten oral history interviews of Kansas legislators in 2015 by Dr. Burdett Loomis done under the auspices of the University of Kansas and the Shawnee County Historical Society with funding from the Kansas Humanities Council. This set of interviews became the foundation for the Kansas Oral History Project with its incorporation.]

LOOMIS: Okay. I do have a release form here I won't forget to have you sign later on.

MAAG: Okay.

LOOMIS: Assuming you want to.

MAAG: Why don't you just strike anything really stupid I say?

LOOMIS: The purpose here, I think, as you know, is that a variety of folks have wanted to have a record of the state legislature and of—there only a couple of states in the nation—Washington state has an extensive oral history program for state legislators.

MAAG: Really?

LOOMIS: Amazing. But no one else really has done it systematically, so we're beginning to do it here with a small grant, and I'll probably do ten or twelve pilot interviews and then hope to raise a little money to keep on going.

MAAG: Yeah.

LOOMIS: And I think that one of the things that's important here is to recognize the significance of the state legislature and the people who work there.

So, let's just jump right in. How did you initially come to run for the Kansas legislature?

MAAG: As soon as I graduated from graduate school at KU [University of Kansas] in '64, we moved to Dodge City, and I taught at what was then Dodge City Junior College. It was before the restructuring into a community college.

LOOMIS: Yeah. Right, right, right.

MAAG: And we'd there about four years, and ironically it was my bridge group that convinced me that I ought to run if they would do all the legwork on it. I was pretty reluctant because we had one small child and another on the way at the time, and Dodge City is a long way from Topeka.

LOOMIS: Sure.

MAAG: And in those days, of course, the pay was—was zip, practically zippo. I think it was ten dollars a day, you know, that we were getting. So, I was a little reluctant, but in the end, I agreed to do it. And fortunately, we had a lot of enthusiastic followers, and a lot of my students got involved in the campaign. From that standpoint, it was a good learning experience for them. And so, we were very

fortunate to have won. What made it a little difficult in 1968 was the fact that educators were not present and were expected not to be present [chuckles] in the legislative process.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: The only person who had been successful at it was Burt Chaney who served from Hutchinson. He was an instructor at the junior college there.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: And so, he kind of paved the way for me to get involved in politics.

LOOMIS: You ran as a Republican.

MAAG: Mm-hm.

LOOMIS: Was there a primary?

MAAG: Yes, yes, in fact a very contested primary, and that was really the bigger race than the general race was. But the Dodge City area has traditionally been a Democrat area.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm.

MAAG: And Don Smith and I were—until we get up to where Pat George in present day was a member. [Chuckles.] We were about the only Republicans ever elected from that area. Heavy Catholic population.

LOOMIS: Was the seat open?

MAAG: Yeah, yeah, the gentleman who had had two terms in there decided not to run again, and so it was a wide-open race. You know, we were up against people who had been in the community a lot longer than I had been—

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: —and who were very much involved in agriculture, which I wasn't, and so it was a real challenge.

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah. And just quickly, how long did you serve?

MAAG: Eight years.

LOOMIS: Eight years.

MAAG: Yeah, '69 through the '76 session. I resigned in the summer of '76 to come to work for Gov. [Robert F.] Bennett.

LOOMIS: Right, right. Growing up, was your family especially interested in politics?

MAAG: No, no, not at all. In fact, politics was—I grew up in a farm down in Franklin County, and politics was about the furthest thing from our minds [chuckles], I think. I do remember, ironically, the night—election night 1948.

LOOMIS: Really!

MAAG: Because we lived next to the schoolhouse where the—

LOOMIS: Uh-huh.

MAAG: —which was the polling place, and I can still remember going home and Dad listening on the car radio to the returns. He was a big Demo- —he was a Democrat, actually.

LOOMIS: Uh-huh.

MAAG: And so, he was very happy that Harry [S.] Truman was—

LOOMIS: And surprised, I suspect.

MAAG: And very surprised, yes.

LOOMIS: And you would have been how old then?

MAAG: Oh, I was only about nine.

LOOMIS: Yeah. I'm thinking that '52—that [Dwight D.] Eisenhower was the first president—I would have been around seven or so.

MAAG: Yeah, right, right.

LOOMIS: He was a larger-than-life figure.

MAAG: Oh, yeah. Oh, absolutely.

LOOMIS: So aside from your family, were you interested in politics at all?

MAAG: I think—you know, to a certain extent, I guess I was. My seventh, eighth grade teacher kind of got us interested. And then ironically it was a basketball coach at the school when I was in high school that kind of got me interested in politics but, you know, only on a very slim margin.

LOOMIS: You weren't thinking, "this is for me somehow."

MAAG: Oh, no. No, no, no, not at all. Until, until I got into college, and then my junior year in college—

LOOMIS: Which was—

MAAG: —which was 19- —

LOOMIS: —where?

MAAG: —at Washburn [University]. Gov. [William H.] Avery, then Congressman Avery, —

LOOMIS: Mm-hm.

MAAG: —always brought two people from his district back for a week to intern in his office.

LOOMIS: Oh.

MAAG: And my junior year, which was 1960, I got to go back with a young lady from Mount Saint Scholastica in Atchison, and I just absolutely felt in love with Washington, D.C., because, of course, that was such a dynamic year—

LOOMIS: Right, absolutely.

MAAG: —when [John F.] Kennedy was running for president.

LOOMIS: Yeah.

MAAG: You know, it was a big deal. And I just thought, Boy, if I could only get back to Washington, this would-be heaven on earth.

LOOMIS: Yeah.

MAAG: So that's really where I got involved in politics.

LOOMIS: [unintelligible; 7:04] someone runs an intern program. It still happens with kids today.

MAAG: Yeah. Oh, I bet, I bet.

LOOMIS: But it was much more unusual in those days.

MAAG: Yeah, yeah. I think that's right. I think back at who we got to talk to—

LOOMIS: Mm-hm.

MAAG: I think we talked to two or three different U.S. senators. We got to talk to two of the lobbyists from the Eisenhower administration. I mean [chuckles], we had access to people you wouldn't even dream of getting to talk to today.

LOOMIS: Right, right, right.

What was your district like at the time that you were first elected?

MAAG: Actually, it was a fairly large part of Ford County. It included all of Dodge City and several of the rural townships around Dodge City. And I don't think I ever won one of the townships in the four times I ran.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: By the time I ran the fourth time, in 1974, the district had shrunk because Dodge City was growing.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: And so, it wasn't nearly as rural as it had been.

LOOMIS: That was kind of Don [sic; David J. "Dave"] Heinemann's experience.

MAAG: Yeah.

LOOMIS: He was from a rural area, but basically, he represented most of Garden City.

MAAG: Right, right. Exactly. Yeah, Dave and I had very similar setups in terms of the districts, yeah, yeah.

LOOMIS: So how would you describe that district? You know, in your mind, how do you think about the district?

MAAG: Well, Dodge City was pretty diverse in terms of population. This was before the packing plants got started, though.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: The railroad was still a big part of it, and so you had a fairly significant Hispanic population, who had come with the railroad in the 1870s, and the generations just continued to live in Dodge City.

Dodge, of course, from a standpoint of tourism, was in its heyday—

LOOMIS: Mm-hm.

