The David and Barbara Pryor Center
for
Arkansas Oral and Visual History

University of Arkansas
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Arkansas Memories Project

Bob Lamb

Interviewed by Tom W. Dillard

May 29, 2007

Fayetteville, Arkansas

Objective

Oral history is a collection of an individual's memories and opinions. As such, it is subject to the innate fallibility of memory and is susceptible to inaccuracy. All researchers using these interviews should be aware of this reality and are encouraged to seek corroborating documentation when using any oral history interview.

The Pryor Center's objective is to collect audio and video recordings of interviews along with scanned images of family photographs and documents. These donated materials are carefully preserved, catalogued, and deposited in the Special Collections Department, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville. The transcripts, audio files, video highlight clips, and photographs are made available on the Pryor Center website at http://pryorcenter.uark.edu. The Pryor Center recommends that researchers utilize the audio recordings and highlight clips, in addition to the transcripts, to enhance their connection with the interviewee.

Transcript Methodology

The Pryor Center recognizes that we cannot reproduce the spoken word in a written document; however, we strive to produce a transcript that represents the characteristics and unique qualities of the interviewee's speech pattern, style of speech, regional dialect, and personality. For the first twenty minutes of the interview, we attempt to transcribe verbatim all words and utterances that are spoken, such as uhs and ahs, false starts, and repetitions. Some of these elements are omitted after the first twenty minutes to improve readability.

The Pryor Center transcripts are prepared utilizing the *University of Arkansas Style Manual* for proper names, titles, and terms specific to the university. For all other style elements, we refer to the *Pryor Center Style Manual*, which is based primarily on *The Chicago Manual of Style 16th Edition*. We employ the following guidelines for consistency and readability:

- Em dashes separate repeated/false starts and incomplete/ redirected sentences.
- Ellipses indicate the interruption of one speaker by another.
- Italics identify foreign words or terms and words emphasized by the speaker.
- Question marks enclose proper nouns for which we cannot verify the spelling and words that we cannot understand with certainty.

- Brackets enclose
  - italicized annotations of nonverbal sounds, such as laughter, and audible sounds, such as a doorbell ringing;
  - annotations for clarification and identification; and
  - standard English spelling of informal words.
- Commas are used in a conventional manner where possible to aid in readability.

Citation Information

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Tom W. Dillard interviewed Bob Lamb on May 29, 2007, in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

[00:00:00]

Tom W. Dillard: My name is Tom Dillard, and I am interviewing Mr. Bob Lamb today. Today's date is May the twenty-ninth, 2007. We are in the Lamb home in Fayetteville, Arkansas. And, Bob, I'm gonna ask you, if you would, to verbally agree to this interview and to donating this interview to the University of Arkansas Pryor Center.

Bob Lamb: I do.

TD: Very good. Well, we're—we're just gonna jump in, and you feel free to answer these questions—uh—to whatever degree you wish to. And if I want more information, I'll ask you for it. And if I think that maybe you're headed in a direction we don't need to be going, I might gingerly move you into other directions. But—uh . . .

Kris Katrosh: Excuse me.

[00:00:54] TD: . . . would you tell me about—we're gonna talk about your—uh—birth and—uh—your early years. Um—tell me the day that you were born and—and where you were born. And let's talk about your folks.

BL: Okay. But first could I thank you all for doing the interview and doin' it here in our home, and to thank former Senator Pryor and his wife and the individuals who may have contributed to this effort in Little Rock, whom—I don't know who they are, but I wanna thank them in advance for makin' this possible. I was born in my grandmother's home in Reyno, Arkansas, on the sixth day of April 1932.

[00:01:43] TD: Where is Reyno?

BL: Reyno, Arkansas, is in northern Randolph County, between Pocahontas and Corning. My mother's name was Jessie, and my father's name was Shirl. They also was born in that area. My maternal grandparents, whose home I was born in, was Harrison and Effie Parker. My paternal grandparents was John and Josie Lamb. And all of them were—uh—farmers, renters, and in some terms, sharecroppers—uh—in those days. Uh—I—I moved out on a little farm just east of Reyno—uh—from birth to first grade.

TD: Okay. Let's stop at this point . . .

BL: Okay.

TD: . . . and back up just a little bit. I wanna talk with you about your folks' names again so that we—we . . .

BL: Okay.

TD: . . . get this correct. Your father's full name was . . .

BL: Is Shirl Lamb.

TD: How do you—how do you spell that?

BL: *S-H-I-R-L*.

TD: Mh-hmm.

BL: Uh—*L-A-M-B*.

TD: And your mother's maiden name was . . .

BL: Uh—Jessie—*J-E-S-S-I-E*—uh—Parker Lamb.

TD: Parker.

BL: Uh-huh. My maternal grandparents' names was Harrison . . .

TD: Harrison.

BL: . . . and Effie Parker.

TD: Mh-hmm.

BL: My paternal grandparents was John and Josie Lamb. And—uh—as I said, they all—all lived there. My grandfather ca—came to Randolph County after he was an adult, as a horse trader, and then began to—to farm, and he died relatively early—uh—uh—maybe in his early forties. And—uh—my Grandmother Lamb raised—uh—my father and his brothers and sisters right there at the edge of town on a little farm.

[00:03:46] TD: Mh-hmm. And—um—your father—uh—made his living as a farmer?

BL: A farmer.

TD: Mh-hmm.

BL: He was a renter—uh—and he rented a—a little farm—a eighty-acre farm—uh—east of—uh—Reyno from—uh—my birth till I was—uh—in the s—uh—uh—uh—well, I was—uh—six years old goin' to the first grade. And I went to the first grade at—uh—uh—Nelson School, which is on the Randolph/Clay County line. My first grade teacher was a distant cousin named Acil Dalton, and I can remember very well walkin' up to the corner of the edge of our field and holding his finger all the way to school that first day. [*TD laughs*] It was—uh—it—and I went to school there my first and second grade, and then my mother and father rented a farm in Success, Arkansas. And we moved to Success and . . .

[00:04:58] TD: And which county is Success in?

BL: It's in Clay County.

TD: Clay. So you—it wasn't a—a long move but it . . .

BL: No, it was a very—really—uh—fifteen, twenty miles . . .

TD: Mh-hmm.

BL: . . . at most. Fifteen, probably. And we lived very near the little town of Success, like, half a mile—quar—scuse me, quarter of a mile. And—uh—uh—and I went to that school—uh—till I was in the fourth grade, I believe.

[00:05:28] TD: Did you—what did your father farm?

BL: Cotton, soybeans, and corn. And the—uh . . .

TD: Now was this—this was still in the days—uh—when he was using mules?

BL: Yes—mu—it—it—when we lived in Success, he had five teams of mules, five hands, and while we were there, he purchased his first Allis-Chalmers tractor.

TD: Mh-hmm.

BL: And—uh—uh—and that's when I first began learning how to drive a team myself. If we went to the grocery story or church, we went to church and the grocery store in a wagon and team. While we were there, they bought me a little pony, a little black-and-white pony. We named it Spot. And I used to ride it—like to ride it up to the school and ride around the bases of the baseball. [*TD laughs*] And I could get it up there, and when I got it back to second base, it would not go to third. [*TD laughs*] It—it would [*laughs*] take off for the house, hard as it could go, and hard as I'd pull, the more stubborn it got. It would run to the gate at the barn, and—uh—uh—my—my mother could hear it comin' down the road, me yellin' at it. And so she'd go out and help me get off, and I don't know—on it—take the saddle off and take the bridle off and let it in. Oh . . .

[00:06:58] TD: Did you have siblings?

BL: Uh—I had a sister. My sister was born after we moved to Piggott. We moved to Piggott when I was in the fourth grade for the s—farming for the same landowner—uh—uh—and we moved on what was called the Sunnyside Farm, which is north and east of Piggott about five mile between Holcomb, Missouri, and Piggott. And there I went to—uh—uh—uh—s—uh—elementary school, first to eight grade, rural school named Austin School. And—uh—uh—at that point in time, my father got his first John Deere tractor, but we still had—uh—some eight or ten teams of—of mules and horses to farm with. And by then I was old enough to start driving a team to drag off cotton rows or ?higher? after breakin' plows. And one of the big job I had as a kid was pump water for the teams that would come in to—to—at noon. And I'd start pumping about ten thirty and still be pumpin' in that horse trough when they got there. And then in the afternoon, I'd start about three thirty or four and be doin' the same thing. It was an exciting sort of a time for a young fellow because of all that activity and all the—all the movement around in the morning and the afternoon when everybody was comin'.

TD: So you grew up with a sense of responsibility, that you had

chores and a role to play on the farm.

BL: Right. I started workin', pickin' cotton, even when I lived in Success. My mother made me a—a—a cotton sack out of a—out of a—uh—feed sack. And so if I wasn't ridin' on her—uh—her own cotton sack as a little kid, as she's pullin' it along, I was up pickin' myself. And then when we—when we got to Piggott, it was a full-time—uh—full-time job every day. And of course, in those days they let school out in the fall so you could pick cotton.

TD: Mh-hmm.

BL: And—and you missed—you'd—you'd get out in the—in the month of late September and early October, and you'd work in the field. And—uh—walked to school. It was about two and a half miles to the elementary school. It was five miles back to the high school. And—uh—baled hay—uh—rode the combine. We—I can remember when we got a one-row combine—uh—I would do the sack-tyin'. You had a seat on the side of the combine like on the old hay balers. And basically all you had to do was feed a needle through the—through the—through the sack top so you could tie 'em.

[00:09:55] TD: Mh-hmm. And this was probably corn for your . . .

BL: Well, it was soybeans.

TD: Soybeans.

BL: Mostly soybeans. We shucked the corn.

TD: Uh-huh.

BL: And—and it came in, in the ear form.

TD: Okay.

[00:10:05] BL: And—uh—uh—we had—uh—uh—a good farm to farm—uh—my father and mother, I thought they were well off. They had a pickup truck. By the—by the time we got there, they had—they had bought a pickup truck. And I didn't know that we didn't have any money [*TD laughs*] to—to speak of. But mostly it was all on credit—uh—uh—and—uh—but they lived good. Mother shopped on a rolling store. There'd be a—there'd be a store with all the necessities that would come by, usually twice or three times a week, and—and she would buy outta that. And once a week, we'd go to Piggott, and then she'd shop there with my dad. And—and—uh—uh—sometimes we'd go to a movie.

TD: Mh-hmm.

BL: Uh—and sometimes we wouldn't. We'd just get—uh—sweets and candy, fruits—and—and play around the square and go home. Uh—we took our cotton always to Holcomb and—uh—mostly drove it with a wagon and team. And as I got a little bit older, well, I'd drive one of the wagons, and Daddy would drive

one of the wagons. And—and Mother always did the weighing in the fields, and I learned how to read the scales and—and—uh—help her, so she could post the weights of the cotton sacks.

[00:11:36] TD: Did you-all hire help . . .

BL: Yes.

TD: . . . with the picking? Did you have—did you hire local folks, or did you have . . .

BL: We had both.

TD: . . . Mexican laborers or . . .

