

Interviewee: Sen. Robert Graham
Interviewer: Dr. Sam Proctor
May 3, 1991
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P: We are still on the plans for the campaign, and the question that I am asking you now is who were your advisors, the people that were running the thing, perhaps behind the scene or maybe publicly?

G: Throughout my political career my most extensive and qualitative, best advice has been from my brother Bill. Although Bill has never been candidate for political office, he has great instincts about politics and people. In this particular case, Bill was not particularly optimistic about my chances for running for governor and was candid about that.

P: Why?

G: He looked at the field. I think he may have been reflecting back on some of the disappointment that my father had felt in his failed campaign for governor, and was in part trying to shelter me from going through a similar failed experience. Maybe he felt that where I was from and the kind of reputation that I had gotten was not what would be electable as governor in Florida. For the first several months of the campaign--let us say up until maybe the spring of 1978--while Bill was always supportive and helpful, he was not really that involved. Then the last six months of the campaign, he became very involved and was extremely helpful in fund-raising in general and in fund-raising with

agriculture specifically. Bill was a key factor in the process of selecting a lieutenant governor and specifically in the decision to ask Wayne Mixson to be lieutenant governor.

Bill also had an idea that proved to be very effective. We set up a group of Floridians who were in advertising and public relations, and, on a pro bono basis, they served as our review panel on how the campaign was communicating.

They would critique speeches, television spots, [and] other things that we were doing, including how the work days were being perceived, and [they] gave us some good advice.

[They] caused us to change a few things and to emphasize others that were going well. So Bill was a very central figure.

One of the people who was on that PR group was a public relations and advertising man from Miami named David Pearson. David had a lot to do with the specifics of the work days in terms of how to maximize their impact. Around the state I really appreciated the value of having gone to the University of Florida, because it gave me a source of first contacts in almost every community in Florida. Most of the people who turned out to be my first supporters were people that I had gone to school with at the University of Florida. The Shorstein family [Harry and Jack] in Jacksonville were early, very strong, and effective supporters; in Tampa, [C. Lawrence] Larry Stagg, who I had

gone to school with; also [W.] Crosby Few in St. Petersburg; in Pinellas County, Frank Logan, with whom I had to gone to school; in Polk County, Robin Gibson [Jr.].

P: Were you able to call on fraternity brothers?

G: No. Sigma Nu was a social fraternity which during the 1950s was very large, and had a lot of members who turned out to be influential. They overcame their University of Florida fraternal experiences to do well in life. [laughter] Then [there were] people that I had known as friends and fellow undergraduates.

P: This is an informal kind of a thing. You did not have a formal group of advisors, other than that group of people who reflected on your PR activities?

G: We did not have a lot of committees or other formal structures.

P: That is what I meant. No advisory committee that you went to?

G: Not in the sense that the first of every month we would have a meeting. Frankly, again going back to our desire to keep the campaign as focused on television as possible, and to save as much money [as we could], we did not spend a lot of money in setting up internal meetings, and we did not have a particularly organized structure to the campaign beyond our communications, media, and fund-raising activities.

P: Talking about media, what about newspaper support?

G: That was what I thought [would be] and [did] turn out to be one of our assets. I felt that I had a good relationship with most of the editorial boards in the state, and that they had thought well of my service in the legislature, and that when the campaign got started they would be a source of support and would surprise people. That is, when I got the endorsement of the newspaper, it would have more than just the normal impact, because it would not only be whatever benefit of having the Orlando Sentinel endorse your candidacy, but also the surprise of having it endorse your candidacy. In the first primary, I probably got half of the newspaper endorsements in the state. Jim Williams got the next largest number, and [Robert L.] Bob Shevin got the next largest after that.

P: What were the major papers supporting you? Miami Herald?

G: No, the Herald did not endorse me. They endorsed Bob Shevin. In fact, I remember [laughter] I was on a work day at a Publix supermarket as a bagboy in South Miami on a Saturday. I had worked throughout the day, and it was now early evening, maybe seven o'clock at night, when the first edition of the Sunday morning Herald came out. I thought that might be the day that they would print the endorsement, and so I was anxious to get the paper. When I read that they had endorsed Bob, I almost dropped whoever's bag of groceries I was carrying. [laughter] But I got the endorsement of the St. Petersburg Times. I think we got

[the] Orlando [Sentinel]. We got a lot of the New York Times [regional] papers. We got the Pensacola paper. I believe [we] also [got] the Fort Myers paper.

P: Jacksonville?

G: I think Jacksonville endorsed Hans Tanzler. Because the field was so big, there was still, more so than today, a sense of parochialism. That is, people would be lined up as "the Jacksonville candidate" or as "the Tampa Bay candidate" or whatever it was, so there was some endorsement that was of a geographic base. And I benefited by some of that. I got the Miami News endorsement. I know that.

But one of the things I believe in life is that you are well advised to concentrate on doing a good job in your current responsibilities and spend a minimum amount of time fantasizing about what you would like to do in the future, because your ability to have a future is going to be largely determined by the assessment people give to your current activities. And if you have not performed well, you are not likely to have much of a future. I had a feeling that my good performance in the legislature was going to pay off with the newspaper endorsements, as well as with some of the groups, particularly education and environmental groups with whom I had had a longtime association.