MAAG: —in the 1960s because Gunsmoke was still going strong on television.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: And so that was a big part of the economy.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm.

MAAG: One of the things that really helped me was that the Chamber of Commerce and the teachers— both groups got behind me in the campaign. When I think back about it, I think that was the deciding factor, —

LOOMIS: Mm-hm.

MAAG: —that the business community was there, —

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: —and the teachers were there.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: So, I had two very significant niches of support.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm, yeah.

MAAG: But the district still was heavily dominated by agricultural interests, obviously. The cattle industry and wheat farming—

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: —was still the most important topics of conversation [chuckles], I should say.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

How did you keep in touch, and what was your major way of—

MAAG: Yeah. I had the best of all possible worlds. We had two radio stations in Dodge and a television station, which was only a few miles out of town at Ensign [pronounced EN-sine] and then the Dodge City Daily Globe, and I had access to those things any time I wanted them, and there was no competition.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: I mean, you know, nobody else to take the limelight away.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: This was when Harold [S.] Herd was the state senator from the area, and, of course, he lived down in Coldwater. So, he didn't have quite as much access to all the media that I did. So, we were very fortunate from that standpoint. And during the legislative sessions, I wrote a weekly column that the Globe ran.

LOOMIS: Yeah.

MAAG: And the Chamber of Commerce would have coffees and—

LOOMIS: Sure.

MAAG: —the traditional stuff that—

LOOMIS: Yeah.

MAAG: —legislators still do today.

LOOMIS: But basically, you'd go back and talk to people.

MAAG: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. And that was the challenge. I mean, Dodge was two hundred and seventy-two and a half miles from Topeka. [Laughs.]

LOOMIS: Right, right, right.

MAAG: And you'd drive that on a weekend—

LOOMIS: It's what—everybody who represented a district knows exactly the mileage! [Laughs.]

MAAG: Exactly the mileage.

LOOMIS: [Laughs.]

MAAG: And, you know, traveling during the winter sometimes was a little bit treacherous, too. A lot of times, I was afraid I was going to wind up in a snowbank, you know, coming back.

MAAG: Yeah. And actually, when I first ran in '68, the passenger service on the railroad was still good. The Super Chief came through, and, you know, you could get on and off. Well, wouldn't you know it, right after I get elected, they dropped the line.

LOOMIS: Yeah.

MAAG: And so, there wasn't any real good rail service to and from Topeka.

LOOMIS: Right. So once elected, how did you approach your first term?

MAAG: [Chuckles.] I tell you; I think back about it now and how incredibly naïve I was about what was going on. And Dave and I were far and away the youngest guys in the legislature. Both of us were below thirty at that time.

LOOMIS: Yeah.

MAAG: And the average legislative age in those days was well into the fifties and sixties. You know, most of the legislators, the guys—because there was only one woman who was from Junction City. Most of these guys had lived through the Depression. Many of them had been in the war.

LOOMIS: Sure.

MAAG: I mean, they had really hard life experiences. And so, you know, they approached this work with a little more of a beady-eyed attitude than we do today. And so, I was—thankfully, I kept my mouth shut most of the time and just tried to learn what was going on. Some legislators were extremely helpful; others were not. Bill Fribley was from down in southeast Kansas, was chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. He ate freshman legislators for lunch. [Chuckles.] I mean, he wasn't about to reveal any real secrets—you know, political secrets. On the other hand, Clyde Hill from Yates Center, was a wonderful mentor.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: Clyde had his own little class, where he'd bring all the freshman in.

LOOMIS: Oh, is that right?

MAAG: Oh, yeah, and say, "Now, this is how the budget process works" and, you know, yada, yada, yada. So, he was extremely, extremely helpful. And, you know, you just picked it up from—you kind of got a feel for who was influential and who wasn't influential by the debates that went on on the House floor.

LOOMIS: Sure.

MAAG: And, of course, in those days, we had no offices.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: I mean, you sat around—and that was part of the beauty of it. You had gathering places. When the session was over in the afternoon, you went over to the Hotel Jayhawk and went to the rooms—

LOOMIS: Right, right, right.

MAAG: —with, you know, the bankers, the truckers, the Farm Bureau. Everybody had a room.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: And so, you'd sit around and talk, and that was a great learning experience for us. And then at night, we didn't have—[Chuckles.] This seems impossible, but we did not have telephone access—

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: —at night except you could come back to the chamber, where there were two long-distance lines and we'd set [sic] around and take a number, kind of like you were at Baskin-Robbins [chuckles] as to who got to use the telephone next, you know.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: But here again, it was a great learning experience because you were setting [sic] around—Republican, Democrat—talking about what was going on during the day.

LOOMIS: Sure.

MAAG: Far, far more interaction between legislators than there is today.

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Who was your seatmate?

MAAG: I had two seatmates: [R.] Austin Nothern, who is a prominent attorney here in Topeka now and was just beginning then, and a brilliant, brilliant guy and a great tax attorney. And then on the other side was Paul [V.] Dugan, who would later become Lieutenant Governor under [John W.] Carlin. "Doogie," as we called him, or sometimes "The Phantom" because he had a niche [sic] for coming in late Tuesday morning and leaving early Thursday morning. [Chuckles.]

LOOMIS: [Laughs.]

MAAG: And the reason—in those days because there were tons of lawyers in the legislature—

LOOMIS: Right, right, right.

MAAG: —back in those days—nobody paid any attention to how many times you voted or didn't vote, you know, and so these guys would—a lot of them, who, to them, time was money—

LOOMIS: Sure.

MAAG: —would come in late on Tuesday and leave early on Thursday.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm.

MAAG: That all changed. That all changed after the 1972 election, when Gov. [Robert B. "Bob"] Docking hammered Morris Kay, who was the Republican candidate, who had been majority leader of the House and who had abstained on many votes, so starting with the '73 session, you didn't dare miss a vote.

LOOMIS: Even though there wasn't electronic voting at that time.

MAAG: Well, there was in the House.

LOOMIS: There was in the House.

MAAG: Oh yeah, yeah. We still had electronic voting.

LOOMIS: Okay.

MAAG: But, I mean, that was the new rule: You didn't miss a vote. And I think that led directly to a diminishing of the number of attorneys in the legislatures and a number of other professionals, i.e., dentists, optometrists and that sort of thing, which is too bad.

LOOMIS: Yeah.

MAAG: It was really too bad because we lost a lot of experience.

LOOMIS: Almost everybody remarks on—I've never heard that side of the explanation, but I understand it.

MAAG: It really was—it was a sea change.

LOOMIS: You came in two years after the big reapportionment, redistricting decision.

MAAG: Mm-hm.

LOOMIS: And so, was there still any fallout from that, or people pretty well adjusted to the changes that—you know, the large-scale changes that were mandated?

MAAG: I think we were on the cusp of major change. The rural boys, the "short-grass boys," as they called them, —

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: —still dominated the process.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: I mean, the Jess Taylors of the world. But during that first term, 1969-1970, a number of legislators from the urban counties—Johnson County, Shawnee County, Sedgwick County—we formed what was called the urban coalition.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: And Dave and I were the only semi-rural types—

LOOMIS: Right, right, right!