BL: We had—we had both. We had—we had—uh—hired people from Piggott and Holcomb who would come out on their own. We also had family—we had a two-story home there, and we had a couple of families from out at Maynard, Arkansas, who would come there and—and live for two or three weeks and pick cotton. And I always thought how amazing it was that those folks would go to town and buy a new set of clothes and put 'em on and work in 'em all week, and then they'd put 'em away to take 'em home to wash 'em. So they'd buy three new sets of clothes, and it was always interesting to me that—that they would buy those clothes and work in 'em. I—I'd—I—I'd say, "Why are you wearin' your new clothes to the field?" "Well, we don't have time to wash 'em." And they would work early in the

morning till late in the afternoon, just—it'd be dark before those folks would give up pickin' cotton.

TD: Mh-hmm.

BL: And—uh . . .

[00:12:42] TD: Did—did—did you ever find that—uh—folks would come in from the mountains—uh—move there—uh . . .

BL: Not—not so mu—

TD: . . . just for the duration?

BL: Not so much—uh—uh—mostly—uh—as time went along, Daddy would just—uh—uh—take his truck into town, pick up people whom he knew would come and pick, and the same—one of the other guys would go to—uh—to Holcomb and do the same thing—drive through the neighborhood. And those people knew it. And the chopping was done the same way. People who chopped cotton were from those communities who would work for the day. Had—we had three people—uh—three families that lived on the farm—worked all the time with him. And . . .

TD: Now did they work for your father?

BL: They worked for my dad.

TD: Okay.

BL: The way those kind of—of business deals worked in those days is the landowner provided the land and the seed, and the

sharecropper provided the labor and the equipment. And sometimes they shared in the fertilizer, and if they used fertilizer, commercial-type fertilizer. Otherwise, we used barnyard-type fertilizer. And—uh—uh—then they split the crop—uh—uh—income—uh—uh—usually it was 50/50 on some crops and—and—uh—75/25 on other crops. [00:14:12] Uh—we all—we—uh—uh—when we were livin' in Piggott, one of the—one of the real things that sticks out in my memory is in 1941 when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, my dad had taken a load of cattle to St. Louis and let me go with him and one of the guys that worked for him. What we did in this—in addition to farming, we raised cattle and fed 'em.

TD: Mh-hmm.

BL: And—as, like, feeder calves.

TD: Mh-hmm.

BL: And—uh—that night when—when we were at that livestock—uh—yard, and the news was on about bombing Pearl Harbor, I was in this little restaurant, smaller, much smaller, than this room. Had maybe six or eight little stools and two or three little booths. Cattle was bawling, and—and people were talkin' about Pearl Harbor. And honestly, I didn't know if Pearl Harbor was across the street or where it was.

TD: Mh-hmm.

BL: I had no idea, but I knew somethin' terrible was goin' on. And my dad was out dealing with the cattle, gettin' 'em in the pens. And I was sittin' in that little old restaurant, scared to death. [*TD takes a drink*] And the next morning, we—uh—we—uh—he always backhauled a load of coal, and he picked up a load of coal, and we took it back to Piggott and Holcomb, and he—he had little customers that he would take it to and—and sell 'em as a—as another way to make a little money.

TD: Your father was quite innovative—uh—diversified.

BL: He was a—and a very hard worker.

TD: Uh-huh.

BL: A very hard worker. He was—he was a—a—a diligent—uh—uh—farmer, a good farmer. Very well—uh—uh—very much interested in bein' sure that his animals were treated correctly. He—uh—he let me have a—a show pig and a show calf with my f—FHA work, and we went to the Mid-South livestock yards on a—on an annual basis to show . . .

[00:16:19] TD: Was that in Memphis?

BL: That was in Memphis. To show the—the feeder calf and to show the pigs. And sometimes I had luck, and sometimes I didn't, [*TD takes a* drink] but I always made money, in addition to

showin' at the county fair there in Piggott. It was a great training—uh—exercise on his part to have let me do that.

TD: It sounds like you—uh—were fortunate to have wonderful parents.

BL: I was. I was. They were always very helpful. They were not—they were not people who had a lotta money, but they were—uh—they were very, very generous to—to me and to my sister.

[00:16:55] TD: Did they take interest in your schoolwork?

BL: Yes—uh—uh—whenever they could, they'd come to Piggott and—and see the football games. Bein' five mile outta town, it was a—it was a chore for 'em to get in town. As a matter of fact, the people who lived on our road out to our house—if—if it was close to the end of football practice, they would wait and—and give us a ride home. Uh—for a while, there'd been two of us that lived out there. Later it was just one. But if we didn't get a ride, it was a five-mile walk. Uh—both of them only went to elementary school. Mother graduated from the eighth grade, and Dad ?grade eighth? at Reyno. And that little school district, the high school was at Biggers. The—uh—the—uh—uh—elementary school was there in Reyno, and that's as far as they went. And they went to work themselves in the fields and helpin' their—their families.

[00:17:57] TD: Wa—wasn't the eighth grade—uh—considered—um—pretty much the end of the educational process for most people in rural areas?

BL: Process. At that time ?in? their age. Yes, it was.

TD: Mh-hmm.

BL: And—uh—and I was fortunate enough at Piggott High School to—to get involved in athletics—uh—played on the football team, the basketball team, and the baseball team. And—uh—in the—uh—in my senior year, when I'd convinced my dad I was goin' to college, he made a decision that he would—uh—um—uh—not farm anymore for the family he was farmin' for, which was a man named F. E. Belford who owned the Bank of Reyno and the Bank of Pocahontas. Fine, fine family. So he sold his equipment. We moved into town, and he and a man who owned a grocery store there named Mr. Taylor, they began to go to livestock barns and buy cattle and trade 'em. They'd buy cattle one day in Corning and sell it the next day in Rector or Poplar Bluff. And he did that for six months or so and finally decided he'd—he would like to go back to farming, so he bought a—a little eighty-acre farm about a mile and a half north of—of Piggott and moved back out there in the spring of my senior year. And I always thought he did that so I'd have somethin' to

do and stay outta trouble 'cause we weren't out there a week before he told me, he said, "Now you're the one who's gonna plant this crop, and you're the one who's gonna do this [*TD laughs*] and do that." And sure enough, it started out that way, and I—and we did work together. We didn't have any hi—hired hands or any help that year. And—uh—ul—in the spring—uh—

after our—our—uh—I wasn't graduated yet, but I was approachin' graduation. I was plowing with a little old two-row John Deere tractor and cultivating cotton. And a part of this eighty acres had about twenty acres that was very sandy, so the tractor had a tendency to shift. And—uh—when I pulled up to the end of the road on the street, there was a—uh—a—uh—a pretoday van. It was like a—a 1941—[19]40—it was a . . .

[End of verbatim transcription]

[00:20:34] TD: Paneled truck-like thing.

BL: Well, no, it was a Chevrolet SUV but a small version of an SUV-type thing. And I thought the g—the person that was in the truck was a county agent. Had somethin' marked on it that I didn't pay attention to what it was marked on it. I turned around; he was climbin' over the fence. And when I, you know, backed up and lined up to go again—walked up and said, you know, "My name's Paul Bryant." Oh, I didn't know who Paul

Bryant was, and I said, "Hello, Mr. Bryant." He said, "Can I ride with you?" I said, "Yeah. Get on." And so we—the rows were a quarter mile long. We went the end of the road, started back, and he said, "Do you think I could drive this?" I told him, I said, "Well, if you do and let it get in that cotton patch, my dad's gonna skin both of our heads." [*BL laughs*] He said okay. He drove a little piece, and sure enough, it started to shift, and he stopped. Well anyway, the long—to make a long story short, when we got back to the end, turned out that Paul Bryant was Paul "Bear" Bryant, who was then coach at the University of Kentucky. And he introduced himself and talked to me for a while and asked me if I'd be interested in comin' over to the university and lettin' him look at me some more. And course, it excited me, but I didn't know where the University of Kentucky was, to tell you the truth. [*Laughs*] Had no idea, and I'd listen sometime on the radio if we happened to pl—they happened to be playin' somebody that we could pick up. But it was a far place for me. Long and short, I went over there and looked around, and it was way too big for a boy from Piggott, at least this boy from Piggott. So I didn't go. And—but I thanked him, and I appreciated havin' the chance to go. [00:22:35] Went back to the eighty-acre farm and about July, round the Fourth of

July, friend of mine named Max Harbor, his father is a elementary school su—principal, and he had been to Little Rock to play in—the year—the last year that Jimmy Karam was there, in the Little Rose Bowl. And Max and I had been friends, and a fellow named Julius Taylor, who had played center on our team, was also a friend, and wa—durin' that Fourth of July, Julius and I was playing baseball, and Max come out and talked to us about havin' a new coach down at Little Rock Junior College named Howard Pearce. And he said, "A lot of the guys that played last year are no longer there. There'd be some good opportunities if you guys would like to go down there." So Julius and I talked about it, and I had been to Little Rock. I had been to Little Rock to see a football game. I went to see the Razorbacks play William & Mary, and everybody wanted to go see War Memorial Stadium and all that. So I'd been there, and I had some comfort level with Little Rock. And I had some comfort level that Max had been there and was a year ahead of us and that he liked it, and that made sense. [00:24:05] And so I talked to my dad and mother about it, and they didn't warm up to it really quickly. They kinda thought that with all the experience I had in farming that I oughta be a farmer, and that they'd buy another farm, and that we'd be partners in the farm, and that I would farm.

And that probably would've been all right, but honest to goodness, I'd worked so hard through high school that farming didn't have the appeal that it did when I was a little bitty kid. It was just a lotta hard work. So—and I really kinda wanted to be a teacher. I'd had some wonderful high school teachers in Piggott, and I watched the way those people conducted themselves and the way people liked 'em. And I just thought, "You know, that's not a bad thing, not a bad life." And so anyway, they gave me a couple of hundred dollars and I—and we rode a train. They bought my train ticket and gave it to me and said, "If you don't like it, here's enough money for you to get home."

[00:25:17] TD: Your parents?

BL: My dad and mother gave me that two hundred dollars. And we rode a train from Piggott to Brinkley to Little Rock and caught the bus from Seventh and Main. We—I don't know how—I think we rode the electric car . . .

TD: Streetcar?

BL: . . . streetcar from the railroad station up to Main Street and got out at Seventh Street and caught the bus that went out to UALR—went out to Oak Forest and Oak Park Forest. And then you walked down the hill. Oh, we got out there, and what they

had for us to live in was old military army barracks.

[00:26:09] TD: Now what year was this?

BL: This would've been 1950.

TD: Nineteen fifty, you went to college at then . . .

BL: Went to college—I graduated at high school in 1950.

TD: . . . Little Rock Junior College.

BL: Little Rock Junior College in 1950. And we had these barracks to live in, and old military-type barracks, showers, and a practice field out there. And we had a cafeteria on the campus. And about two days into a tryout period, I told Coach Pearce, I said, "Coach, I need a little money for Cokes and maybe even a hamburger up at Lola's up there on a"—and he said, "Oh, go up my house and mow the yard." So he was livin' up there right off of Oak Forest, and I went up there and the lawn mower was under the porch. And Betty and her little baby was in the house, and so I got the lawn mower, a push lawn mower, out and start—I was pushin' the lawn mower. And when Howard came in, I was almost done. I put it—I was puttin' it back. And I heard Betty say, "Howard, you just had that lawn mowed yesterday." [*Laughter*] And on my way back, I couldn't help but just be walkin' on air 'cause I knew that sign was that I was gonna stay. He wouldn't've have sent me up there and let me

mow his yard and give me some money for it if he wasn't gonna keep me.