Toward the end of my legislative career, I had a piece of bad luck that turned out to be good luck. Dempsey Barron became the president of the state senate, and he was, to put

it mildly, not "simpático" with some of the newer, more reformist members of the state senate, including myself. We were all relegated to what was called the "dog house," and became the "dog house Democrats" of the state senate. Part of that was that I was taken off the committees that I had been most active in, in environment and education, and put on what was supposed to be the "Siberia" committee, which was the HRS committee. [This committee] had jurisdiction over social service programs. As it turned out, it was a very good move for me because I had probably learned as much about education and the environment as I was going to learn in the legislature, and that gave me a chance to spend a year or two learning about another important area of state government, the social service health areas, and building up a relationship with some of the constituency groups interested in those fields. They became another source of political support once we got into the governor's race.

P: Were you on Dempsey Barron's list as an individual, or was it because it you were part of this young crowd coming in? What was the antipathy between you and Barron?

G: Well, there were several issues that were the firestorm, one of which was [that] Governor [Reubin] Askew [1971-1979] had nominated a man by the name of O. J. Keller to be secretary of our department of HRS. Keller had some very progressive ideas, particularly as it related to youth programs and juvenile delinquency. Barron was much more the old school

on that and was antagonistic towards Keller. He drew the line on the confirmation vote on Keller. I supported Askew and Keller; Barron opposed it. It became a very bitter issue.

P: So that is what put you in the dog house?

G: If you had to point to one thing. Also, Barron was not very supportive of education. Particularly, he did not believe in spending much money on education. I had become a principal legislative spokesman for education, so during the budget process we had a number of run-ins over the level of support for both public schools and our community colleges and universities.

P: Did that antagonism continue after you became governor?

G: To some degree. Barron, I think, always thought that he should have been governor, and I believe [he] really had convinced himself that all he had to do was just announce and there would have been a groundswell of support that would have swept him into office. A highly unrealistic [notion].

P: Very unrealistic!

G: But it was his view, in any event, and there was some antagonism based on the sense that he should be where I was. Also, one of the low points of the 1978 campaign--well, two of the low points--involved Dempsey. Both of them were during the run-off with Bob Shevin. Dempsey and W. D. Childers, who was and is a state senator from Pensacola, did

a half-hour television program which, to the casual viewer, looked as if it were a Sunday morning, out-of-Washington series discussing political issues. But actually it was a political commercial paid for by the Shevin campaign, and it was a real hatchet job on my service in the state senate. They only ran that in the area from Tallahassee to Pensacola, and it had a very heavy parochial "Bob Graham cannot be trusted by people from northwest Florida" type of twist to it. As it turned out, I think it was so extreme that it probably at least had no effect and may have even have had a positive effect [on my campaign].

Another thing that happened which did have a positive effect was [that] Bob Shevin's press secretary had gotten into a dispute with the political writer for the Miami News, whose name I cannot recall. The result of that was that they refused to allow him to ride on the press plane that accompanied Shevin during the last days of the campaign. There was a rally held in northwest Florida on the two nights before the run-off election. Bob and the people traveling with him got there at the time the rally was starting. Because the Miami News reporter had been kicked off the plane and had to make his own travel arrangements, he was the only one who got to the rally early. So he was the only one who reported on a speech that Dempsey had given in which Dempsey had said, "Vote for Bob Shevin, because if you vote for Bob Graham, he will call the Washington Post

every morning to get his instructions as to how to function as governor, because he will be the captive dominion of this ultra-liberal newspaper." Well, the Miami News was the only paper in the state that carried that story, and it came out the day before the run-off election.

On that day, Channel Seven, which was the NBC affiliate in Miami, had assigned a TV crew to cover both Bob and myself, since for the first time there were two candidates from Dade County in the run-off for governor. On that day both Bob and I had been invited to appear on a radio talk show. I was on from ten to eleven [o'clock], and Bob was on from eleven to twelve [o'clock]. At the five-minute break after my segment and before his, I was standing in the lobby of the radio station, with the television cameras poised to record anything that happened. One of my campaign people came up and said, "Bob, you ought to see this story." There was the Miami News that had just come off the press, and it had this story about the Washington Post and what Dempsey Barron had said. It went on and talked about some of the things that Shevin had said once he arrived at the rally, which seemed to reinforce what Barron had said. So I am reading this thing and I am getting more agitated, and Bob walks up. As he was standing there, . . .

P: With the TV cameras going.

G: Two sets of cameras--his and mine. I said: "Bob, you know this is not true. How do you associate yourself with this?"

At which point Bob reached and grabbed the paper and ripped it, literally. Then he realized that all this was being recorded. Well, the program that appeared on the six o'clock news that night in Miami led with this confrontation in the radio station and Bob tearing up the newspaper, which is not the imprint you want to put on people's minds as they are getting ready to go to vote the next day. So the Dempsey Barron relationship had some pluses and had some minuses.

P: On a one-to-one basis, did you get along with Dempsey?

G: Yes, Dempsey and I did and, to this day, get along well personally. He is a very engaging person. He is a folksy, storyteller kind of person, that if you wanted to spend an evening just in a conversation, would be very [entertaining].

P: But he is not the kind to take home to Mother.