MAAG: I mean, we're out there in the west end of the state. And started meeting. It was Republican and Democrat. We had— [Richard D.] "Pete" Loux [pronounced LUX] was heavy in it, [James Paul "Jim" Buchele, Jr.] was heavy in it. And we'd meet during the off season and kind of strategize as to what we

wanted do promote the next year. It started out as a way of changing the distribution of the gas tax formula.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm.

MAAG: And that was really what got it rolling. But the people who were involved in the urban coalition ultimately wind up in leadership positions later on, in the 1970s, so things were really beginning to change, but the rural boys still had a pretty dominant position.

LOOMIS: —wrote a little bit about that in a piece, and it was interesting that even after redistricting, that they kept—and I make the observation today that rural interests have a disproportionate influence— to their numbers in the chamber.

MAAG: Oh, they still do.. Oh, no doubt about it.

MAAG: Absolutely, absolutely. But, yeah, you had so many of the committees that were still dominated— by the rural people.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: That made a big difference.

LOOMIS: What were your committees when you started out?

MAAG: [Chuckles.] Well, I was on the wrong side of the Speaker's race.

LOOMIS: uh

MAAG: I voted for Jack [R.] Euler, rather than [Calvin A.] "Cal" Strowig, and so my committee assignments weren't really whippy. But I did get on Education, and I was on Public Health, and then I think Parks and Memorials or whatever it was called back then in those days. [Chuckles.]

LOOMIS: Right, right, right.

MAAG: But, of course, the experience on the Education Committee was big.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm.

MAAG: It really was, yeah.

LOOMIS: Did you move subsequently?

**MAAG: Ultimately—I think I pretty well stayed—I didn't stay on Public Health. I remember that. But I wound up chairing the State Parks Subcommittee in '71 ad '72, I think it was. But I stayed on Education. And I think I was on Transportation for one term, but when I became Assistant Majority Leader and then pro tem, I pretty much got off of committees.

LOOMIS: So, as opposed to Dave, who had a series of pretty significant committee assignments, your eight years—in a sense, one of your arts is moving up into leadership.

MAAG: Yeah, yeah, really.

LOOMIS: How did that come about?

MAAG: Well, I think it was a little bit of an outgrowth of the urban coalition group. They wanted somebody to run for a leadership position in 1972, and I agreed I'd run for majority leader. Donn [J.] Everett from Manhattan was also running. And the Everett's coalition group decided at the last minute that, hey, we don't want a big fight on the floor over this. We think we're going to win. And they came to us, and we figured we weren't going to win—

LOOMIS: Right, right, right.

MAAG: And they said, "Why don't we set up the position of assistant majority leader?" And so that was really the beginning, that position. And so, I did that. And I have to give [Duane S.] "Pete" McGill a lot of credit. Pete kind of looked upon me as one of those damn teachers, you know, who shouldn't be here—

LOOMIS: [Laughs.]

MAAG: —in the first place. But from the very onset, when he was speaker in '73-'74, '75-'76, Pete went out of his way to give me an opportunity to do things, so it was very helpful. And then in '74, Kenny Howard had to resign from the Kansas legislature. He had been Speaker Pro Tem in '73 and '74, but he resigned before—I think either very early in the '74 session or before the '74 session, and Ansel [W.] Tobias from out in McPherson County took his place. And the urban group decided they'd like to have their own person in the pro tem job, and so I agreed to run, even though it was kind of awkward because I really liked Ansel. He was a great guy, a great guy. But we won that. And here again, McGill was extremely generous in letting me be involved in the leadership decisions in '75 and '76. I think I presided in the House probably 90 percent of the time.

LOOMIS: Really!

MAAG: Because Pete preferred to be setting [sic] out amongst the troops—

LOOMIS: Sure.

MAAG: —and doing things in the back room. So, it was a great experience, a great experience.

LOOMIS: So, in a sense, on a day-to-day [approach to? 23:26] the job of being a legislator, how did moving into the leadership change the way that, you know, your job was in the legislature?

MAAG: Yeah, obviously, you spend a lot more time strategizing—

LOOMIS: Mm-hm.

MAAG: —and setting the daily calendars and kind of monitoring what was going on in the committees and who was creating problems and who wasn't—

LOOMIS: Right, yeah.

MAAG: —and this sort of thing, and communicating with the other side of the aisle, which in those days was much, much more open—

LOOMIS: Sure.

MAAG: —than it is today.

LOOMIS: Absolutely.

MAAG: But, yeah, you didn't spend nearly as much time in actual committee work.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: And finally—I think it was in '76 session that it got to the point where I said, “this isn't really working,” so I gave up my seat on Education, and [James D.] “Jim” Braden—we wound up choosing him to replace me, and that's kind of what got Jim started on the road to leadership.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

Going back to your first term a little bit, if you can remember, when you got here, you said you were naïve. What surprised you the most about the legislature?

MAAG: I guess the fact that it didn't seem like we were working very hard.

LOOMIS: Yeah.

MAAG: You know? That I expected to come and that we'd be busy the entire day and take up all these major issues and such. You know, a lot of the days we were through at 11 o'clock in the morning, and then what do you do for the rest of the day [chuckles], you know, if you didn't have committee work? And so, I guess I was really shocked at that.

I was a little disappointed in the secretiveness of the process, too, that—of course, we didn't have nearly the technology that—

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: —we have today. And so, you didn't know what was in the conference committee reports, except what whoever was at the microphone was telling you was in those reports.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: And the Xerox phenomenon had just really gotten started.

LOOMIS: Yeah.

MAAG: And nobody had secretaries.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: And so, you know, it was a challenge to really get things done. But the good side was that you met a lot of really good people—you know, people who sincerely wanted to do the right thing, who weren't—yeah, there was always partisanship, but not the extreme type of partisanship that we experience today in the process.

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah.

When you got to Topeka or during your years there, what were your living arrangements?

MAAG: [Chuckles.] Well, that was the only reason I could run. My wife's mother lived here.

MAAG: And so, we could stay at her place, because otherwise we couldn't even begin to have afforded to live at the Jayhawk or the McCann Center—

LOOMIS: Right, right, right.

MAAG: —or whatever it was. It was tough because, like I say, we had two small children. In fact, our son was born during our first session, in 1969. So, I just about had to go home every weekend because Kathy couldn't always be up here.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: And so, it was tough to keep that going. And, to her credit, she kept the home fires burning under tough circumstances.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

So, did you keep your job back—

MAAG: I had to hire a replacement, out of my own salary.

LOOMIS: Oh, is that right?

MAAG: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. I mean, that was only fair.

LOOMIS: Sure, yeah. I'm surprised—that was an interesting arrangement.

MAAG: Yeah. And ironically, one of the guys that I wound up hiring, Larry Burke, who was a businessman in Dodge City—he wound up—after I left the legislature, he wound up selling his business and taught full time at the [Dodge City] Community College.

LOOMIS: Oh, really!

MAAG: [Chuckles.] So, we just went in opposite directions.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: He went from business to teaching, and I went from teaching to business.

LOOMIS: Yeah.

MAAG: Yeah, ultimately.

LOOMIS: Yeah. What were your subjects that you were teaching?

MAAG: I taught American and world history. Well, western civilization, as it would have been known at KU.

LOOMIS: Yeah.

MAAG: [Laughs.]

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

You talked a little bit about the legislature and the good people. Can you describe a little more of what the culture of the legislature was like in those days?