[00:27:53] TD: And which sport were you playing at that point?

BL: Which what?

TD: Whi—were you recruited to play football or basketball?

BL: Football.

TD: Football.

BL: Yeah, I was a guard, an offensive guard, and a linebacker on the football team. And I played baseball with Dr. Bob Hall here in town, who was on our baseball team. In any case, as we went along there, Wilson Matthews, who was coachin' at Central High School, would come out and a—he'd come usually on a Thursday late in the afternoon to teach us downfield blocking and kickoff-return coverage, which he was excellent at. And boy, you just couldn't keep from learning your assignments with him and Howard both. They'd both—Howard had coached for Wilson at one time before he came out to UALR. And it was great experience. I was fortunate to be able to learn all the positions. One time—and it was easy for me, for some reason, to recognize the assignments on a football team and to learn what you were supposed to do. So I could play almost any position on the line, and that let me get a lot of playin' time that I would not have

gotten otherwise. And we lived there . . .

TD: Who . . .

BL: Go ahead.

[00:29:27] TD: Who were some of the teams that you played against?

BL: Well, we played all of the AIC teams. The first year that I was there—and we had usually about a 9-11 season as a—those two years I was there. We played in the Lions Bowl in Laurel, Mississippi, the first year I was there and had a—we had a good, solid football team. Guys that were playin' with me at the time, like Mickey O'Quinn, who became the athletic director at Henderson; Royal Bailey, who's—who went pro—went to Tulane and then went to Canada with a professional team, was a great runnin' back for us.

TD: Can you remember who your quarterback was?

BL: Yes, Bobby Spann was the quarterback for me. Bobby . . .

TD: Was that the Spann family of Little Rock?

BL: At Little Rock, and Bobby went into the military. When I finished my sophomore year there, Howard was—Howard Pearce was searching for what his next career move was gonna be, and a fellow named Fred Thomsen, who had been the University of Arkansas coach years before and went to Nebraska, was a

Southwest Missouri State Teachers College coach. He came down, and Howard—he and Howard and I met in the old Albert Pike Hotel, and he and Howard had a list of eleven boys that they wanted to go to Southwest Missouri. And Howard was talking about goin' up there and bein' Coach Thomsen's line coach, and they told me, they said, "If you'll help us recruit these boys, then we'll give you a scholarship," and they gave us a car. That was my first car. I—it was a booster-club group that gave us a car, but we got almost all the boys to go. One or two didn't stay. But we went to Southwest Missouri, played football and . . .

[00:31:54] TD: And that was located—Southwest Missouri was . . .

BL: Springfield, Missouri.

TD: Springfield.

BL: And stayed a semester. At the end of that semester—and Coach Thomsen and his wife were as good to me as Howard had been 'cause when I was at Little Rock Junior College, Howard helped me get work there on the campus. We laid the water lines for the campus, as an example. I mean, we dug the trenches by hand and laid 'em. And we got paid for doin' that. It was good. And I always had a job at the stadium. I had a job at the stadium until I was in chamber of commerce work. I opened the

first restaurant, the Hog Heaven Restaurant, at the stadium, all because of Howard and our longtime relationship of workin' there. But in any case, at—back to where I was, at the end of that semester, Coach Thomsen told us, he said, "I'm gonna—I'm goin' to retire." And by that time, I was married. I married Barbara Lowell Smith in August of the fall that I went to Southwest Missouri.

[00:33:06] TD: And what year was that?

BL: That would've been 1952.

TD: [Nineteen] fifty-two.

BL: And she was workin', and I was playin' football and goin' to school, and I wanted to teach. So I col—I told Coach Thomsen, I said, "Coach, you can get a teaching certificate in Arkansas with as much education as I have and finish out s—your college degree in the summertime." And I told him, I said, "I've already talked to two or three people that I know that are possibilities." And he, this was near Christmastime, and he said, "Well, when you go home, and you don't make any decisions until you come back and talk to me." So we went home for Christmas to Little Rock and came back through—by then, my mother and daddy had moved back to Reyno and was farmin' around Reyno. And so we went back through Reyno and visited with them and came

back to Springfield. When I got back to Springfield, he said, "I want you to go see Jeff Farris at UCA in Conway.

TD: Which was then Arkansas State Teachers College.

BL: It was then Arkansas State Teachers College, and Jeff Farris was the athletic director. And a coachin' change was takin' place there. They were losin' half of their scholarships, and a fellow named Jim Crafton from Little Rock was gonna be the new football coach. He had been the Harrison High School coach and was a center on the Razorback team before he was a coach. And so I went down to see him. I didn't really know what he had on his mind, and he told me. He said, "Well, do you wanna play, or do you wanna teach?" And I said, "Well, I wanna teach, sooner or later." He said, "Well, now's as good a time to start as any. We've got two places for student assistant football coaches, and we'll give you one of those to be assistant line coach and a scholarship." And so we moved back to Little Rock, and I commuted back and forth from Little Rock and did all the odd jobs I could find and graduated from UCA in 1954. From there, I . . .

[00:35:43] TD: Let's talk about your time at Arkansas State Teachers College.

BL: Okay.

TD: Who was the president of the institution when you were there?

BL: Dr. Snow.

TD: Silas D. Snow.

BL: Silas D. Snow. And what . . .

TD: And . . .

BL: . . . a wonderful a guy he was.

[00:35:56] TD: Did you come to know him?

BL: Yes. Not only did I come to know him—he had been a superintendent at Corning and Crossett, back up the road. And I had known of him, and then he was always present on the campus so that students could touch him and feel him if they wanted to. And he and Dr. Farris, who was head—who was the athletic director at the time—son became the president of UCA later. But they were good, close friends and stayed together and made us all feel very comfortable. We, of course, played all the AIC schools. Had about a—I think we had a 6-4 season. Good people who were on the team were in school then. And I found my experience there to be very good and sort of give me the sense of direction of where I was goin' in education. And when I left there, why, I went to Morrilton as an assistant football coach and baseball coach and basketball coach.

TD: So at Arkansas State Teachers College, you were a scholarship

student.

BL: That's right.

TD: And you were a—an assistant coach.

BL: Right.

TD: And you also did some work on the side, as opportunities presented themselves.

BL: That's right.

TD: So you were very busy.

BL: I was busy.

[00:37:45] TD: And you were married at this time. Did you have any children at this time?

BL: Not at that time.

TD: Mh-hmm. So when you graduated from Arkansas State Teachers College, your degree was in physical education?

BL: I had a physical education major and a social study major.

TD: Studies minor?

BL: Minor. And . . .

TD: And you had a teaching—you got a teaching certificate?

BL: Got a teaching certificate.

TD: And moved up the road to Morrilton.

BL: Moved up the road to Morrilton.

TD: Tell me about Morrilton, when you went there. How did it

impress you—not just the school, but the whole community?

BL: Well, the community is a—was a large Catholic community. But when we moved there, a fellow named Vic Boring, who was superintendent of schools, and Bob Harris, who was chairman of the school board, and Clyde Trickey, who was the head football coach, really made us feel really welcome. It was there that we joined the Baptist church, and it was there that the community gave me an opportunity to work with them. I started working with the booster club there because in those days every school had to raise its own money for athletic equipment, everything from shoes to helmets. So the first thing I did that fall was put together that booster club with the guidance of the head coach and the superintendent of schools and others. But they kinda let me take the lead, and I was new, and people wanted to visit with me and wanted to talk about it, and we put together a really, Tom, a real good booster club. [00:39:30] And I learned a lot from Trickey. He—I was never a real good—I could never look at a boy or a girl and determine what they were gonna grow into, but Trickey had that skill. He would—he could take a youngster, and he'd say, "This youngster is gonna be somethin' athletically. Now here's what I'd like for you to work with him on and all." And so I learned a lot of how to deal with personal—

people personally while I was there. The outcome of the athletic activity and the booster-club activity really led me then to the chamber of commerce work. But while I was still coachin', I—on the weekends I would scout for the university of—I would scout the opponents for the University of Arkansas, if they'd hire me—like Tulsa, other schools. And I also scouted for UCA, the AIC school, because I, somehow or other, I had the ability to look at a football field and see how all the people did their assignments, and I could quickly sketch it on a tablet. Same thing with the defensive end of it. So then I'd come back to UCA on a Sunday afternoon and meet with the coaches and go over my scouting report with 'em. The—I would mail the scouting report to schools where I scouted the Razorbacks, and they would call me on the phone and visit with me about my report. And I picked up money like that. [00:41:33] I always had a crew of athletes who would go to War Memorial Stadium with me when the Razorbacks were playin' and sell cushions or rain gear. I remember Rockefeller's stepson was one of the ones who'd go with me, Bartley. Bruce Bartley.

TD: Bruce Bartley.

BL: And one—I was so pleased with him one day. It rained terribly, and we had lots of [*pen clicks*] dollar raincoats to sell. He made

a fistful of money sellin' those raincoats, and he was [*TD takes a drink*] so happy when we were on our way back. I always was amazed. Here was a kid that had—he had more money to spend for hot dogs than all of the rest of us made. [*Laughs*] But he was so happy with what he made.

[00:42:26] TD: Were you at Morrilton when Rockefeller moved there?

BL: Yeah—no, he had already moved there when I moved there, but they were building the farm. While I was there, Rockefeller gave the school district the money to build the elementary school on the south side of town. And one of the things that come outta that booster club that I worked on was an assignment to kinda help reappraise property tax, so they would have—they were still in the construction of the school, but they needed the funding to oper—open it in the fall. So we used the leadership in that booster club with the behind-the-scenes help from people like Marlin Hawkins and other county officers who said, "We really don't care to be out in the front on this, but we sure will help you get it done if you will." So what they did, they opened a little corner for me in the chamber office down in city hall, and I was doin' that organizing of speeches . . .

[00:43:42] TD: And your goal was to get the millage—the property

millage raised sufficiently to support this new school.

BL: School. That's right. So we could hire new teachers, pay the air-conditioning, pay for the heating, whatever it took to operate the school in the future. And it just went like clockwork. I mean, it was a—it was not a difficult chore. It was a kind of a timing to get it done, but it was workin' fine. And one morning I walked in the chamber office, and a fellow named Meredith Jones, who had been the chamber exec, and a University of Arkansas graduate—he's from Helena, told me, he said, "Bob, I'm gonna leave the chamber. I'm gonna go with Mobley Construction Company as their business manager." And I thought, "Well, boy, this is gonna be a mess now." Well, about two or three days later, a group of the Morrilton businessmen, headed by a man named Owens, who had the bu—he had the Chrysler/Dodge dealership, and whose wife had been the home economics teacher there at school, workin' with me, came to me and said, "We've been talkin' about this, and we'd like to see if you'd just take over and be the manager of the chamber of commerce and continue to do what you're doin' and manage the chamber, too." I said, "Boy, I don't even have any idea what they do." They said, "You—you're gonna—you'll be good at it. We—we'll tell you as you go along. You manage the chamber.

You manage the Conway County Fair Association. You help us promote Shetland pony sales, and we'll help you get goin'." And sure enough, they did. Boy, they volunteered and helped and raised money, and it did go good. Well, the next summer I went to US Chamber Institute, through that summer I was gettin' acclimated to the deal, at Dallas. The US Chamber of Commerce has an institute for chamber of commerce managers.