G: Dempsey is a complex person. He comes out of a very poor background and worked himself up from those circumstances. He had a strange mixture of appreciation for the people who had come from a disadvantaged background.

P: Kind of like a Populist, from that point of view.

G: Yes, some degree of a Populist, but also he had been co-opted by both the perquisites of office and some of the affluence of a better life and had a degree of hardening attitude. For instance, I would try to convince him that we ought to be doing more for our schools because [his success

was partly due to] the fact that there was a university in Tallahassee, and he was one of the first male students to attend FSU after it went coed and then went to the University of Florida law school. It was that that had made it possible for him to achieve what he had done and that we ought to assure that future generations of Floridians had the same opportunity. But he was not very moved by that.

P: You could not convince him of that. We are getting toward the end of this, but before we leave this, there is another big area I want to ask you about.

G: Incidentally, Dempsey would be a good person to be interviewed.

P: I am not sure he would be willing to, though.

G: Well, I would be glad to talk to Dempsey and encourage him to do it. I think he is at a point of life [where he might be willing to comply.] Apparently he is not in good health. I heard that when I was in Panama City this past weekend. But this might be something that he would be interested in doing.

P: I wonder how candid he would be on all of this.

G: Probably about as candid as any of us politicians.
[laughter]

P: One other big area I want to get into before we [break for lunch]--it is five minutes to twelve now--is the money. How much did this campaign cost, and where did the money come from?

G: The campaign cost in total about \$3 million. We spent about \$1.2 million in the first primary, probably about \$600,000 plus in the run-off, and the balance in the general election. We will get to the general election later.

P: Yes, we have not talked about that yet.

G: Of that, I put in the first \$750,000.

P: This is your own money?

G: My own money. As a Scot, it was a tough thing to do, but every month I would put in between \$25,000 and \$50,000. I had sold some of my company stock, and that was what I was using. It was not until about the late spring of 1978 that our candidacy got enough attention and was considered to be sufficiently hopeful that we started to generate much support. So of the first \$1.2 million, \$750,000 was my money, which would mean that about \$450,000 was what we raised.

P: Was Bill putting in anything?

G: Bill put in the maximum that he could put in, and so did other family members. So probably between what Bill did and what I did and [what] other family members [did] represented \$800,000 to \$900,000 of the first \$1.2 million.

P: A big hunk of it, then, came from your own personal assets.

G: Right. Frankly, if I had not been in a position to do that, I would not have been elected, because we ran some early television [spots]--early being in February and March of 1978--which was very important, again, in getting us known.

We concentrated on the work days as a statement of our seriousness as a candidate and our desire to be a different kind of governor. We would not have been able to do that without my ability to finance it.

P: Were PACs [political action committees] yet part of the political system? Is that a little early?

G: PACs had started, I think, in 1974; at the federal level PACs had been authorized. They were not a significant, or I cannot even remember them being any part, of our 1978 campaign. But Florida, unlike the federal government, allows corporations to contribute, so to some degree PACs are less important in a state election than they have been in federal elections because you have the alternative of corporations contributing. Corporations are precluded from contributing to federal elections.

P: You were very active in environmental issues all the way through. Were any of these organizations, the Sierra Club and the Florida Wildlife Association, putting money into the pot?

G: No. Most of those organizations are not political. In fact, they are--I do not know the correct number of the internal revenue code--non-profit corporations that can receive tax-deductible contributions and therefore are precluded from participation in partisan politics, and very zealously guard against that.

P: But they must have given you a lot of leg work and dedication.

G: We had many individual members, people whom I had met through various environmental activities. For instance, to mention some names, Fran Pignone in Orlando had been very active in the League of Women Voters and especially active in environmental and children's issues. She and her husband, Frank Pignone, became some of our strongest supporters in central Florida. John DeGrove, who was a professor at Florida Atlantic University, whom I had first met when he was a young professor at the University of Florida when I was an undergraduate, and who was very active in environmental issues during the Askew administration, was another one of our strong supporters within the university communities of the state, and particularly in Palm Beach County.

P: I want to end this with one other thing, and this may be too much for us to talk about in the little time we have now. I want to find out how you zeroed in on Wayne Mixson [as your running mate], what that meant to you.

G: There were a series of decisions which culminated in asking Wayne to serve as lieutenant governor. The first was the decision as to when to pursue the issue of lieutenant governor. Most gubernatorial candidates have not made their decision on lieutenant governor until close to the filing date. I guess that is based on the premise to keep your

options open as long as possible. I think that is a false theory. The conclusion we reached was to try to make that decision substantially earlier in the campaign so that that is one less decision that you have to make under a pressure circumstance. You can spend the time to do good background checks. Third, once you have your lieutenant governor candidate on board, that is another person that can go out and do all the things that you do in a political campaign. So we made the decision that we wanted to have a lieutenant governor selected prior to the 1978 legislative session. We solicited from our friends and supporters around the state the names of who they thought we should consider. It was our feeling that the first test ought to be: "Was this person of gubernatorial status?" That is, was the person capable of being governor, and would he or she be perceived as being of gubernatorial status? Second was, what would the person contribute to our being elected as governor? We felt that we needed somebody who could appeal to the northern part of the state and to agriculture specifically. So Wayne Mixson was an immediate, top-of-the-list person because of his background in Florida agriculture, having been chair of the house agriculture committee. He had been active in the Farm Bureau. He was from Jackson County.