MAAG: Yeah. Well, you still had the same basic structure you got today in that all of the special interest groups had dinners and such, the big difference being that in those days you had the rooms at the Hotel Jayhawk, where everybody went in the afternoons.

LOOMIS: Yeah.

MAAG: And so many more of the wives came to the process, —

LOOMIS: Oh, really?

MAAG: Well, you think about it: Most of these guys were kind of at a retirement age anyway, —

LOOMIS: Uh-huh. I see.

MAAG: —and so they get to come up here and stay. A lot of them didn't go home on the weekends, even, particularly if they were from far western Kansas.

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MAAG: And so, there was a lot of camaraderie—

LOOMIS: Sure.

MAAG: —among the older folks. I remember when our son was born during the first session—oh, my gosh! I mean, it was like he immediately had fifty grandmothers, —

LOOMIS: Right, right, right.

MAAG: —you know? Because everybody—

LOOMIS: [Laughs.]

MAAG: —wanted to be involved. And the wives would come to the session every day.

LOOMIS: Oh, really!

MAAG: Oh, yeah. They'd sit up in the left-hand corner of the balcony, and I will always believe that there were a number of the wives who knew a hell of a lot more about what was going on [chuckles] than their husbands did—

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah.

MAAG: —in the process.

LOOMIS: Also, I just imagine that it might have kept a little rein on some of the husbands.

MAAG: Oh, yes.

LOOMIS: Not to say [crosstalk; unintelligible; 29:59].

MAAG: Oh, absolutely. No doubt about it.

LOOMIS: [Laughs.]

MAAG: No doubt about it.

LOOMIS: I'd never heard that.

MAAG: And—and a lot of the wives were involved as secretaries—

LOOMIS: Uh-huh. Oh, yeah.

MAAG: —and run—Mrs. Rogg—her husband, [Herbert A.] “Herb” from Russell—she ran the post office.

I mean, and boy, she ran it! And, of course, in the Senate, where they did have secretaries, the wives often were the—

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: —senator's secretary. So, yeah, there was a lot of involvement.

LOOMIS: I should know this, but how long were the sessions when you first arrived?

MAAG: Well, we had ninety- and sixty-day sessions—

LOOMIS: Uh-huh.

MAAG: —through 1972, and then the constitutional amendment changed—

LOOMIS: Yeah. Right, right, right.

MAAG: —it to ninety all the way, from that point on. So, the second—you know, the even numbered sessions were the sixty-day sessions.

LOOMIS: Yeah. Were they still called budget sessions in those days?

MAAG: No, we didn't call them budget sessions. I think the budget sessions were basically thirty days,

LOOMIS: Yeah, right, that's what—yeah, that's what I heard.

MAAG: —in the early '60s.

LOOMIS: Right. Yeah, yeah. So, in a sense, you came at a time when the legislature really was—and state government as a whole—was in transition, —

MAAG: Oh, yeah. Big time. Big time.

LOOMIS: —as you point out with the book [unintelligible; 31:26].

MAAG: Yeah.

LOOMIS: So, although it started a little bit before you got into the legislature, you really hit the major period—

MAAG: Mm-hm.

LOOMIS: —of this. So, can you reflect a little bit about how the legislature changed and also state government as a whole during your period there?

MAAG: You have to give the speaker of the House, the president of the Senate—well, then, pro tem I guess it was—credit for being the drivers behind this: Pete McGill in the House and Pete Loux, the minority leader in the House, and Bennett in the Senate and Harold Herd. But, you know, when you think about it, in 1969, 1970, the Capitol Building was still the center of government.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: You had not only the governor, but you had the secretary of state, you had the state treasurer, you had the insurance commissioner, you had the attorney general, you had the Supreme Court—were all in this building.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: And the legislature was kind of an afterthought. I mean, we had no offices, except the leadership had offices. And you had to rely on a bullpen, as we called it, —

LOOMIS: Sure.

MAAG: —of typists and such. And the building was not in good shape. I think back on it now. This was kind of an embarrassment, the way the Capitol Building looked in those days. But it was so busy. I mean, my God, —

LOOMIS: Yeah.

MAAG: —you had all these agencies, you know, right on top of [unintelligible; 33:05] out here. So basically, as a result of this, the Council of State Governments or Conference of State Governments [unintelligible; 33:17]. [Transcriber's note: The Council of State Governments was the precursor to the National Conference of State Governments.] Look, the decision was made, "By gosh, we're gonna clean this place up, and we're gonna get adequate staff, we're gonna get space for offices," et cetera, et cetera. And that was really the driving force. And really most of it happened after 1972.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm.

MAAG: It was the '73-'74 sessions were the sessions where we really made some significant strides. The secretaries for most of the legislators—I mean, they had to double up—

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: —much more than they do today, but that. And having your own office. And the relationship with legislative research was expanded quite a bit. That part of the legislative process had always been very good.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: I mean, my gosh! Dr. [James “Jim”] Drury and [Richard] “Dick” Ryan and those guys—they did a superb, superb job. [Chuckles.] Actually, we’ve done more and more work on them without giving them a lot of expanded staff. But that was big. And, you know, I think it was 1974—we got the award as the most improved legislature—

LOOMIS: Right, right, right.

MAAG: —in the United States. I mean, it was really something. Like I say, though, you have to give a lot of the credit to McGill and Bennett.

The most controversial thing they did was demand that the special interest groups close their lobby rooms.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: That did not set [sic] well with the average legislator. And I’m not sure in the end it was a good idea.

LOOMIS: I think that—I mean, I’ve heard that from many—you know, it’s interesting that—I never had the good fortune to meet Pete Loux, —

MAAG: Mm-hm. Yeah.

LOOMIS: —but certainly I knew Pete McGill well.

MAAG: Yeah.

LOOMIS: And the idea that Pete McGill, of all—

MAAG: Yeah, of the—

LOOMIS: [crosstalk; unintelligible; 35:25].

MAAG: That’s right. [unintelligible; 35:27] back away from a [bar? 35:30] situation [unintelligible; 35:31]. But, yeah, it was—and we still—you know, you still had a lot of interaction because there were places around the city that became the traditional stomping places.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: Another aspect—and I’m sure Pete probably will talk to you about this—it did have an impact. That was, when I first came in 1969—you had all this time—as a freshman, you had this all this time. You

didn't have anything to do. We went over to the YMCA, which was just to the east of the Hotel [unintelligible; 36:11], and we played basketball in the afternoon.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: And this included [David] "Dave" Owen and Wendell [E.] Lady and people who ultimately became— [Winton A. "Wint"] Winter [Sr.]—part of the leadership, and we formed a legislative basketball team and went out and played charity games around the community and such. We had a game between the House and the Senate over at the old Hayden High School, and we packed the place. One year we actually went over and played the Missouri legislature.

LOOMIS: [unintelligible; 36:47] from this.

MAAG: But it created an area [sic] of camaraderie that you couldn't get anyplace else.

LOOMIS: Still, it still [unintelligible; 36:59] a place where partisanship was pretty much [unintelligible; 37:07]. A few places.

MAAG: Yeah, sure.

LOOMIS: [unintelligible; 37:09] someone who's real sweaty.