[00:45:59] TD: And what—which summer would that have been? What year was that?

BL: [Nineteen] fifty-seven, I believe—would've been the [19]57 year.

TD: Okay.

BL: May have been the 1956, but I think—actually, it could've been 1956, Tom, because—it ha—it probably was 1956 'cause it—I was coachin' the 1955—1954/1955, 1955/1956 year. I was trans—I was doin' this while I was movin' outta school, so it was either 1956 or 1957, one. In any case, at the institute, the director of the institute told me, he said, "New York University has an aptitude test, and they've been goin' to our institutes and giving aptitude tests to determine whether or not an individual can become successful or not successful in this kind of work. And we would like for you to take one of those tests." Well, I tell

you, lookin' back on it now, I honestly didn't know what a—I thought I knew what an aptitude test was, but I really didn't quite know what it was. So I took the test, got my results back, and it was a good match. At the time I did that, I had also been workin' with Dr. Farris about goin' to—he had arranged for me to get a fellowship at Iowa State to work on my master's degree. And so I was torn between which one of those to fly. And I decided I'd stay in the chamber work. [00:47:57] Now this is an aside, but just somethin' I just remembered. But fifty years ago last week, when I was just—almost just beginning in that chamber of commerce work, a group of individuals in the Arkansas River Basin Association went to Washington. They were led by the publisher of the Fort Smith newspaper, a fellow named Jetta Taylor at Ozark ?who was? a lawyer, a man who was president of People's Bank at Russellville, but I can't remember his name, and Arthur Ormand, whose son was a state legislator. This—Bob Harris that I had mentioned as a funeral home director and school board director, and John Riggs, Riggs Tractor Company.

TD: John Riggs, the senior.

BL: Senior. John Riggs Sr.—the person who they gave [*TD clears throat*] a substantial amount of money to build the new Little

Rock Regional Chamber building. But John Riggs—what the trip was, was that Eisenhower had put some money in his budget for completion of Dardanelle Dam, Dardanelle Lake, but not as sufficient enough to satisfy the Corps of Engineers. And Charlie Maynard, who was either the assistant commander of the Corps at Arkansas at the time, or he was the top guy, [*pen clicks*] and I can't remember what . . .

TD: He later became . . .

BL: He later became, and he . . .

TD: . . . the . . .

BL: . . . might've just been almost then. But he was in charge of the group. So a group of guys there in Morrilton raised enough money to send me, and that was my first trip to Washington. And I was so impressed with the activity. And I remember bein' so concerned because in those days, the—a big tourist attraction to Morrilton was the Shetland pony sale. It was a big sale and a big deal, and on that same week when I got back, Maurice Smith from Birdeye bought the highest-price pony that was sold there that day. [*Pen clicks*] It was over three thousand dollars.

TD: He was already a big-time farmer.

BL: A farmer—and a big-time farmer.

[00:50:25] TD: And of course, later Maurice Smith became very

famous as a confidante of Bill Clinton and . . .

BL: That's right. And highway commissioner.

TD: And a highway commissioner.

BL: And a chairman and a—he was always a close friend of mine. I hardly knew him that day, but I mean, that was the way that it worked.

[00:50:39] TD: Mh-hmm. So you've gone to Washington as a representative of the Morrilton chamber.

BL: Chamber of commerce.

TD: And your goal up there is to help get funding for this reservoir.

BL: That's right.

TD: [*Pen clicks*] At that point, it has not yet become the Kerr-McClellan Navigation System.

BL: It's in the process of bein'.

TD: Okay.

BL: And at that time, we didn't have interstate highways.

TD: Yeah.

BL: We have not yet developed interstate highways, and we're just starting on the—it's moving along. The financing had started but—so anyway, the long and the short of that, as I remember, they got $2.5 million. John McClellan and Wilbur Mills helped them commit that. And . . .

[00:51:22] TD: Tell me about working with John McClellan and Wilbur Mills on that trip. Do you remember enough about it to talk about it?

BL: I—basically, I was so young then, I was in the back of the room, listening and being really impressed with the strength and the magnitude of the two men. We also visited with Senator Fulbright for a few minutes, and I know he had a big stroke in it, but the day we were visiting with him, he had a committee meeting that he was headed for, and I can remember walkin' down a long hallway with him and him talkin' to us and telling us that "We'll see this through. You-all make the contacts that you need to make while you're here, and I'll be back in touch with you." And I thought that was so impressive. We—while I was there in Morrilton, we bought our first industrial little park, which is on the south side of the railroad and moved Coca-Cola Bottling Company and Arkansas Valley Wholesale Grocery out there, which helped us as our first tenants. And I located my first manufacturing plant, or helped locate it, called Sound-Craft Systems, Inc., then. It is on Petit Jean Mountain, and the people who came there was Mr. and Ms. Shaw. And they had been replaced or misplaced in Pittsburgh because of an urban-renewal project and their pro . . .

TD: That business had been—was relocating because of that.

BL: That was the reason they were relocating is that they were gonna have to find a new place to go, and they wanted to find someplace [*pen clicks*] that was rural and someplace that they thought they could make their products and enjoy a different kind of life than in the city. Wonderful couple.

[00:53:32] TD: And their names again were . . .

BL: Shaw.

TD: Shaw.

BL: Mr. and Ms. Shaw. Henry Shaw, I believe, was his name. They—their major product, at the time, was a sound system used in ships. But soon after that—and he found a place on Petit Jean, and I can remember Bob Harris and I went up with him, and our big expense was a six-pack of Coca-Cola. [*Laughter*] [*Claps hands*] There were no—it didn't take any money to entice him to come or anything like that. He just was lookin' for the right place. He liked bein' up there on the mountain and s—and he was in the process of inventing and beginning to get ready to produce a lectern sound system. If you'll recall years ago at every civic club, it had a little suitcase-looking lectern that had a mic and a sound system. That was his. Later on he invented a microphone for churches that would screen out the outside noise

of traffic on the street or any kind of noise other than the—than what was happenin' inside the church. He was a wonderful man. He later sold that business to William Earle Love and his family. And as far as I know, it's still operational, and I don't know who may own it now, but it's very . . .

TD: Is it still up on the mountain?

BL: It's still up on the mountain. The—and it was, you know, one of those things that employed forty, fifty people. Not a big thing.

[00:55:25] TD: So Klipsch was not the first major soundman in Arkansas?

BL: No, he was not the [*unclear words*] first. [*TD laughs*] But . . .

TD: Did the presence of Winthrop Rockefeller up on the mountain, did that play any role in recruiting that business?

BL: Oh, I'm sure that that had to influence 'em, but we never had any involvement with them on that occasion. It was just these people were lookin' for the right place. It surprised us that they weren't interested in our little industrial park. I mean, that was where we were goin'. He said, "No, I don't think this would work." Well, it did—when they tested the horns, it made a noise, so he wanted trees to block the noise, and I don't know how long he did that afterwards in terms of the noise 'cause he'd get—he was doin' so well with those lecterns. Every county

agent carried one of those around everywhere. Every civic club bought one. And it was a great market for 'em.

[00:56:36] TD: Let's talk some more about Morrilton and some of the people there. You mentioned earlier Marlin Hawkins . . .

BL: Yes.

TD: . . . who was sheriff for essentially a lifetime.

BL: Right.

TD: Tell me about your dealings with Marlin Hawkins.

BL: Marlin was—when we started that property-reassessment deal, Marlin wanted to visit with me, and I went over to his office, and we sat down, and then he told me what he'd do to help us and how he would help us. And it was very congenial and very, very good. And it was from then until he was deceased. And of course, we had Bruce workin' for us this time in the ?legislature? as a contract lobbyist with Southwestern Energy.

TD: Bruce Hawkins.

BL: Bruce Hawkins, who was a former state legislator, and his son. But my relationship with him was always very good, and it was not a—it was not an inside political relationship. It was—you know, in a small town, you're friends with everybody. I knew practically every retailer up and down the street by first name, and I knew him. My wife worked at the First State Bank, and we

had our first daughter there. We joined a church there, the Baptist church, was baptized, and we had our first daughter, Diane. And just the whole community was open. You couldn't go anywhere in town that you weren't known and appreciated. We built a new little chamber of commerce office. Moved it out of the city hall over there. And as a matter of fact, I was in Little Rock as a volunteer for the chamber of commerce in 1955. I was still coachin' when the legislature was in session, and I was asked to go with a group who was tryin' to get some funding for Petit Jean.

TD: For the park?

BL: For the park. And one of the big things goin' on that interested me at the time was the legislation creating the Arkansas Industrial Development Commission was bein' considered, and I didn't know enough about the legislature to know what they were doin'. I was just part of the crowd that went for the park budget meeting.

TD: But it was your first introduction to lobbying.

BL: First introduction to lobbyin' and, you know, the excitement around it and . . .

[Tape stopped]

[00:59:23] TD: Let's talk about your work in Morrilton just a little bit

longer before we . . .

BL: Okay.

TD: . . . move off of that. I've asked you about Marlin Hawkins. Do you remember when Winthrop Rockefeller came there? Do you recall how the—well, he was already there when you came there.

BL: Mh-hmm.

TD: But do you remember how the locals reacted to his impact?

BL: Oh yes. Yeah. The local people were very excited about him building his home and ranch on Petit Jean. And all of us would drive up there to watch the construction, and the people that he had workin' for him were integrated into the community. And of course, they did—they'd come down for groceries or to visit or sometime to church. And everybody wanted to talk to them, and they were amazed that someone would pick Petit Jean and make that kind of an investment in it. They couldn't—they just wa—hard to believe. And of course, the state park was building all the time—was tryin' to make it more attractive and make it a place where people would want to come. And . . .

TD: Who was head of the state park when you got there? Do you recall the first person you dealt with there?

BL: I can see the guy.

[01:01:03] TD: Was it Lad Davies, by any chance?

BL: No, it was before Lad. It was before Lad. And—gee, I can't come up with his name. He was a nice . . .

TD: You mentioned Bruce Bartlett earlier.

BL: Right.

TD: He was Rockefeller's stepson.

BL: He was his stepson.

TD: And you knew him through . . .

BL: Well, I knew him through Morrilton. He was a Morrilton student, and I'm not sure that his sister went to high school in Morrilton, but she was also in the community from time to time.

TD: That was Anne Bartlett.

BL: Anne Bartlett. And then, course, Anne was prominent in Little Rock for some time, and a lot of us knew her there.

TD: Bruce stayed in Little Rock, didn't he?

BL: Yes, and he's still there, I think. Two or three years ago, I saw Bruce at a—up in the Heights, but I haven't talked to him in a long time. He was a fine young man and was just a joy as a teenager to be around.

[01:02:10] TD: Mh-hmm. Were you ever around Mrs. Rockefeller? Jeannette?

BL: Not a lot. Not a lot. I knew her, occasionally went to lunch with her in Little Rock, but not in Morrilton. But not—did not know

her—did not have an occasion. You got to picture that, you know, I'm a young guy in Morrilton that's maybe okay in Morrilton, but I'm a far fly from socializing with the Rockefellers at that time.

TD: But now later on . . .

BL: I can't . . .

TD: . . . later on your cro—your paths will cross again.

BL: Right. Well, I . . .

[01:02:57] TD: And we'll get to that in our chronology.