P: Had you known or worked with him before?

G: Oh, yes. We went to the legislature together. We had served for better than ten years in the legislature

together. [My wife] Adele and [Wayne's wife] Margie Mixson had a good relationship. So I was very comfortable with Wayne. We did some background checks, and there was no information that surfaced that indicated that there was any problem or any unknowns.

P: Did he meet the first criteria of somebody who seemed to be of gubernatorial caliber?

G: Yes, and he not only had that ability, but would be perceived by other people in politics and by the press as being of gubernatorial status.

P: Of course, lieutenant governors are always so submerged to the governor that you hardly think about them, and as you would perceive Wayne Mixson now, you would say, "I would not have voted for him to be governor."

G: But I think, here is a fellow who was a graduate of Columbia University and the University of Florida. [He was] well educated [and] had been successful in everything that he had done in life. [He was] a mature man [who] came from a good family [and] had a good record in the legislature. I think he was a very excellent choice for lieutenant governor.

P: Was he perceived, however, as somebody that you needed, because you came from south Florida--Dade County, big-city boy? Is that where they got the "Graham cracker" designation?

G: Well, the Graham cracker was something that had pre-dated Wayne. It really came from the fact that the name Graham is

a hard name for a person whose first language is Spanish to pronounce. If you show a person who is a Spanish speaker the letters g r a h a m, that person will have a difficult time verbalizing it. So in an attempt, when I was introducing myself to the large Hispanic population, particularly of south Florida, to get them to understand who I was, I would say, "My name is Bob Graham, that is, Graham like the graham cracker." They would say, "Oh!" That sort of turned lights on.

P: I am glad you are giving that explanation. I have never heard that before.

G: So our symbol became a small graham cracker. We gave out a few thousand during the course of the campaign.

P: So that pre-dates Mixson.

G: Right.

P: I see.

G: In March of 1978 at a motel in Tampa near the Tampa airport, we met with Wayne and Margie and talked about this possibility and discussed what kind of role he would have in the campaign and in the administration. After a period of his thinking about it, he agreed to do it, and we made the announcement.

P: Was he a force in the campaign?

G: [He was] a very important force in the campaign. We did extremely well across north Florida, and I think his being on the ticket was a significant part of that. The very

first newspaper that endorsed our candidacy was the Jackson County Floridan. That was in large part out of their respect for Wayne.

P: All right. Let us talk about the first primary now, unless there is something else you think we ought to say on the tape before we get to the actual voting.

G: The first primary was, from a personal standpoint, one of the most enjoyable periods of my life. Generally in politics, there is a certain degree of tension and anxiety which starts within the candidate and then flows out and affects the rest of the campaign. I was having such a good time. I cannot think of a period in my life in which I was so personally enjoying myself as the period of the first primary. I was totally relaxed. I had a sense that we were doing the right things and a certain fatalistic confidence that if you did the right things they would generally turn out successfully, but if they did not turn out successfully, you still had found that to be a rewarding part of your life. So I was relaxed, [and] I was enjoying myself. The work days were just becoming an experience that [were such that] when I finished one, I was looking forward to getting started with the next one. Instead of the campaign's being repetitious and tedious, as some of the other candidates were complaining about, my campaign was diverse, colorful, eclectic, [and] a tremendous amount of personal fun.

P: Where was the family in all of this?

G: Adele became increasingly involved in the campaign. Adele had not had much experience, particularly with speaking to groups of strangers, and was ill at ease about that early in the campaign. But as she gained more experience, she relaxed and became extremely effective. Our girls were getting excited about the campaign. They were involved to the degree that they could be involved. For instance, when we would have a parade, they would walk with me and hand out graham crackers to the crowds. We tried to make it as much of a family-involved activity as possible. Out of necessity, there were many periods of time when I was away from the family. The night of the election our youngest daughter, Kendall, told her mother, "Mama, I am glad this is over, because Daddy will come home now." So I know that they had a sense that they had lost their father for a while.

But my recollection of the first primary is of a very happy time of my life and a time in which I had a sense of being at peace with whatever the result was going to be.

P: Talk about your opponents now, starting with [Robert] Shevin.

G: Bob had gone to the [Florida] legislature two years before I did. He was elected in 1964, I think, and I was elected in 1966. We both represented Dade County. We both had a close relationship in the legislature. I supported Bob when he ran for attorney general in 1970.

P: So you were both good friends, strong friends?

G: Yes. And I will say that one of the things that I have had a special gratification in is the fact that all of the people that have been political opponents, including Bob, Jack Eckerd [Florida businessman; 1970 and 1978 candidate for governor], Paula Hawkins [U.S. senator, 1981-1987], and [Louis A.] "Skip" Bafalis [Florida senator and U.S. congressman] have today become friends [of mine], and, in the case of Bob Shevin, a close friend. Bob and I had graduated from the same high school. Bob is two or three years older than I. Early in the campaign, he had a very strong position politically in Dade County. Most of the organized groups such as the condominium groups, organized labor, the Hispanic groups, [and] the education group that represented the teachers in Dade County, all were supporting Bob.

P: Obviously the Jewish groups [as well].