MAAG: [Laughs.] Yeah, [Todd] Tiaht [pronounced TEE-HART] was considered one of the best baseball players when he was there. Yeah, yeah.

LOOMIS: You know, everyone mentions Loux, Bennett, Pete McGill and [often that? 37:31] Harold Herd is a great guy. What did they do? [unintelligible; 37:38] a lot of old legislators, people who had been around, but how did they do the spadework that would get this stuff through in the end?

MAAG: I think a lot of their being chosen for key positions came from how they performed on the floor of the House and Senate, that their ability to argue reasonably and not very often had to play a big part. I mean, you just sensed who was giving you good information and who was just, you know, shooting the breeze with you. And there were always those who [unintelligible; 38:26] way too often, and that really hurt their chances of ever getting leadership positions. But they were just people who knew how to get along with people. I used to refer to it as power personality. And some people had it; some people didn't.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: You know, it ranged from one extreme to the other. You had guys like John [H.] Vogel from Lawrence, —

LOOMIS: Sure.

MAAG: —who served in the House quietly, but when John went to the microphone, you listened because you knew he wouldn't be down there unless he had something meaningful to say. You know, you had the other extreme in the Senate, where you had some senators who insisted on talking on every issue. [Chuckles.]

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: And, of course, as a result, they really had no influence.

LOOMIS: Yeah. You know, I can sense that Bennett—he was really fascinated by the process—

MAAG: Oh, absolutely.

LOOMIS: —and, you know, wanted to make it work, maybe even a little more [intellectual status? 39:39] than Pete McGill. That's a compliment.

MAAG: Oh, absolutely. That was amazing relationships, because McGill, in a public way, was always, you know, talking about the “goddamn Bennett,” “the intellectual,” blah, blah, blah, you know. But he greatly admired Bennett's abilities. And Bennett, on other hand, knew that Pete was pretty rough and tumble but always treated him, —you know, “Speaker, darling.”

LOOMIS: [Laughs.]

MAAG: That was his favorite line. “Well, Speaker, darling, I think we ought to do this,” you know. And so, it was a wonderful relationship that they developed, and you can't leave Pete Loux and—

LOOMIS: No, no, absolutely.

MAAG: —Harold Herd out, because, you know, Pete would come to McGill and say, “Well, we're gonna take you on today on this.”

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: “Were gonna do this, we're gonna do that.” So, there weren't the surprises that we're constantly up against in today's legislature.

LOOMIS: I saw that in '88-'89 session. Bud Burke and [Michael L.] “Mike” Johnston—

MAAG: Mm-hm.

LOOMIS: —had, you know, a similar relationship.

MAAG: Yeah. Right, right.

LOOMIS: I thought, Oh, my God, these guys are gonna kill each other on the floor.

MAAG: Yeah, yeah.

LOOMIS: And then they walked out and a few minutes later they're going to lunch together.

MAAG: Oh, yeah. Sure, sure, yeah.

LOOMIS: I think I saw the last part of that, that era.

MAAG: Uh-huh. Oh, absolutely. [Franklin D.] “Frank” Gaines is another classic example. I mean, Frank—he would give these stem-winding speeches on the floor, you know, and then, you know, it was all over, and you went and drank with him that evening and such. So, yeah, it was a different world.

LOOMIS: You talked a little bit about the interest groups. I had a couple of questions there. One would be: One notion is that contract lobbying per se came in kind of with Pete McGill in the late '70s.

MAAG: Mm-hm.

LOOMIS: Were there contract lobbyists by other names, maybe lawyers who did it occasionally?

MAAG: Oh, yeah.

LOOMIS: In the earlier era?

MAAG: Yeah. There weren't nearly as many of them.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: There weren't as many of them, and a lot of them would only come here maybe once or twice a session—

LOOMIS: Uh-huh.

MAAG: —and such. But the idea of what we call a contract lobbyist today really got started even a little bit before McGill on a liquor issue, and I forget all the details now.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: But I remember them hiring several lobbyists to do this, and I thought at the time, Oh, this ain't gonna work. You know, if you aren't representing one specific area, —

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: —the legislator is not going to pay attention to you. But it worked, and as a result, you began to get the multi-client—

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: —contract lobbyist.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: So, it's a little bit different. But the two big differences in lobbying today over what it was in the '70s is the number of lobbyists.

LOOMIS: Sure.

MAAG: I mean, it is fourfold, at least.

LOOMIS: Yeah.

MAAG: —if not fivefold. And secondly, the number of women involved in lobbying has changed dramatically.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: You know, Mary Turkington was it—

LOOMIS: Yeah.

MAAG: —when I was in the legislature. But today—I don't know, I suppose it's getting close to half [chuckles] of the registered lobbyists are women.

LOOMIS: Right, right, right.

MAAG: Yeah.

LOOMIS: In the whole reform process, do you recall if the interests were involved at all? Did they see a benefit, do you think, in the more modernized legislature?

MAAG: Yeah, I think they did. Obviously, they weren't too overt about their support, but Harold Stones was the lobbyist for the KBA [Kansas Bankers Association] during those formative years. And I think Harold was very supportive of what McGill and Bennett were trying to do.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

MAAG: And I think Farm Bureau was the same way, and the truckers and such. But, you know, it wasn't in their interests or in the legislators' interest for them to be too open about it, —

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: —about the support.

LOOMIS: Right, right. You came in at a time when the federal government was expanding—

MAAG: Mm-hm.

LOOMIS: —dramatically.

MAAG: Yeah.

LOOMIS: —in, you know, post-Great Society era stuff like that. Did this growth of the federal government affect your day-to-day work in the legislature?

MAAG: [Chuckles.] In one specific way for me it did. I'll come back to that. But I do remember that particularly in the area of social welfare, the amount of federal involvement, as it grew and grew and grew throughout the '70s, became a huge headache.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: When I was working for Bennett, when we were developing the budget, we spent far more time on those issues, other than higher education maybe, than anything else in the budget, and it was because we were getting pushed by Washington to do all these things.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: But back to the involvement of the federal government, part of the Great Society was this idea of creating these cultural centers around the country.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm.

MAAG: And the only one that was ever established, I think—I know it was in Kansas; it may have been the entire United States—was in Dodge City.

LOOMIS: No kidding!

MAAG: And it was funded by the federal government for about four years. And then the funding was gone. But here we had this building in Dodge and all this material and such, and so [chuckles] decided: Well, why don't we go to the legislature and see if we can get some money? This was in I think my third year in the legislature. And so, I went to the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, who now escapes me, but it wasn't Bill Fribley. He was only there two years. But at any rate, we got something in the budget for it, and then Docking vetoed it. And I went to Jim Bibb, who, of course, was God in those days—

LOOMIS: Sure.

MAAG: —on the legislative process. And I said, "Jim, we really, really, really gotta do this." And he said—finally he relented, and we got it in. Well, then it became a matter of keeping it in there year after year—

LOOMIS: Right, right, right.

MAAG: —after year after year. And John [F.] Hayes had a similar pork barrel operation [chuckles] in Hutchinson, in a little park he had out there—

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: —that he wanted to keep, you know. So, John and I kind of matched up with working on our projects. And this went on clear through the [John W.] Carlin years, after I was long gone—

LOOMIS: Yeah. Right, right, right.