BL: I will tell you one story about Rockefeller, if you want a story. I went up to the mountain after he became chairman of the . . .

TD: AIDC.

BL: . . . AIDC. Faubus had appointed him. And caught him out by the barn and asked him if I could visit with him. He came out and put his foot up on the fence, and I told him, I said, "I would really—I've had a little chamber of commerce work and industrial-development work. I would really like to think about goin' to work at the AIDC. I think that'd be real good." And part of the reason that that was occurring to me is, in those days, the merchants closed Thursday at noon, and they worked on Saturdays all day. So Thursday afternoon, they all closed. And when they closed, I went to Little Rock, and I went to the state

chamber office, and I went to the AIDC. And I would meet the staffs and visit with 'em, and that's how my longtime relationship with the staff at the state chamber developed [*coughs*] and with Bill Rock, who was then the director of AIDC. Anyway, Mr. Rockefeller looked at me, and he said, "Well, Bob, I just don't know if you'll ever—that would be something you'd ever want to do or not." [*Laughter*] And I've laughed about that. [*Laughs*] He just—he really didn't give me a lot of encouragement to go that route, so I never did work for the AIDC, but I've been involved in the activities. So I thought that's a—that was a kind of a fun thing that happened. From Morrilton's activities, one day I was at the capitol building, and I cannot recall for sure why I was there, but it was some governmental-affairs issue of some kind, and I was standing at the base of the senate—oh, I know what. Nathan had asked me to come down there, I think, to talk to—Gordon.

[01:05:15] TD: That's Nathan Gordon, the lieutenant governor.

BL: Yeah—had asked me to come down there for some reason and—I ca—I—right now it's slipped my mind for why. But I know that I was standin' at the bottom of the senate stairs, and a man named James Hobgood, who was president of the Merchant and Planters Bank in Arkadelphia, came up to me, introduced

himself, and I didn't know him, and he told me who he was. He said, "I'm president of the Arkadelphia Chamber of Commerce, and we'd like to talk to you about becomin' the manager of our chamber." He said, "Our manager has recently died, and we're lookin' for a new manager, and would you be willing to come for an interview?" And I said, "Well, I don't know. I had not thought about goin' anywhere else at this point in time." He said, "Well, you come down and meet with us, and we'll—we'd love to talk to you." He said, "We've talked to people in Morrilton about you, and we really do wanna talk to you." So about a week passed, and they had the committee meeting set up, which I thought was a committee meeting. And I went to Arkadelphia. And in the main restaurant there in town that they had, they had the whole membership of the chamber, not a committee, not a board. They had about 250 members then. I swear they—I thought they were all there. And they asked me to talk to 'em about my philosophy on the chamber of commerce and what I thought about what chambers oughta do. And I did. I spent thirty, forty minutes tellin' 'em what I thought they oughta do, and they excused me. And I went out, and they told me to wait a few minutes, and they'd come back and visit with me. And there was a real prominent guy who had also been an

applicant for the job who was the money-raiser for the chamber. And I later learned that he made the motion to hire me. And they came out and made me an offer, and I got my salary increased $3,000 a year, and we moved to Arkadelphia.

[01:07:51] TD: [*Laughs*] So you were being interviewed, whether you knew it or not.

BL: Right. That's the whole group.

TD: By the whole membership.

BL: By the whole membership of the chamber, which I was surprised that that's the way it worked. But that's the way it worked. And . . .

TD: A very different town from Morrilton.

BL: Yeah. And Morrilton was a community that one or two people served on a committee and really got the job done. Arkadelphia was a community where a lot of people served on committees. They had big committees, twelve, twenty, hundred, and a good town. The—one of the issues right away that they wanted to deal with—Arkadelphia was aggressive in tryin' to create jobs, and the two colleges, and a good, good bunch of people. They had actually built and owned, as a chamber of commerce industrial corporation, a little, small plant that made two-wheel travel trailers and—for camping and for people to use at county

fairs and things like that. And the former chamber manager had his arm around all that, but a lot of people didn't have their arm around it. And he marketed those little travel trailers through automobile agencies all over the state of Arkansas, particularly the south—north Louisiana and east Texas. And they didn't know where all those little trailers were. So I got into it and located all of 'em, and we liquidated 'em. And ultimately, they turned that little plant into a boat-manufacturing plant that lived on for a long, long time. [01:09:47] The key thing that in the short time I was at Arkadelphia that was significant, other than that, was I put together at the chamber's direction a group of 150 people that went to Washington to testify on behalf of the first funding for DeGray dam and lake. And Bill McMillan, who is an attorney; H. K. Thatcher, who was Ouachita River . . .

TD: Development . . .

BL: . . . Development Group . . .

TD: . . . ruler.

BL: . . . and the guru at the time, and I became real good friends, and we went to Washington. And we got the first $150,000 grant. And I never will forget sittin' there. The Great Lakes Association director was a little, short fellow and had a funny little hat on. He was gettin' millions, and we were only [*laughs*]

gonna—we had—by himself. And we were gonna get $150,000. And we got it, and it got it started. And . . .

[01:11:06] TD: And you had a crew of 100 people along with you.

BL: We took 150 people up there for that, and it was a marvelous thing. It was a marvelous thing. We had a fellow named Charles Clark, who was a local doctor, prominent, prominent family there, was president of the Chamber; Ralph Phelps at Ouachita; and a fellow named Edwards—Edmonds, who was his assistant—all helped put it together. It was a community. It was a community deal. I mean, prominent—everybody who was somebody in Clark County went on that trip and were proud to go. We stayed in the old Adolphus Hotel. That's the first time I had ever made reservations for a group like that out of state. [*TD laughs*] That was a real nightmare. [*Laughs*] And it really worked out. It worked out fine.

TD: The time that Phelps was over at OBU, M. H. Russell, perhaps . . .

BL: Right.

TD: . . . was at . . .

BL: Was at . . .

TD: . . . Henderson.

BL: . . . Henderson. And . . .

TD: Did you work with Mr. Russell very much?

BL: Mr. Russell attended the meeting, but he had an assistant who went with him. But let me go back to a Morrilton experience that I think would be worthwhile to put in. When I was at—when I was in the Little Rock Junior College, it was the beginning of the Korean War, and two or three people off of our team went to the Korean War. And I enlisted in the Navy Reserve out at Fair Park across from the baseball park and went to Great Lakes through boot camp and got to be an assistant S-3 of an assistant storekeeper. And a couple of summers, I actually worked

decommissioning LSTs. And then when I got to Morrilton, there was an opportunity to join the National Guard, and so I had first joined it as a first sergeant, and then I got a commission to a lieutenant. That was in the summer of 1957. And in the fall of 1957, I was in the second-battalion staff that was called to Little Rock because of the Little Rock School crisis. And I was also the motor officer in that—on that battalion. I was on the battalion staff, assistant S-3 and the motor officer for the battalion, and had the responsibility for all the vehicles. And we went out to Camp Robinson and headquartered and all the excitement that went on related to that. About the second—I was there for one day, one night, the next night, about eight o'clock, the guys told

me, said, "Why don't you go home and get a clean uniform and take a shower and come back." So I drove back to Piggott. I meant, back to . . .

[01:14:36] TD: Morrilton.

BL: . . . Morrilton. But when I got back to Morrilton, they had been callin' me. And golly, I was scared that something'd gone wrong with one of those trucks or somebody'd had an accident or—'cause all kinds of things was happening out at Camp Robinson that day with all the vehicles runnin' around, and the kids not used to drivin' 'em and all that. So they said they want me to come back there as quick as I could, and so I went back, and I got there somethin' like four or five o'clock in the morning. The regimental commander was a postmaster at Walnut Ridge, and I can't think of his name, and Colonel Johnson was from Conway, and he was the battalion commander. When I walked in, the whole battalion staff and the regimental commander was there, and they—very nice to me, and I thought, "Oh boy." [*Laughs*] "Somethin's bad happened." So we sat down there, and they started talkin' to me, and they said, "Bob, we have been asked to provide a liaison walker—officer between General Walker," who was then comin' in to take over in the governor's office.

TD: The—General Walker was a regular army general . . .

BL: He was a regular army general who was in char—that Eisenhower—when Eisenhower determined to send the federal troops in, he was in charge of the federal troops and the airborne group. And they said, "Everybody that's on this battalion staff are state employees somewhere or the other, and we would like to ask you if you would be liaison officer between General Walker's office, which would be in the post office, and Governor Faubus's office, until this shakes out." And they said, "It's probably gonna all shake out in a day or two. All these things are gonna come together pretty quick, and we'll be out of it—National Guard. We will no longer be involved. But it's gonna take a day or two." Well, for me as a youngster at that age—what would I have been? Twenty-four, twenty-five? That was a pretty big assignment. A pretty big assignment. [01:17:12] And on top of that, they gave me the general's motor pool, which they kept over at the Sam Peck Hotel across the street from the post office. And so anyway, I just had a little desk, and I didn't have anything really to do except run errands and keep things—paperwork carried wherever it needed to be carried and messages delivered wherever there needed to be messages delivered. And the Razorbacks played a ball game that weekend, and I never will forget; one of the guys called me

and said, "Bob, we've dispatched one of the colonel's cars." One of the general's admin—aides was a colonel—one of his cars to the ball game because somebody called and said, "Colonel so-and-so wants his car sent around in front of the hotel." But he said when he got out there to the ball game, the guy got out of the car and said, "Thank you for [*laughs*] bringin' me to the ball game." And we don't think it was a military person. I said, "Just destroy that trip ticket and forget that you ever dispatched it, and let it go at that." But it was a—an experience and . . .

[01:18:43] TD: Did you ever talk with General Walker directly?

BL: No, I never talked him directly.

TD: What about Governor Faubus?

BL: Oh yeah, I talked to Governor Faubus several times.

TD: During that . . .

BL: Yeah, during that period of time.

TD: . . . time?

BL: Yeah.

TD: What was the tenor of his behavior and discussion and that sort of thing?

BL: It was—Tom, if you can recall during Governor Faubus's administration and later during Governor Rockefeller's administration because he called me back to help when we had

marches on the capitol buildin' by demonstrators in those days. I never will forget. I was at Dardanelle with a group of chamber managers in a summer meeting, and his staff called me and said, "Governor Rockfeller would like for you to come back to Little Rock and gather up some prominent business people and stand out near the capitol buildin' with him so that we don't get any damage to the capitol," and this kinda thing. [01:19:49] Well, all of my experience with Faubus and all of my experience with Rockefeller under those same kind of conditions was that they did not want any children injured. They did not want any property damaged. And they did not want any of the demonstrators or children hurt or in any way mistreated. And that was always foremost in the explanations that I got and the feelings that I got from what he wanted. He wanted those kids protected. He wanted them not harmed in any way. And he didn't want anybody on the street to damage them or damage anybody that was in the guard or damage any of the residents' property that was in the neighborhood. And that was the same feeling I got from when Governor Rockfeller had his brief demonstrations. And I'm sure that I asked to do that simply because, at that time, I was in a position as a chamber of commerce guy to get volunteer business people to do it, and I

did, and I was glad I did. And—but it worked out, in my mind, that safety of the people, safety of the property—the politics of it was over and above what I was dealing with. As a matter of fact, I probably never even thought about the politics of it. It was just a crisis that we were dealing with and . . .