G: The Jewish groups. And all of those would have been my front-line supporters but for Bob. Political analysts thought that the effect of that was going to be that Bob would get such a big share of the vote in Dade County that there would not be enough left for me to add whatever votes I could get elsewhere to have much of a chance of making the run-off. Bob had been running for governor for at least four years and, I think, had a sense of the inevitability of his success. He was a very intense candidate, and in some

ways, I think that intensity turned out to be a liability, because on television, which is where you communicate with people in Florida, you want to come across as somebody who has a softness or at least a sense of humor and a pleasantness quotient that people will like. Bob, who is on a one-on-one basis a very agreeable person, did not project that on television.

P: Who is Jim Glisson?

G: His [Shevin's] lieutenant governor [candidate] was Jim Glisson. Jim was in the state senate from Lake County. He was a chiropractor by profession. He had been active in some issues such as mobile home park residents' rights, there being a lot of mobile home park residents in Lake County. Jim was an example of what I was saying earlier: a decision that was made very close to the qualifying date. Had Bob been able to spend six months doing a careful analysis, Jim may have been the person that he would have selected as his running mate, but I think, in part, it was a decision driven by the lateness of the calendar and the need to get that behind him.

P: Are you saying, then, that he would have been better off with somebody who had stronger agriculture ties, or something like that?

G: I think he might have been better off if he had focused on a [different part of the state]. Probably central Florida was

not a bad place for him to select him from, but there may have been some other options for Bob.

Maybe the third candidate in terms of early-on feelings of strength would have been Bruce Smathers. Bruce was the son of [U.S. Senator] George Smathers [and] had been secretary of state since 1974. He made his decision to run for governor somewhat later. I think that up until probably the winter of 1977-1978 he was thinking more about running for re-election as secretary of state and then running against [U.S. Senator Richard] "Dick" Stone for senator, because he expressed to me several times that he was more interested in following his father's footsteps in the [U.S.] Senate than he was in being governor. But for whatever reason, he decided in the winter of 1977-1978 to run for governor. That late decision set a pattern of tardy decisions which took a toll. Probably the most significant was he did not select the person to do his television [spots] until almost the week that he needed to have the television ads cut. Therefore, there was not the opportunity as I had had in all those meetings back in the Ionosphere Lounge with Bob Squire to develop a chemistry and a rapport. My sense is that [the relationship between] a political candidate and your television producer is almost like [that of] an actor and your director. You need to understand each other so that when the director is asking you to present an idea in a certain way, you will understand what it is he wants and be

able to deliver it in a televised form. Bruce never developed that rapport, and his television was awful. In fact, I understand that a lot of money was spent producing television ads that never got on the air because they were considered to be so inferior.

As his campaign sort of wandered around, Bruce was not able to raise the money that was necessary to be competitive. So if he started off third in the field, he began to fade once you got into [the heart of the campaign].

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P: You said he began to fade pretty quickly there, because he did not have a plan, and his TV spots were so bad.

G: Yes.

P: But you said Gary Smith, in your case, did have, that he was a well-organized person.

G: So that everybody, including the candidate, had a sense that you not only knew what you were going to do, but why you were doing it and what it would contribute towards the ultimate success of the campaign.

The next candidate after Shevin and Smathers would have been Jim Williams. Jim had been selected by Reubin Askew as his lieutenant governor in 1974.

P: He followed Tom Adams?

G: Yes. Tom Adams had been Reubin's lieutenant governor in his first term [1971-1975]. They had a falling out to the point that Tom Adams ran against Reubin in the Democratic primary in 1974, thus opening up the position of secretary of state, for which Bruce Smathers ran, and opening up the position of lieutenant governor, for which Jim Williams was selected. In fact, Reubin had interviewed several people for the position of lieutenant governor, including myself at one time, as a possible running mate in 1974. Had Reubin asked me to run for lieutenant governor with him in 1974, I would have accepted. In retrospect, it was a good thing that he

did not ask me, because I would not have been able to run the kind of campaign that I did had I been lieutenant governor. That is just another example of where something that happens that may be a disappointment at the time turns out to be a longer-term benefit.

P: Williams was from Ocala?

G: Yes, Jim was from Ocala. Jim had come to the legislature later in life than most members of the legislature. I think he was probably in his mid- to late fifties when he came to the legislature. He had had a very successful career in agriculture and in rock mining. He had gone to the University of Florida as an adult, when he was in his forties, and was a very serious, able man. I would say of the several hundred persons who served in the state legislature during the twenty years that I was a legislator or governor [that] he would be in the very top ranks in terms of ability as a legislator.

Jim's principal drawback was [that] he was maybe too conscientious and too serious. As a candidate he came across as being not aloof, by any means, because he was a very down-to-earth person, but it was not easy for him to meet and be comfortable with the diversity of individuals and circumstances that a gubernatorial candidate in a state like Florida necessitates.

P: I knew him because he was the chairman of the [Florida] Bicentennial Commission, and he was almost academic, if that

is a way of describing him. [He was] quiet and reserved, but able.

G: Yes.

P: Is he still living, by the way?