MAAG: —from the legislature. But I can remember when Carlin was coming in to give a State of the State address one night, and we were—all [these? 47:27] lobbyists were lined up outside and such, and he saw me, and he says, "It's in there." [Laughter.] And ultimately, to this day, I think they still get a little bit

of money via the historical society. [Laughs.] And the cultural center is still there in Dodge City.

[Chuckles.]

LOOMIS: I'll be darned. Yeah, you know, in a sense, these legacies—you don't know exactly where they got started.

MAAG: Yeah. That's right, yeah, yeah.

LOOMIS: So how did you come about to leave the legislature and start working for Gov. Bennett?

MAAG: Well, I was really at a crossroads in '76. Several legislators had tried to push me into running for speaker, but the fact was, the job was so time demanding that there wasn't any way that I could continue to teach—

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: —and be speaker at the same time, and I couldn't afford to just be speaker, obviously.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: And McGill had talked to Bennett about, you know, "You really need somebody to birddog your legislative program more than you have." He had John Conard and I think even Clyde Hill helped him a little bit—

LOOMIS: Really!

MAAG: —that first year.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm.

MAAG: So, Bennett approached me about this, and I thought, Well, okay, it sounds like a fun deal. My wife wasn't real thrilled about it. She didn't want to leave Dodge City. And we had great friends there.

LOOMIS: Sure.

MAAG: But the decision was: Well, if we're going to stay involved, this is about the only way we can stay involved, so we decided to move to Topeka.

LOOMIS: So, you did legislative—

MAAG: Yeah.

LOOMIS: —liaison?

MAAG: Yeah, yeah, I was his legislative liaison for those two years. Max Bickford, who was the long-term exec[utive officer] of the state Board of Regents, helped me the second year, in the '78 session. But I was pretty much on my own for '77-'78. And that was a terribly difficult time because our margin in the Senate was 21-19.

LOOMIS: Mmm.

MAAG: And for all practical purposes, about four of the Republicans [chuckles] were really voting with the Democrats most of the time. [Chuckles.]

LOOMIS: Right, right, right, right.

MAAG: And to make matters worse, Norman [E.] Gaar was the Majority Leader, —

LOOMIS: Yes, yeah.

MAAG: —and he and Bennett just hated each other.

LOOMIS: Yeah.

MAAG: I mean, well, Gaar hated Bennett. I don't know much about if Bennett really hated Gaar.

LOOMIS: Yeah.

MAAG: But those were—oh, man, those were tough times! Getting stuff through the Senate was really a challenge. And, of course, in the House we had a Democrat House.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: And so, Carlin wasn't about to give us a whole bunch of stuff.

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah.

MAAG: So, when I look back on it, the '78 session, we—I don't know how we did it, but I think we got about 85 percent of our program through the legislature. But it was a challenge.

LOOMIS: But in those days, you actually could sit down and negotiate stuff out, —

MAAG: Oh, yeah.

LOOMIS: —as opposed to today, where there was really no negotiation.

MAAG: No, it was—prisons were the big thing—

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: —in '78, yeah, and we were desperately trying to get prisons someplace. God, it was, like, you had to go to these towns in the middle of night, you know, for fear that somebody would find out we were going to put a prison there. [Chuckles.] And then it was Gaines who figured out, "Hey, this is economic development," you know.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: And so, he came around on our side—

LOOMIS: Yeah.

MAAG: —for the creation of the prison at El Dorado [pronounced dore-A-doe].

LOOMIS: Which took a long time to get that —

MAAG: Oh, yeah.

LOOMIS: How did you—moving over to the governor's office, how did you—did you change—what was your perspective on the legislature? You know, being in the governor's office as opposed to being in the legislature.

MAAG: Well, obviously you got frustrated. [Chuckles.]

LOOMIS: [Laughs.]

MAAG: A lot.

LOOMIS: Yeah.

MAAG: But, you know, having known all these people personally—

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: —made a huge difference, you know.

LOOMIS: Yeah.

MAAG: You knew who you could go to and get some meaningful information or some meaningful help.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: You know, if I'd have walked into that liaison job without knowing legislators, it would have been impossible.

LOOMIS: Yeah, sure.

MAAG: But having known these people pretty well made a huge difference. And particularly in the Senate, you really had to kind of work around Gaar if you were going to get anything done. [Ross O.]

Doyen, you know, did the best he could as president to keep things together, —

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: —but, boy, it was tough because you had young John Simpson from Salina, who tended to vote with the Democrats a lot. Paul Hess did.

LOOMIS: Yeah.

MAAG: And John—what's his name? —from down in Independence. Oh, God, he was tough. He was tough. Hardly ever could get him to vote.

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah.

MAAG: So, it was a challenge.

LOOMIS: Yeah. So, Bennett is now, I'd have to say, unexpectedly defeated— in 1978. So, what are the dynamics—of your career at that point?

MAAG: Well, it was not just my career, it was my wife's career. She was Mrs. Bennett's secretary.

LOOMIS: Ah! I didn't know that.

MAAG: So, you know, we were faced with a double whammy here.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm.

MAAG: And so, I had to kind of stop and think, you know: Where do we go from this day forward? Several things began to open up. An opportunity to go to Washington, and then several of the special interest groups were interested. And Jack Brier had gotten elected secretary of state in '78, and Jack and I have been good friends for quite some time. And he talked to me about being assistant secretary of state, and so I decided at the time that I wasn't real interested in going to Washington because of having a young family, and so I decided, Well, I think I'm gonna bide my time and see what comes along, and so I told Jack—I says, "I'll do this for a couple of years, and we'll see where we're at."

LOOMIS: Mm-hm.

MAAG: Well, and then, you know, as the old saying goes, God looks out for drunks, fools and—me.

LOOMIS: [Laughs.]

MAAG: And it was just at a time when the leadership of the Kansas Bankers Association was changing.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: Carl Bowman was retiring, and they were going to move Harold [Stones] into the top spot. Harold came to me in the spring of 1980, asked me if I'd come over there. Of course, that proved to be the best move of my life.

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah.

MAAG: [Chuckles.]

LOOMIS: Yeah.

MAAG: And then, ironically, it wasn't—oh, gosh, I hadn't been with the KBA more than six—no, not even six months—three months, I suppose, and I get a call from Nancy [L.] Kassebaum one Sunday morning [chuckles], wanting me to come to Washington. That was tough. I mean, you know, —

LOOMIS: Yeah.

MAAG: —I have such great respect for her.

LOOMIS: Yeah, absolutely, absolutely.

MAAG: But with the family, you know—if it was just me, I'd have gone in a New York minute.

LOOMIS: Uh-huh.

MAAG: But it was just not reasonable to take a young family back there.

LOOMIS: Yeah. And, you know, schools—you know, everything.

MAAG: Yeah.

LOOMIS: So now you're working for the bankers. Again, what's your perspective on the legislature from that perch?

MAAG: Oh, it's totally different. I don't know. There aren't very many people who have been through all four phases of state government, having been a legislator, a governor's liaison and administrator—

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: —for the secretary of state and then come back as a lobbyist. And I always told people it was kind of like the old adage that a guy moves from Missouri to Arkansas to Mississippi to Alabama, and he goes to Hell, and is asked, "How did you like it?" He says, "Well, the change was so gradual," —

LOOMIS: [Laughs.]