TD: Do you remember your fellow National Guardsmen having a position on these issues, feeling—having their own feelings they had overcome or anything like that?

BL: They may have had 'em, but they didn't talk about 'em. They . . .

TD: So your colleagues in the National Guard did not let their own—they didn't talk about their own position on integration?

BL: No. They may have had deep feelings, but they did not—they were basically doing the job that they thought they oughta do to make the guard proud and to make the people proud that they were in the guard and were not involved in the issue of integration and talkin' about it. And . . .

[01:22:43] TD: Moving along, after your Arkadelphia stint, you spent—you had a couple of ventures out of state . . .

BL: Right.

TD: . . . in chamber work. Could we maybe quickly talk about your time over in Tennessee and Indiana?

BL: Yeah, let's do that. The lead-in to the Tennessee job really started—in Arkadelphia we had a monthly meeting of major manufacturers that included Alcoa and Reynolds in that region, which are big, big employers. And I made a friend of the plant manager at Alcoa, name of Mr. Stout. Carl had been president of the chamber or was just about to be president of the state chamber.

TD: Carl Stout.

BL: Yeah.

TD: *S-T-O-U-T*.

BL: Yeah, I believe that's right. And Maryville, Alcoa, Friendsville, and Townsend in Tennessee are in Blount County, and they're all just across the river from Knoxville. As a matter of fact, the Knoxville Airport is in Alcoa. Alcoa was, at that time, a company town, and it was just beginning to sell or give the housing for—that they had owned for their employees to their employees. And the manager in Blount County left and was goin' to Panama City, Florida, and a guy named Hugh McDade was their public affairs manager, a tremendous speaker and tremendous guy. He came to Bauxite one day and apparently was visiting with the plant manager there, and the plant manager told him about me. So he called me and—on the phone and said, "You know, I've

done some background work on you. You had some experience in reevaluating property and property taxes, and we've got some similar problems like this here. Would you be interested in comin' for an application for the job?" And my goodness, from Arkadelphia, Arkansas, to Maryville, Tennessee, which is just south and east of Knoxville, was a long way for me, Tom. [01:25:17] So my wife and little girl and I drove over there and visited with 'em. And in those days, that community had about 70,000 people in that area. And sure enough, part of the activity was to try to get those pieces of properties reappraised and on the property tax right to pay for their school system as Alcoa designed itself down. That community was really aggressive in tryin' to find new jobs, and we created, in addition to that part of our work, we created a industrial group called More Blount Jobs and cre—raised enough money for me to hire an assistant, guy named Doug Pogue. Doug had been the human relations manager there at Alcoa, but as he went forward, he had also been the human relations manager for Alcoa in Pittsburgh. And right at the end of his career, he had been the national recruiter, visitin' all the college campuses for them. It was a tremendous labor-relations mine, and I was very fortunate to spend as much time as I did with him to learn about

organized activity and the way organizations work. And in that process, the steel workers owned a store, a prominent retail store. And so the retail merchants in Maryville were very aggressive in their advertising and merchandising, not only against people goin' to Knoxville, but also in how to compete with this union-owned store where the manager could say at a union meeting, "You haven't bought your antifreeze yet," or "I haven't seen you in the store," or whatever. And it was a lot of activity. [01:27:26] So, long and the short, we had constant activity related to competition and retailwise there, and we learned a lot about things that were goin' on. While we were there, the chamber owned a garment plant that was operated by a group that made Union brand overalls, the old Union brand overalls. And they wanted to sell it. So I contacted the then manager of the Morrilton plant for Overman, who put me in contact with an executive of Levi-Strauss. And that executive sent a person to Maryville. Walked through the plant and bought it, and later moved the manager from Morrilton to Maryville to become their southern region manager. But we promoted the Smokey Mountain National Parks for tourism. Was a very good tourism community; strip town, but all the traffic goin' through there goin' to that park was amazing to see.

TD: Well, Maryville's an old place.

BL: Yeah.

TD: And I believe a . . .

BL: Maryville College is there.

[01:28:55] TD: . . . a prominent Tennessee politician is from there. Was Howard Baker from Maryville?

BL: I don't think Howard was from Maryville.

TD: One of the modern Tennessee leaders was from there. Perhaps—well, anyhow . . .

BL: Yeah.

TD: It's an interesting and beautiful part of Tennessee.

BL: It's a beautiful part of the state. And Alcoa was a big, dynamic part of Tennessee. One of the—talkin' about McDade—McDade took me to a birthday party for Buford Ellington in Nashville, and I think it was the first time I ever went to a big country club where beautiful, big gowns, and Eddy Arnold sang "Tennessee Stud" on a four-chair—a four-legged bench out in the front. It was a marvelous trip. And we went back to the airport to go to the air—the pilot clipped the wing of the plane, and so we had to spend the night. But a lot of good things happened while I was there. I helped created and organize the Tennessee State Chamber of Commerce and was instrumental in gettin' it off the

ground and . . .

[01:30:17] TD: Tennessee had and still has a lot of regional jealousy and . . .

BL: Right.

TD: . . . rivalry.

BL: Rivalry.

TD: And of course, we have a certain amount of that here.

BL: Here.

TD: That must have been good training ground for you . . .

BL: Right.

TD: . . . as far as dealing with regional rivalries.

BL: Yeah, and a highly Republican area, although we had some strong Democrats. It was a—the Knoxville . . .

TD: That's the heart of Republican Tennessee.

BL: That's the heart of the—later, after DeeDee and I got married, one of the fun things we did was go to the World's Fair in Knoxville, and Lee Zachary, who was manager of the Springdale Chamber, we all took a gigantic watermelon over there as a part of the Arkansas delegation to go.

TD: Chamber work involves a lot of just plain old promotion.

BL: Yes. We did all kinds of retail promotions. We had circuses on the main street of town to draw people. We promoted tourism

all the way up in the East to Florida to get people to drive that corridor and stay at the motels and eat at the restaurants.

TD: Well, how did you make the jump from Maryville to . . .

BL: Lafayette.

TD: . . . Lafayette, Indiana?

BL: Well, Lafayette is also a major Alcoa town, and around Lafayette on the east side of town is an industrial belt. And they were about to—or in the process of rearranging the tax program for that property, and it so happened that the guy that was manager of the chamber there became the director of the Indiana Bankers Association. A guy named Bob O'Bannon. Bob's family—longtime politicians [*TD takes a drink*] in that part of the world. Anyway, it's through that same Alcoa group of contacts that led me to a contact in Lafayette/West Lafayette. And the big issue on the front end there was an election of a mayor in Lafayette and an election of a mayor in West Lafayette that would be friendly to the industrial community and delay or modify the city's plans for taxing that area. And we were successful in electing the right people.

[01:33:12] TD: Did you find that when you moved from Maryville to the Lafayette area that you had a totally different organized labor situation?

BL: We had . . .

TD: Was labor . . .

BL: . . . we had basically the same organizations, but the comparisons to having a union-owned store, nothing like that existed in Lafayette or West Lafayette.

[01:33:46] TD: Was there a greater degree of the workforce that was unionized in that area?

BL: Yes. There was a—both areas were highly organized and two big issues—I was not in Lafayette but about a year and a half. But the two big issues other than the elections, we located a corn-processing plant that is an Anheuser-Busch facility that basically is—the corn syrups used in candies and hundreds of other things. That was a big location for the area and really satisfied folks at the time. The Lafayette/West Lafayette is—in those days was sort of like havin' Fort Smith and Fayetteville across the river from each other. And Purdue was a magnificent university that we had just kicked off—they had started it; we were able to get some activity in it—a research park connected to Purdue. It's my understanding now that it is basically a major retail piece of property, and the research has moved on campus or someplace else and didn't continue to live there. But we—the major lobbyin' function that we did, and this was started before I

got there, but it just—I got to be a part of it, was lobbying the Indiana legislature for a school of architecture for Purdue. And we had them convinced that that would be—that the governor and the legislature would do that. And the president of the university went to a meeting with the governor, and they cut a deal or made a commitment that Purdue University would open a campus at Hammond in the northern part of Indiana, and the architecture school would go to the University of Indiana. So didn't get exactly what they wanted, but they got somethin' that they thought was much, much better. They had such a campus. They had such a opportunity for education population closer to Chicago, and they wanted to provide a educational opportunity for those folks, for those students, and it worked out real well. Those were the two major projects that I got to work on. I was living there when Kennedy was assassinated. And I can remember walkin' across the street from my office to the hotel to watch the news of that sad day.

[01:36:46] TD: How did you get recruited to come to Little Rock?

BL: Well, I—we were sittin' at home one afternoon after work, and a group of Little Rock guys were on a series of phones. And they called me and said, "We've all been talkin', and Mr. Cantrell's had a heart attack, and it's not that he's gonna retire, but he's—

he is not gonna be able to do the things he had been doin' at the vigor he had been doin' 'em at."

[01:37:22] TD: What was Mr. Cantrell's first name?

BL: Frank Cantrell.

TD: Frank Cantrell.

BL: Yeah. Frank had been the executive vice president of the State Chamber of Commerce from, like, 1944 to what—that was, I guess, [19]60—1964. And it was in the fall. It was late—near Thanksgivin', as I remember. Well, it was probably in early November, whenever they were having their annual meeting. So anyway, they said, "We want you to come back. I. J. Steed, who is a longtime member in industrial community development, is also gonna retire, so we gotta splay—we got a place." And of course, my wife then wanted to come back to Little Rock, and I did, too. I always hoped I could come back to Little Rock or the state in some kind of a role, but it was goin' further way instead of closer to it. So we came down, I had an interview, and I took a pretty substantial cut in pay. And we joined the state chamber. And I was—in the beginning, I was the director of industrial and community development and kicked off a great program . . .

TD: This would've been in 1964.

BL: It would've been—when I started, it was January 1965.

TD: Okay.

BL: But when the interviewing and the moving took place, it would be [19]64. The state chamber had created a really super group of Arkansas business people into a industrial development committee to work in cooperation with the Arkansas Industrial Development Commission. And Pat Wilson, who was then president of the Bank of Jacksonville, was then chairman and a past president—immediate past president of the state chamber . . .

[01:39:29] TD: He—that's Kenneth Pat Wilson.

BL: Kenneth Pat Wilson, very, very significant person in the university's life and very significant person in the life of Arkansas and central Arkansas, was the chairman of it. And what they wanted to do, Tom, was they wanted a national marketing program. They wanted to market Arkansas all over the United States for plant locations. It wasn't that they hadn't been doin' that, but they wanted to accelerate that. So I served—I began to serve as a coordinator for a group of people from the utility companies, the Arkansas Industrial Development Commission, and the railroads, and the state chamber. And we'd have from ten to thirteen or fourteen guys on this team all the time. And

we—to start with, we didn't have a—at the state level or at AP&L's level or any place in the state—we had to have a direct-mail program. So our offices were in the Wallace Building, and I went out and found some old Robotyper equipment, which operate like a piano roller. And you could set 'em on that rug there, and you could surround that Robotyper with IBM typewriters, hook it up together. You could have a girl sittin' in the middle, and she could type the salutations on those letterheads and then punch a button, and it would type the letter. And so we would type hundreds of letters to prospects. We'd buy Dun & Bradstreet lists of Chicago, New York, Milwaukee, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Cleveland, Philadelphia. And we would just work these lists and write these letters, and then we would make a trip and cold-call on those folks. And we'd get a prospect; it would come back. And whoever had the prospect would stay home and work with the prospect and go to the communities. It was a fabulous piece of work. And out of that led to a lot of things. [01:42:00] The guy who had the job I have now with Arkansas Western Gas Company, a guy named Leonard Kendall, made those trips with us. Leonard is the one who sold the city of Fayetteville on buying that property that's now the industrial park south of town because he could see that

we needed properties to sell. And it happened all over the state. The industrial sites in Little Rock were put together and . . .