G: Yes, he is, and I think he is in Ocala. He had lived in Washington for a while after he left the lieutenant governor's position. He was a lobbyist for one of the stone and aggregate associations in Washington. During the Carter administration he was an assistant secretary of agriculture for a period. Then he went into his association role, and then he came back to Ocala. We felt that Jim was likely to be our principal challenger as to who was going to get in the run-off with Shevin. We conceded the fact that Bob was going to be in the run-off, and we thought Jim was likely to be our major opponent. And I think Jim selected an excellent lieutenant governor, too, in Betty Castor. On the Democratic side she was the only woman running for either governor or lieutenant governor. [She is] a very able person with a strong base in the Tampa Bay area, which was going to be a critical field, because there was no gubernatorial candidate per se from the Tampa Bay area.

P: His quiet personality, though, operated against him.

G: Against him. In addition to being lieutenant governor, Jim was also secretary of the Department of Administration, which at that time had responsibility for the state's planning, budgeting, personnel, and retirement, and he took

his responsibilities very seriously. I think he was never able to disengage enough from his responsibilities in office to be as effective a candidate for the governor's office as he could have been.

P: Maybe there just was not enough fire in the belly to drive him. And then [can you tell me about] Hans Tanzler [Jr.]?

G: Hans was the surprising candidate, and in the final analysis he ended up being the third candidate in the first primary. Hans probably would have ranked fourth or fifth in the early ratings.

P: Where did he come from?

G: He came from Jacksonville. He had been mayor of Jacksonville since the early 1970s. He had a credible record as mayor.

P: And was popular?

G: He had been re-elected with a strong vote. He was popular. He was a former basketball player. He was tall and athletic looking, probably physically the most commanding person in the field. He had a base of support among the more fundamentalist churches in the state, and his campaign was, in large part, built on family virtues and values. He was the only candidate of the leading ones who did not have a background in state government, and that hurt him somewhat. There is just a certain amount of basic knowledge of how the education formulas work, what are the principal issues of higher education, what are the environmental questions

likely to be? If you had served in the legislature or in the executive position, you would have been exposed to those, and at least you have a frame of reference in which to respond. There were times when Hans did not appear to be up to speed with the kinds of issues that he would have to deal with as governor. But he was certainly the candidate who was making the biggest strides during the last couple of weeks of the campaign.

Then there were a couple of outside candidates, one of whom was Claude Kirk.

P: Yes. Where did former Republican [Florida] Governor Claude Kirk [1967-1971] come into a Democratic primary?

G: Well, Claude had been a Democrat before he was elected governor. Claude first surfaced in 1964 when he ran as a Republican, having come from Alabama to Florida as a Democrat lawyer/insurance executive.

P: In Jacksonville.

G: In Jacksonville. He changed his registration in order to run against Spessard Holland [Florida governor, 1941-1945] in 1964, whom he accused of being an ultra-liberal, which is a hard label to stick on Spessard Holland. Then in 1966 [Claude Kirk] ran for governor, and got the Republican nomination again, as he had in 1964. In large part, because of the very bitter Democratic primary between the incumbent, Governor Haydon Burns [1965-1967], and Robert King High, the mayor of Miami, which split the Democratic party, Kirk was

elected as the first Republican since Reconstruction. I think history will treat Claude better than his contemporaries, and maybe even better than Claude himself, because I think sometimes Claude . . . It is one thing to have a certain joyous spirit about yourself. I try to do that. I sometimes will sing and do other things, but I do it in a context that I think of myself as being a serious person who has the ability to laugh at himself. You sometimes got the impression that Claude Kirk just thought that he was a laughable figure.

He actually, in my opinion, contributed to some very important things for the state, such as the passage of the new state constitution in 1968, and the reorganization of the executive branch in 1969. But he never could overcome . . .

P: Being a clown.

G: Being the clown. So in 1970 Reubin Askew defeated him. But he [Kirk] changed parties, and so in 1978 he was running again for governor. I remember in our forums we would have, we would sit in alphabetical order, so I would end up as a G sitting next to Kirk as a K, and it was one of the highlights of the campaign just to listen to his comments about the other candidates and about himself. He was a very witty person.

The final candidate, and I am trying to think of his name--I think it was LeRoy Eden.

P: I do not have another name.

G: Well, you missed LeRoy. LeRoy Eden. Again, if you lined up the candidates alphabetically, G was between E and K, so LeRoy sat on the other side of me.

P: LeRoy is not on my list.

G: Well, your list is deficient. [laughter] LeRoy was a real estate man from Miami. He got the idea almost that God had commanded him to be governor of Florida. He had an early experience in a parade for a Florida A & M football game in Miami. He rode in this parade in a convertible, and apparently a lot of people applauded him. LeRoy thought that that was the groundswell of public support. What he did not understand is that the crowd would have applauded for anybody in similar circumstances.

P: It was that convertible! [laughter]

G: LeRoy had a lady who was his campaign manager, and he fell into the same trap of several of the other candidates of not selecting a lieutenant governor until it got to be very close to filing date. He did not have anybody, so he asked his campaign manager to be his lieutenant governor, which she agreed to do.

P: So there were two women in the race, then.

G: Yes. Then about two weeks before the first primary, LeRoy Eden married his campaign manager and lieutenant governor [candidate] and disappeared from the campaign. [laughter]

P: Ben Hill Griffin [Jr.] ran for governor [in 1974].

G: With his wife.