MAAG: So, it was kind of the way it was with my career path. But the big difference, of course, is you've got no means of retaliation as a lobbyist versus a legislator.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: If you're a legislator, you've always got that hammer, but as a lobbyist you don't.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: And you simply have to adjust to the fact that no matter how good or how bad these people are, they were all winners.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: They were all winners, and none of them came into second place.

LOOMIS: Yeah.

MAAG: And so, you've got to respect that. And, boy, at times it was extremely difficult to make that kind of adjustment but that really just has to be done.

LOOMIS: One of the things in political science we talk about sometimes with interest groups is that they often look within the legislature for something called a champion, —

MAAG: Mm-hm.

LOOMIS: —someone to carry their water.

MAAG: Oh, yeah.

LOOMIS: I don't say that in a negative way.

MAAG: No, right, right.

LOOMIS: So, you know, what would be a good—do you have a couple of people, you know, who really got what you were doing and could help you out?

MAAG: To start with, we had several people who were bankers—

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: —in their real life, you know, so that helped.

LOOMIS: [Chuckles.] Yeah.

MAAG: Because they understood the technology of the issue. And then you had other people who just had that ability to express and debate the essence of the issue, and that was so, so, so key. So, you did. You had some go-to people that you always went to first, and if they said, “Well, no, I’m not gonna do that,”—

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: —then you had to kind of go back to your second level and see what you could find. Sometimes you had to work around it because sometimes the power structure were not the people who understood the issue the best or really were even supporting you on it.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: You know, the multi-bank holding companies was a classic example, —

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: —because [John Michael] “Mike” Hayden was—he was vehemently opposed to it as speaker.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: And so, we had to kind of work around it. And I’ll never forget, when that bill came up on the floor of the Senate—and, I mean, this was big—I mean [chuckles], seemingly our entire industry’s future was resting on this issue.

LOOMIS: Right, right, right, right.

MAAG: And the day that we were going to debate it on the Senate floor, Merrill Wertz, from Junction City, who was a banker, who had been a banker and who understood the issue well, got sick. And we were faced with the dilemma of: Do we put it off? Everybody’s primed. Everybody was on the edge of their seat. Or are we just going to go ahead with it? And we said, “Let’s go, but who’s gonna carry the bill under the circumstances?” So, we went to [Robert] “Bob” Frey from Seward County, from Liberal., who wasn’t on the committee but who understood the issue, and Bob smoothed his way through the debate. [Chuckles.] It was unbelievable. Of course, being an attorney, he knew how to do those sorts of things.

LOOMIS: Right, right, right.

MAAG: And we got it through the Senate. And then, of course, in the House it was one of the classic debates on a call of the House until they went over and got [Michael J.] “Mike” Peterson from

Wyandotte County to come in and cast the deciding vote. [Chuckles.] But here again, you got to give Gov. Carlin credit. I mean, he put his neck on the line to get the legislation passed. He really did.

LOOMIS: Yeah. Was that—we always talk about parties, but was that—did that break down somewhat of a rural-urban [divide? 1:00:24]?

MAAG: Yeah. It was not a Democrat-Republican issue at all. It was really urban-rural, and with the rural guys not wanting to have the creation of multi-bank holding companies. So, yeah, that was a real challenge, a real challenge.

LOOMIS: Yeah. As a lobbyist, did you often find yourself trying to find allies with other groups?

MAAG: Oh, yeah, yeah. Yeah, and not only find allies but to find out who your enemy was going to be on issues. Yeah, you had some pretty hard words sometimes with other special interest groups about why were they opposing this or why wouldn't they support this—

LOOMIS: Yeah.

MAAG: —and such. Yeah, sometimes that was a bigger battle in dealing with legislators, was dealing with the other special interest groups.

LOOMIS: Sure.

So, I know we've talked a little bit about this, but, say, maybe between when you arrived in the late '60s to maybe—first off, maybe, like, the late '80s—

MAAG: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

LOOMIS: Can you reflect back on how the legislature changed in those twenty years?

MAAG: Yeah. A big difference, of course, the number of women.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm.

MAAG: We had two in 1969, one in the House, one in the Senate. By the end of the '70s we had 30 percent in the House and Senate were women, so that's really the big difference

Another big difference—

LOOMIS: How did that change the nature of the body, do you think?

MAAG: Boy, I don't know how you say this without sounding sexist, but to a certain extent, the amount of communication dropped because you didn't—women weren't going to go out and bounce around the bar scene in the evenings, so there wasn't as much interaction as we had had originally. On the other hand, I think women forced the male members of the legislature to pay much closer attention to the details of the issues.

LOOMIS: Hmm.

MAAG: I think women just generally are much better at doing detail work on legislation than men are, so it was good from that standpoint.

But the other thing is the diminishing number of attorneys in the process. And it goes back, I think, to 1) that issue about voting—

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: —and 2) the amount of campaign time it takes today to get elected compared to what it was forty years ago. You know, when I first started, if you spoke at the Rotary Club or the Lions Club or whatever it was and handed out cards at the county fair and that, you pretty well did your campaign. Today, if you don't go door to door at least twice, your chances are nil of getting elected.

LOOMIS: Did you ever have a tough campaign after the first one?

MAAG: Oh, yeah. Yeah, I had a really tough campaign for—well, two, actually: in '70 and '72. The '70 campaign was over property taxes.

LOOMIS: Was it the primary or the general?

MAAG: General, general, general. Property taxes, and in '72 was kind of a property tax issue. In those days—that was before you [unintelligible; 1:04:06] appraisal for rural property and such, and so there was a lot of contention in the rural areas about that. So those were tough races. And, like I said, there is pretty high Democrat registration.

LOOMIS: Oh, right, right. You actually had a competitive races as opposed to some other Republicans—

MAAG: Right, right.

LOOMIS: —who might not. Yeah.

MAAG: So, yeah, those were pretty tough races.

LOOMIS: So, you continue to view the legislature. You've been close to it—you know, my break point is kind of '88-'89 period, when I was here writing a book about it, and I could see many—but you continue to be a close observer of the legislature. Could you imagine being a state legislator today?

MAAG: No, no, I don't think so. I mean, from the standpoint of if I had to go out and campaign to get elected, I—no way, no way. If someone wanted to appoint me to the state Senate—but that's another matter.

LOOMIS: Yeah. I mean, a substantial number of people get here by appointment.

MAAG: That's right. Yeah, [William W.] "Bill" Bunten—you know, he wound up his career as a state senator after being in the House for decades.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: But, yeah, that would be the only way I'd be interested in doing it, for sure.

LOOMIS: What about the nature of the legislature today?

MAAG: Yeah. I think the thing you have to give today's legislature credit for—I think they do pay much better attention to the issues than we did. I think we tended to—if So-and-so was in favor of it, we were in favor of it, —

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: —you know, and so you didn't worry too much about what was the details. Today, I think legislators pay—and a lot of that is due to the technology involved.

LOOMIS: Sure.

MAAG: They've got access to so much more information than we ever had.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: So that's a big difference. But I think some of these social issues have, you know, polarized the legislature so much, I don't know how you get back to the other way.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: I was thinking—you know, [David J.] Heinemann took ten million photographs of the legislature, —

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: —and at the Special Olympics shrimp deal we have every year—for many years, we had—I did what was called News Bleak, which was a takeoff on the newscasts, and we used David's photographs, and we made fun of legislators.