TD: Yes, Little Rock was not operating in a vacuum by itself.

BL: No.

TD: This was going on all over the state.

BL: All over the state.

[01:42:35] TD: And I presume AIDC was giving you some help.

BL: AIDC was providin' people to go with us. There was the Industrial Research and Extension Center, which was a part of the university, headed by Bart Westerland, was doin' the research for us. And Dr. Charles Venus and others over there made trips. They would help us make the presentation. They would do our presentation for us. If we were gonna talk to steel people, they'd—they would give us the information that we needed to make a good presentation to a manufacturer of a steel product. If we were gonna talk to people who manufactured shirts, they would give us the presentation we oughta make to a shirt manufacturer. And it went on and on and on. And we were locating, in that period of time, we were locating probably fifty or more plants a year. And somewhere in one of those newsletters, there will be a chart of the number of plants located per year and the manufacturing expansions per year and the dollar

investments of those projects. Now my role in that got strengthened as I went along because I began to become [*doorbell rings*] [*someone claps*] . . .

TD: [*Laughs*] We'll hold that thought.

BL: Okay.

[Tape stopped]

[01:44:20] BL: What I was fixin' to tell you was that bein' the coordinator of the activities . . .

TD: Okay. Well, let's back up just a little bit . . .

BL: Okay.

TD: . . . and start over again 'cause they're gonna wanna film it from the start rather than . . .

BL: Okay. You oughta go back to when I first came on board as director of industrial and economic development, one of the major things they wanted to do was a nationwide marketing program. So we organized a group of individuals representing utility companies, the University of Arkansas, the Industrial Research and Extension Center and the railroads and the state chamber, and we designed a marketing strategy and a group that would travel the United States, selling Arkansas to manufacturers. And the Industrial Research and Extension Center prepared—helped us prepare our presentations and it—at

the state-chamber level, we put together a direct-mail program usin' old Robotypers and individuals who'd type the letters. We'd get the governor to sign 'em, or we'd get other prominent people, well known nationwide, even Mr. Rockefeller would sign 'em, and others—so to try to get the door open for us to make our presentations. And we had some tremendous guys that were part of that team, guys who really could make an impression, like Joe and Jim Dildy, John Watson, who had been the air base commander at the Blytheville Air Base. When they walked in a room, you just—they really did make an impression. My strength began to grow in that group because it was my job to talk about the business climate and that I could try to persuade companies that you can operate in Arkansas and make a profit. And then as we grew further into it, I began to be in a position to talk about whether or not, to the best of our ability, we could say, "You could operate here perhaps without bein' organized in this community," or maybe "We'll have a greater chance of bein' organized." Now as that developed and as you look at the number of companies that were comin' in, fifty a year, you had plenty of opportunities for the organizations to be organizin' and tryin' to organize. So my friendship with the labor attorneys, who were bein' hired by the companies to work for

them gave, me a constant—an association with people who were involved in that activity. [01:47:26] And that was further added to by the fact that Dr. Westerland and I—it was largely his idea, but we come up with a program to teach supervisors. We—we've—the first person we hired to help us with that was a boy from California who had been Kaiser Aluminum Company's supervisor developer, development director, for startup plants. So he came to Arkansas, and we started a series of programs to teach supervisors to work in these plants and to teach technical people to work in these plants. So now we got not only the people who were workin' in the companies on the nonorganizing side, we're teaching supervisors that are gonna work in those plants. And before I left the state chamber AIA, that whole organization—bef—and before they had moved to UALR, was housed in the state chamber. And we had probably gone through—40- or 50,000 people had gone through those courses. And we had at least 4 or 5 people on the staff at that point in time. And what the state chamber did was market that, and the university taught 'em. And they had a great group of teachers who could teach management skills. And if you could imagine tryin' to staff 50 plants around the state with foremen and supervisors, it was a real need. So it filled a void. So my role,

and as it went along further and further, grew away from the actual marketing but every—for years and years, all the plants that would come to Arkansas, for the most part, somehow or the other, I would have some little role in it dealing with operating community development. And then what we had on the bottom side of that is we sponsored what we called the Arkansas Community Development Program. And I coordinated that activity, and it was financed by the utility people. But we had a group of staff people from the utilities and from the state chamber who went across Arkansas every week, workin' the local communities to prepare themselves to be able to market themselves to an industrial plant when and if it came to the state. So it was a great relationship between local business and community leaders. And we even got to the place where we would give awards to specific individuals in these communities who did the best job of community development.

TD: Yeah.

[01:50:29] BL: And we had a big luncheon, and that would—in those days, that was the only place where an individual could really get statewide recognition for what he or she did at home. And that went on for twenty years.

TD: Many of those companies moving in from up north were

interested in a nonunion environment.

BL: Yeah. Some of them were, and some of them were not. There were some that were—that was what they would like to have. But all of 'em wanted the right-to-work atmosphere; they wanted to operate, if they were gonna operate with a union, to operate in one where the people could belong to the union or not belong to the union.

[01:51:15] TD: When you say right-to-work, you're referring to a constitutional amendment . . .

BL: Amendment.

TD: . . . to the Arkansas state . . .

BL: Arkansas state.

TD: . . . constitution . . .

BL: Right.

TD: . . . from . . .

BL: Amendment 34.

TD: . . . from the postwar era . . .

BL: Right.

TD: . . . in which Arkansas—this constitutional amendment states that workers do not—are—cannot be forced to join a labor union.

BL: Right. That's right.

TD: And that's still in the books, and it has been a target of labor

unions ever since.

BL: [*Laughs*] That's right.

TD: And still remains a target to this day.

BL: Yeah.

TD: I'm sure that no large company or even small company makes a decision to relocate based upon whether or not their people are unionized. So I'm sure there it's one of many factors.

BL: Oh yeah, and it's u—it's not one of the major factors. You got all the transportation; you got utility costs; you got just-in-time-now delivery of the raw material; you got thousands of items that go into a decision other than whether or not to be organized or not. In many instances, it's whether or not they can find enough people to fill the workforce. That's always been a problem with small towns in Arkansas. And we had to do thousands and thousands of labor studies to convince companies that, "Yes, there's five hundred people here for you to hire a hundred, and here's their background," and . . .

TD: And that continues to this very day.

[01:52:58] BL: And that continues to this very day. And now you—it's bein' done—well, in the case of the steel mill that we just lost. Since we serve Blytheville, we participated in that project. [*Pen clicks*] We hired a—an outside consulting firm to come in

and help us, state, utilities, to help us convince the steel company that, "Yes, there'd be enough people in eastern Arkansas." And the final presentation of that, Tom, was made at the Pleasant Valley Country Club, and the president of Arkansas State University, the president of the community college in Blytheville, the workforce development people, all had a role in tryin' to convince those folks down to the place where the workforce people would go to Germany, or they'd go to Brazil, wherever this raw material was, and learn the techniques for teaching in Arkansas. And that—that's a situation that will go on forever. That's just part of the training skills that are needed.

[01:54:20] TD: Mh-hmm. When you came to chamber work in Little Rock, all of the aluminum—the Alcoa and Reynolds plants were all unionized . . .

BL: Right.

TD: . . . if I'm not mistaken.

BL: Right.

TD: The steel mill at Blytheville is . . .

BL: Not organized.

TD: . . . not unionized.

BL: Not organized.

TD: Through the years, you worked with, I know, J. Bill Becker . . .

BL: Right.

[01:54:46] TD: . . . from organized labor. But you probably worked with any number of organized-labor people through the years. Could we talk a little bit about those—that work and your association with Becker and organized labor?

BL: Well . . .

[01:55:04] TD: You came out of a background, a farming background, where you would not have known organized labor as you were growing up.

BL: Yeah.

TD: So you got to know it after you got into chamber-management work . . .

BL: Yeah.

TD: . . . I'm sure.

BL: Yeah, I did. The relationship basically with the leaders in the union was not in individually organizing plants. I was not involved in that. They—our relationship dealt with public policy and legislative issues. And Bill was always takin', of course, the side of organized labor, and I grew in to takin' the side of management on public-policy issues. And those public policy issue deals with taxes, unemployment insurance, workers compensation, freedom to work, the sales tax on food, and

issues like that. He and I, we got together on some issues, we—but for the most part, we were al—we always had a difference and tried to find a way to work it out. We were never disagreeable with each other. I think he had respect for me; I had respect for him, and we tried to maintain it at that level. As a matter of fact, when they did a appreciation luncheon for me in Little Rock, which was a magnanimous thing, fifteen hundred people came to it, he was videoed and made very complimentary remark. And there was a period in time when people would introduce me as a rich man's Bill Becker because we both had [*TD laughs*] a lot of hair and—but we—but like he said, "We always had our differences and always had fights." [01:57:20] When I first came to work at the state chamber and the first year that the officers asked me to start the lobbyin', Bill had really sort of the upper hand at the capitol building on all those issues. And some of them were not—were outta hand, not because he wanted them to be, but because they'd grown up that way. And he took—he was pushin' 'em along, of course, but he had a great presence before the television camera. He was really articulate, probably the most sought after person to interview, other than the governor, in the state. And he would come to the capitol building and have a press conference in the

middle of a committee meeting. And he'd come right into committee meeting, and if a committee meeting hadn't started, he'd hold a press conference right there. Well, you can imagine what that did to the members of the general assembly. I mean, it deflated any interest in the issue. And in order to kinda derail that, I used to go out and get enough people to come in and sit in all the chairs and stand against the wall, so he couldn't have those press conferences. [*Laughter*] And finally when he caught on to what I was doin', well, we shifted to somethin' else. But we had a good time.

[01:59:02] TD: He was not an Arkansan.

BL: No. He . . .

TD: He was from, I think, somewhere up north, if I'm not mistaken.

BL: He—I think he was a president of a garment group from somewhere up there and came here and became president of the AF—I think when he first came here, he was an organizer, then ran for office and got elected president of AFL-CIO. He had some good guys workin' with him. Gerald Jacobs from down at Arkadelphia and Morril—Malvern, who was part of the steelworkers' group, very solid guy, very good legislative lobbyist and spent more time at the doors of the capitol than Bill did. And I think when we defeated his efforts to repeal the

right-to-work amendment by 2-1 vote, the tide changed for us. And we did a lot of other things that helped with that, but I think that was the thing that put the business community in—and gave me a boost up. And we—but we had some wonderful guys, volunteers, working on that project. We—the committee hired Cecil Alexander to be the spokesperson for it. I organized the organization and helped raise the money and hire the advertising agencies and all that kind of thing. And we worked as a team, and we got that done, and that put us on an even keel. [02:01:02] But before we'd done that, we had created the ESD Advisory Council. In the early days of 1964-1965, in that area, if you had an unemployment-insurance problem, a lotta guys took that directly to the legislature. So the legislature would have forty or fifty of those issues to deal with. It was takin' up so much time. And we—so we organized the ESD Advisory Council, with an equal number of labor members, an equal number of business people, and an equal number from the public. And Jim Argue's father served as chairman of that for a long time, as a major pastor in the city of Little Rock, prominent guy. Well, we were able to get an agreed hand between organized labor and management around all those issues and reduce those issues to one bill or two bills that would be agreed

to. [*Camera beeps*] And we got the legislature to come to the place. Is that us?