P: With his wife.

G: Ben Hill was a more serious candidate than LeRoy.

P: Well, Ben Hill's platform, he told me, was to get rid of the lieutenant governor's position.

G: Yes.

P: So LeRoy disappeared, and he has disappeared from history.

G: That is right.

P: What was his name again?

G: LeRoy Eden.

P: And where was he from?

G: Miami [Beach].

P: That is probably the only time we are ever going to be able to document him.

G: Yes. So that was the field. In the final returns of the first primary, it was Shevin with 35 percent [and] we had 25 percent. I think Tanzler had about 17 percent; Williams, I believe, was next, and then Smathers and then Kirk and then LeRoy Eden, who fell off your list.

P: Let me, just for the record, put down the exact numbers I have here: 364,732 votes for Shevin; 261,972 for Graham.

G: How many did Tanzler receive?

P: I did not go beyond that--just the two winning candidates. [Tanzler received 124,706 votes. Ed.] So then you went into the second primary. The question is: How were you able to overcome him? He led by more than 100,000 votes.

G: Well, I had not realized it until after we got into the second primary that Florida had had a tradition of candidates who ran second being successful in the run-off. For instance, LeRoy Collins [governor, 1955-1961] had run second to Charley Johns in 1954; in 1970 [Reubin] Askew had run second to Earl Faircloth; and [Lawton] Chiles had run second to Farris Bryant [in 1956]; and they both [Collins and Askew] came on to win. What was different in our case is that in all those, the margin had been much closer. The biggest margin between a first-primary candidate when the second was able to win was 40,000 votes. We had over a 100,000-vote margin, so we had a big mountain to climb. The second primary was unusual in that it was a little longer than most run-offs, for this reason: normally, elections, of course, are on Tuesday. But the Tuesday on which the second primary would have normally fallen was a Jewish holiday. At the legislative session the date had been shifted to Thursday. So instead of there being the normal three weeks, there was three weeks and two days. I do not think that was decisive.

P: That would not have been critical, would it?

G: It would not, but it was helpful to us because we felt that the momentum was on our side, so the longer we had the better it was going to be.

Several things happened quickly after the first primary.

One was that we picked up some critical support from people

who had been in the first primary. Bruce Smathers endorsed our candidacy; Hans Tanzler endorsed our candidacy; a candidate who had been in the race but had dropped out earlier, **Raleigh Green**, a savings and loan executive and former member of the state Board of Regents from St. Petersburg, endorsed our candidacy.

P: Why would Smathers and Tanzler have endorsed you?

G: That requires a degree of immodesty. I think it was a combination that they were supportive of me and they were not supportive of Shevin. To some degree, the first primary had become Shevin versus everybody else, and it was a question of who would be the person other than Shevin who would get into the run-off.

P: So these were not as a result of deals cut or anything?

G: No. As it turned out, we got into the general election, and Tanzler ended up supporting [Jack] Eckerd, the Republican candidate.

The second thing that happened is that there were some newspaper editorials where newspapers had endorsed someone else, other than Shevin or myself, who came and endorsed me in the run-off. I think the Daytona Beach paper may have been one of these. I think the Orlando Sentinel had endorsed Williams in the first primary, and they did a fairly early endorsement.

P: Did you campaign any differently, or did you just do more of the same?

G: Well, our goal was to do one hundred work days by the first primary, and we had done that. We decided that we would continue to do work days but slightly less intensively during the run-off. We did three work days during three weeks of the run-off [campaign]. We did a poll over the weekend after the first primary, and that poll indicated that we had almost closed the gap on Shevin, whereas it had been 25/35 at the first primary. At that point it was about 42/42, with the balance undecided.

P: Where were you picking up support? I presume you already had north Florida and west Florida.

G: We were getting a disproportionate share of the support that Smathers had gotten and Williams had gotten.

P: Do you think they really were able to carry some of their supporters over to you?

G: No, I do not believe that in Florida politics there are very many votes that any person can "deliver." I think psychologically it helped us. It gave us a sense that we were the candidate on the move, as opposed to the candidate who was so far behind that it was a lost cause.

P: I am really wondering, since there were so many groups in south Florida, in Dade County and Broward County--like the condominium group, for instance--which were supporting Shevin. Did they desert him, or did they hold on?

G: No, but Bob got in Dade County almost the same number of votes in the second primary as he got in the first primary.

P: So he did not pick up the rest from around the state.

G: Well, in Dade County, specifically, anybody who had voted for anybody other than Bob and myself in the first primary voted for me in the second primary. You may have these numbers, too, but I do not think that Bob's statewide total in the second primary was much greater than his statewide total in the first primary.

P: Well, he had 364,732 in the first primary and 418,636 in the second. But yours was the dramatic increase, from 261,972 to 482,535.

G: So we almost doubled our total [from the first to the second primaries].

P: So you were separated by about 102,000, but now, as you say, you were almost double that.

G: The second week of the second primary was the critical week. I am certain that Bob's poll people were giving him the same numbers that I [received]. I am a believer in professional polls. What a political candidate ought to want out of a poll is not something that makes them feel good, but something that gives them good information upon which to make good judgments. That is what we were getting out of Cadell. Bob had a good pollster, so the numbers should have been very close to the same.