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah.

MAAG: And I would have legislators come up to me after the show and say, "I was so disappointed you didn't have me in there."

LOOMIS: Right, right, right, right.

MAAG: "[next time?] make fun of me." Well, you wouldn't dream of trying to do that today.

LOOMIS: Uh-huh.

MAAG: No way, no way you would do something like that.

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah.

MAAG: So, it's just a different environment.

LOOMIS: Yeah.

MAAG: For sure.

LOOMIS: Is there anything I've really missed here that—you know, particularly back in, you know, in—is there something that was really important in the legislative process or you being a legislator, particularly—you know, particularly, you know, during your term in office that I haven't touched on?

MAAG: No, I think we've hit pretty much the high points. You know, I wouldn't want to leave the impression that people today aren't good legislators because they are good legislators, and I think they work very hard at what they do.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: I guess what disappoints me is that there isn't as much flexibility as there ought to be in the process. And I think maybe we need a little more age in the legislature than we've got today. Not nearly as many life experiences.

LOOMIS: And one of the common themes is that in those days, the people would come—they would have been city commissioners or bank presidents or on the school board and bring those experiences to the legislature, and then maybe only stay for two or three or four terms.

MAAG: Right, right.

LOOMIS: But, you know, it was part of their social responsibility.

MAAG: That's right. That's right. And they wouldn't have run if they'd had to campaign as hard as you have to campaign today.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: You know, they'd say, "Oh, no, I'm too busy. I don't do that sort of thing." So, yeah, it really is different. And, I mean, like, their life experiences were such that this wasn't an end-all part of—

LOOMIS: Sure.

MAAG: You know, if you'd lived through the Battle of the Bulge, a legislative session was a pretty tame—

LOOMIS: Dave made that point very explicitly, about—that part of the camaraderie was—he talked the Depression a little bit, but particularly the fact that we had so many veterans that you know, they really did have shared experiences.

MAAG: Yeah.

LOOMIS: And whether a bill got passed relative to—

MAAG: Yeah, right.

LOOMIS: —you know, going [crosstalk; unintelligible; 1:09:14].

MAAG: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Totally different deal.

LOOMIS: And he talked about—well, he found out that So-and-so was a bombardier?

MAAG: No, [Richard D.] Rogers' [unintelligible; 1:09:26].

MAAG: Most people don't realize that this Bennett is the only governor we ever had who served in two wars. He was in World War II and the Korean War.

LOOMIS: Right. Okay.

MAAG: And you don't think of Bob Bennett as being a warrior, —

LOOMIS: No.

MAAG: [Chuckles.]—by any stretch of the imagination.

LOOMIS: No, no, no.

MAAG: [Chuckles.]

LOOMIS: Not at all. And I remember interviewing Norman Gaar. His office is filled with—

MAAG: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

LOOMIS: —military stuff.

MAAG: Yeah, yeah, absolutely.

LOOMIS: Just—let's finish up with—we're talking about—maybe start with Norman Gaar and maybe a couple of other people, personalities who, you know, thirty years after—have faded a little bit but who were, in their day, you know, extremely important to the process, maybe [Winton A.] "Wint" Winter Sr. I don't know.

MAAG: Yeah, yeah.

LOOMIS: But are there some people like that who come to mind?

MAAG: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Well, WWI [World War I], as we refer to it—Wint was extraordinary. And, I mean, absolutely one of a kind. And, of course, he ultimately wound up as chairman of Senate Ways and Means.

LOOMIS: Right.

MAAG: He was in a very powerful position. And when Mike Hayden was chairman of the House—I guess in those days they still called it Ways and Means—

LOOMIS: Right, right, right.

MAAG: —for many. The Conference Committee meetings were absolute classics, absolute classics, where, you know, Hayden would roar at Winter, and Winter would just chide him, "Now, c'mon Mikey. You know, you can make this change." [Laughs.] It was just pure theater, absolutely pure theater. But in the end, they were really trying to do the right thing, what they truly, truly believed.

And, you know, Jack Steineger—I mean, boy, you think back: Jack had an enormous influence on the process, even from a minority position, as did Harold Herd. And, of course, on the Republican side, nobody in floor debate could outdo Gaar and Bennett. I mean, they were just classics at that sort of thing.

LOOMIS: What happened there?

MAAG: As I recall, it was over funding for Shawnee Mission School District, and when they first came here, they were just like that.

LOOMIS: I read the clips, yeah, yeah.

MAAG: It was over an issue involving Shawnee Mission funding, and I don't remember the details of it, but—

LOOMIS: Right, right, right.

MAAG: And then, of course, Frank Gaines, who was one of a kind. I mean, both a House member and a Senate member.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: My worst nightmare as a House member was Frank came down to oppose me on a bill, you know, and he got into one of his stem-winding speeches. [Laughs.] To which you can't really reply anything.

LOOMIS: Yeah.

MAAG: You say, "Well, thank you, Senator" or Representative.

LOOMIS: Right, right, right, right.

MAAG: But Frank was—and he'd go to the wall for you if he thought your issue, you know, was worthwhile.

LOOMIS: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

MAAG: He was just a great guy.

And then the quiet people, you know, that just went about their work and got it done.

LOOMIS: Yeah, I mean, is there someone like that who—you know, I think—Dave had a couple of candidates—who might not have garnered the press but who were absolutely crucial to the process.

MAAG: Mm-hm. Oh, absolutely. Don Crumbaker is I think a classic example when it came to education issues, because Don was so calm. I mean, if you got him in a private conversation, he could get cranked up, but on the floor, he was—you know, he was the voice of reason in all those education conference committees. I mean, my gosh.

And [Patrick] "Pat" Hurley. Pat was one of the best legislators at reasoning out issues that I was ever around. He was really, really good.

LOOMIS: Now, I've been in a kind of group with Pat, although he hasn't been around much recently, but I could see that he—yeah, he's very calm, very reasonable—

MAAG: Mm-hm. Yeah.

LOOMIS: —and tough as nails, too.

MAAG: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah, he was hard to deal with. You know, you think about women involved, and, you know, Rochelle Chronister comes to mind.

LOOMIS: Right, right.

MAAG: In her heyday, Janet [sic; Janis]—

LOOMIS: Lee.

MAAG: —Lee was—on the Senate side. And, you know, there have been some awfully good ones over the years. Sheila [S.] Frahm was good.

LOOMIS: Yeah.

MAAG: —in her role as majority leader the brief time that she was.

LOOMIS: In some sense, I think that Bill Graves did her no favors—

MAAG: That's right. Oh, oh, yeah.

LOOMIS: —by selecting her.

MAAG: Yeah, looking back on it, I think Bill would probably make a different decision than he did—

LOOMIS: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MAAG: —at that point.

LOOMIS: Well, this has been really useful. It's just the kind of thing that we'd hoped for.

MAAG: Well, you know, I'm so glad you guys are doing this because it needs to be recorded. You hate to lose the—

LOOMIS: Yeah, and—you know, John Conard, Ross Doyen, Bob Talkington [are no longer living]...

MAAG: I know, yeah.

LOOMIS: And so, we're moving now [to begin collecting the oral histories].

[End of interview.]