Clearly, what Bob decided to do at the beginning of the second week was to go on the attack. He had some television ads. The one that I can best remember was one that had

taken the number of bills that I had sponsored in the legislature and put them on like an adding machine tape and was adding up what they would cost. At the bottom it said, "Graham has advocated a big number of additional state spending. We cannot afford Graham for governor."

P: [He was implying that] you were a big spender.

G: Yes, that was the ad, to be the big spender liberal. I mentioned earlier that they had this ad running in west Florida with Barron & W. D. Childers doing what looked like was supposed to be a political discussion piece which was an anti-Graham ad.

Then we had some debates. The first debate took place in Pensacola, at the Tiger Bay Club. Whereas the debates that we had had in the first primary had been very de-personalized and issue-oriented, this was a very confrontational debate. It also had a nasty anti-Semitic aspect. Somebody got up in the audience and made some negative reference to Bob, who was Jewish. Both of us responded that that was an inappropriate issue, but that kind of clouded that. It created a very tainted atmosphere.

P: Would you say that Bob had become an angry candidate during the second primary, and that showed?

G: I do not know if I would use the word angry. I think I would use the word anxious. Here was a man who had devoted a good part of his adult life to achieving this goal, and he

saw it both in sight but also saw it slipping away, and he was asking, "What can I do in order to capture this?"

We then flew from Pensacola to Tampa and had another televised debate that same day.

P: You won the debate, you think, in Pensacola?

G: Oh, no, I think I got my ass beat, and again in Tampa. We did a debate which was taped for later showing. Bob had done a very good job of going over my record and picking issues, like the bills that I had introduced, and making them the basis of labeling me in an unfavorable manner.

P: And you had no way of defending yourself against that.

G: Well, that was a period in my political life which I have tried to avoid repeating. I really was not prepared. I had not anticipated that, and it kind of overwhelmed me.

A couple of days later we had a meeting at a beach house in St. Petersburg that Steve Hull had rented. He was living in this house during the campaign. Steve Hull, Pat Cadell, Bob Squire, Wayne and I were there. We got the latest Cadell poll, and the poll indicated that whereas a few days earlier it had been 42/42, balance undecided, it now indicated that Shevin had gone up to about 44 or 45 and we had dropped down to about 37 or 38. So he had opened up a pretty [good margin as a result of those debates].

P: Do you think this was because of the debates?

G: I think just the general fact that he had been effective on the attack. [He] had been using the television series of

ads that were having an impact. So we realized that we had to do something to respond. That something took two forms. One, we produced a couple of negative ads on Shevin. I cannot remember just precisely what the target of those ads was. We also had had a fellow who had worked with me in the legislature who had been doing some work on Shevin's record, but we had never really used his research very much. Cadell and Squire came up with a plan which was to be launched at the next debate that we were going to have, which was the following Monday. It was going to be for Channel Two in Orlando, but televised or taped out of their studio in Daytona Beach. Their strategy was that we would anticipate that Bob would make a negative attack, and our response was to be disappointed that Bob had chosen to lower the campaign and then answer the attack. Then [we were going] to come back with, "And why did Bob Shevin make such a statement?" and we would pick up one of the things that we had gotten in our research.

When we got to Daytona Beach, I was buoyed because we had just gotten the endorsement in the run-off of the St. Petersburg Times that morning, and they had made some negative comments about the negative campaign of Shevin. The first question that gave us an opportunity to use this strategy had to do with a law enforcement question. Bob made some statement that I was weak on law enforcement. I expressed regrets that he had said that, defended my record,

and then said: "And why would Bob do this? Maybe it is this reason, because on such-and-such a date, as attorney general, Bob Shevin wrote this letter to a circuit judge in Ocala on behalf of a convicted drug dealer, asking that the judge be lenient in sentencing the drug dealer." Well, I think you could just see the expression in Bob's face: (a) that there was a response, and (b) the character of the response, both its specificity and its strength. That one little vignette almost ended the negatives in the campaign. At the end of that debate, we sort of went aside and said: "Look. We are friends, and we do not want to spend the rest of our lives being embittered over what we have done. The people deserve something better than this. Let us agree to a mutual arms treaty on this." So we did.

P: And he agreed?

G: He agreed and I agreed. We did not run any negative

_____.

P: It was upbeat from that point?

G: From that point on it was upbeat, and from that point forward the second primary became as joyful for me as the first primary had been. We had a very upbeat [attitude].

P: He increased somewhat, obviously, in his vote, but you increased so much more rapidly than he did. Yours was from different parts of the state as a result of these various endorsements and the positive campaign that you carried on.

G: Yes. I mentioned earlier that television debate that we had in Jacksonville, which I think was as critical as anything that happened in the race. Bob was very tight and tense and anxious. While he was not negative in the sense that he did not say derogatory things, he maybe came across as almost sullen in his relationship with me.

P: So you had a debate in Pensacola, Tampa, and Jacksonville.

G: Yes. The others [Pensacola and Tampa debates] were for localized audiences. What made the one in Jacksonville so important was [that] it was carried by the big television stations all over the state, so probably a high percentage of the people who ultimately cared enough to vote saw that debate, and that was a significant part of their decision.

P: The second primary vote was 482,535 for Graham, 418,636 for Shevin. [Interview ends]