KK: That's—I'm out of tape.

BL: Oh, okay.

TD: He's gonna have to switch.

BL: Okay.

[Tape stopped]

[02:02:21] BL: The issues that impact both organized labor and the business community, like unemployment insurance, we were able to get a good working group that, every year over a series of meetings, they could reach an agreement on the legislation that oughta be introduced to set the public policy during the—dealing with that subject. And there were times when we had bigger tax increases on the business community that we agreed to than we would in the general-funding part of the activity in order to take care of funding the trust fund for unemployment and unemployed people to draw out of who lost their job through no cause of their own. The same thing happened in workers compensation. There were oftentimes when we couldn't reach agreement, and for the fun of a story, I'll tell you one of those. I cannot remember the exact amendment, but there was amendment that organized labor wanted on the workers-comp

law passed badly, and session went on and on, and finally they got an amendment on a joint-budget bill to do what they wanted to do and got the bill passed in the senate. Now the significance of this is you got to get seventy-five votes in the house if you're gonna take that amendment off. And we were able to get about forty or fifty volunteers, people who would really help, come to the capitol building, and we got David Matthews, prominent lawyer, member of the legislature, to handle the bill. And we were able to remove the amendment from the bill. First we had to spin the rules; that's seventy-five votes. Then remove the amendments; that's another seventy-five votes. And then pass the bill for seventy-five votes. And to the best of my knowledge, that's never happened before or since. But it took a lotta work, and shortly after that, why, we had another disagreement, and Governor Clinton told us the legislation we were interested in, he wouldn't sign, for us to get together, and we did get together and had a special session that he called just to deal with workers-compensation issues. They were all fun, some good, some bad, some ups, and some downs and—but over the years, it was issue after issue after issue that you just—that's the way it is. That's the way you're gonna to deal with those issues. If you're dealing with a sales tax on food, state chamber always

opposed the removal of sales tax on food because it was the best tax-collection agents—agency that we had, along with the tax collection that utilities can do—two forms of cash flow, along with income tax, that operated the state. And so those are the, you know, the types of issues that we were involved in.

[02:06:16] One of the major issues while I was there, Tom, in the Clinton administration, dealt with the Little Rock/North Little Rock/Pulaski County segregation issue. And somewhere there is a complimentary article by Brummett, who—about what we were able to do. But Bill came out at our house and sat in the chair that we have kept because of his presidency [*TD laughs*] and asked for our help. And we spent a full week helping pass that legislation that kept the schools out of the—kept federal courts from takin' over the administration of the schools. We put, I think, $30 million into that program that year. It's—this past year, it's now up to 65. Next year it'll be up to 67, to show you how it's grown in that period of time. But I still think it was the thing to do rather than let the courts take it over because, at the time, the results that was goin' on in Kansas City and St. Louis were not very good to look at. And I'm glad we helped him get that done. It was a lotta hard work, and it took a lot of activity on my part especially to deal with that issue, in addition

to a few volunteers, but it was a good thing for us to do.

TD: You didn't do all of these projects on your own.

BL: I had . . .

TD: You had lots of help, both paid help and corps of volunteers.

BL: Right.

[02:08:09] TD: Why don't we talk about some of your main helpers through the years?

BL: The state chamber and AIA is—are organizations that have their own boards but the same staff. And when we there, we had a hundred members on those boards, and we met twice a year and adopted the policy of this organization based on the committee reports that we had committees, based on issues, give those boards, and the boards would adopt 'em. Those boards scattered all over the state, along with fifteen hundred members or so, and the local chambers and the trade associations, and they all kinda come together as one on most of these issues. And the help was just—it just came from everywhere, Tom, just everywhere. And we never had any trouble raisin' money. These issue campaigns that we would have every other year, and I guess, in the twenty-five years maybe we had twelve or thirteen of those issues. One time I counted up, we'd raised over $35 million to fund those

campaigns. And when the legislature was not in session, I spent a great deal of my time the last sixteen or eighteen years there raising money and helping people raise money. And on some of those issues, we would—if there were issues we were promoting, we'd have as many as three advertising agencies helpin' us. We—on one usury issue, I remember, we had Ben Combs handling the petition drive; we had Bob Wimberly helpin' us with the fund-raising; and we had Cranford Johnson doin' the campaign itself. Oh, good, professional help, terrific people. The business community themselves elected top officers every year. They're prominent business people from around the state with tremendous careers. People like Charles Scharlau here in town, Alan Nixon in Jonesboro, Jimmy Mason in Stuttgart, Jim Nichols, and Warren Bray, and Mike—and Jim—and Mr. Maulden at . . .

TD: Little Rock.

BL: . . . AP&L in Little Rock. We had Peter George with the Dierks family in Hot Springs. I could go on and on. Jeff Starling, who was one of the leading labor lawyers in the state from Pine Bluff, was a president one year. And they were all—Cass Huff with Daisy was a president of AIA one year. They were all top, top people. H. L. Hembree with Arkansas Best Motor Freight. I

couldn't have asked for better people, and I'm sorry I can't name every one of 'em right off the top of my head. But they were just outstanding. They . . .

[02:11:41] TD: If you had a campaign coming up that you needed to raise some money on, who would be the first five people you would contact?

BL: Well, it probably would depend on the issue.

TD: Let's say it's the . . .

BL: If . . .

TD: . . . usury issue.

[02:11:54] BL: If it was a usury issue, it would be people like Bill Bowen [*claps hands*]. . .

TD: The banker, Bill Bowen.

BL: . . . the banker. Cecil Cupp, the banker . . .

TD: From Hot Springs.

BL: Right. Penick, the McAdamses in Jonesboro, the Tom Wilsons and the Pat Wil—Tom Wilson in Conway, Pat Wilson . . .

TD: In Jacksonville.

BL: Jacksonville. The two bankers here in town.

TD: McIlroys, perhaps?

BL: McIlroy—he and Lewises, the Steeles, the Allens in . . .

TD: The canning company?

BL: The canning company owned a bank. Miss Peck down at Texarkana.

TD: Julia Peck.

BL: Julia Peck. Mr. Campbell at Forrest City. I know I've left some off but—we didn't miss any. They all had an interest in it, and they would all help us. And the two bankers in Russellville, the two bankers in Morrilton, the banker in Ozark, the banks in Fort Smith—all of 'em made contributions and kept on makin' contributions. I mean, they just—they didn't just make one and quit if things didn't go good. They always felt like we were puttin' out the effort, and they were gonna stay with the team.

[02:13:37] TD: I know that you were involved in various ethics legislation proposals. Can you talk about that a little bit?

BL: The year that the ethics proposal was presented, there was also a fair-tax amendment presented as legislative issues. Governor Clinton was for the ethics issue, and the executive vice president of the Arkansas Sheriffs' Association and I were the only two trade-association execs who stepped up and spoke out against the proposed ethics issues. I felt like that the ethics issues, and I think I'm—I still think I'm right, I thought the ethics issue was going to create a paper curtain around the capitol building, and in the end, it would prevent business people and professional

people from goin' to the capitol building and lobbyin' in their own interest. And instead it would create a proliferation of paid lobbyists. And in fact, that's basically kinda what it's done. You used to could go to the capitol building, and it would not be uncommon to see Witt or Jack Stephens out there lookin' after their own business, as an example. That doesn't happen anymore. It used to be that you could see the president of AP&L out there at the capitol building, looking after their own business, or the general manager of one of these paper companies or—on and on. Today they've got someone hired. Now some of those job descriptions in those big companies have changed, but in my thoughts about what has now occurred is a current, modern-day manager would really not like to have an ethics complaint filed against him for some reason, if he failed to make a report, or he did the wrong thing. So therefore they just get it done some other way. Most of the witnesses ?instead? witnessing it before committees, instead of bein' done by a top business person, it's done by an attorney, or in some cases, by a lobbyist themselves who are paid to do it. And to me, it's sorta s—caused a step-back from the process for a lotta business people. And I opposed it then, and I'm not sorry that I did. I felt strongly about it. It wasn't that I—we weren't reporting

already. We were reporting what we were doin'. It wasn't that people didn't know what we were doin'. The papers would report on it. I used to get a five-star week by the *Gazette*. They would run a news—they'd run a front-page article about what I was doin'. They'd run a front-page article in the second section about what we were doing. And they would run a editorial. They'd run an op-page editorial and a con—and then they'd run a cartoon. So I got plenty of notoriety from things that we were doin', and I never felt like that we weren't—that we were doin' anything that we weren't reporting on. Now we're still reporting, and we still will li—we're goin' by the law every day, but it exists where it exists. But I felt like then that it would do what I think it's done now and I . . .

[02:18:06] TD: Did the state chamber take a position on term limits? Do you recall?

BL: I don't recall whether they took a position on term limits or not. I . . .

TD: What's your personal opinion about term limits?

BL: I was not for term limits. Let me go back a little bit just to get to there. Under the—in the Bumpers administration, I was asked to be on a statewide group to reorganize the legislature. In those days before that time, we had all of the agencies that

are now in the ?Big Mac? building in the capitol building where the AIDC, the Parks and Travel Commission, and others, History Commission, and others who—and we were havin' committee meetings in the hallways, and it was not a very good, organized way, and we had too many committees. [02:19:11] So the—Governor Bumpers appointed a group of people, legislators and citizens, to this study committee, and the house elected Dr. Cal Ledbetter as the chairman of it, and the senate elected me as the vice chairman of it. And we organized—we had an outside consulting company that help—come and help us design a plan to organize the current committee system that exists and the committee rooms that we still have today. And that helped, in my mind, to spread out the influence that had previously existed in, say, one or two, three people in the house and in the senate. Now you got committee chairmen, who by seniority, get to the committee, and you've got prominent committee people who have knowledge servin' on those committees. And they had a lot of knowledge. So when you were dealing with Ben Allen in the Revenue Committee at the senate, you were dealin' with someone who was very knowledgeable in revenue flow. When you were dealin' with Max Howell, who was then chairman of the joint budget, you were dealin' with somebody who knew state

government. And John Miller in the house—those guys had long lines of experience and spent a lotta time at doin' it. [02:20:53] As we went into this term-limits issue, the—you've got six years and out in the house and eight years and out in the senate, unless they happen to make a draw and get an extra two years. And it's just when you're dealin' with the magnitude of the budget and the number of people that are in state and local government that they've got to set budgets for, it's just hard for me to believe that anybody can go in and get their arms around what's goin' on in all the prisons, higher education, welfare, human services. It's just impossible. I don't think they can ever get there. And I know some of 'em work real hard at it. We've got guys and girls who spend full time being legislators, even with a part-time legislative system. But I think they oughta have a little more time to serve in that job. Plus, I think it's a mis—I think it's not treating those individuals right to not have a retirement plan for 'em for the time they spend away from their family. I just noticed Kevin Evans said, "I'm six years of this, and I've got teenage kids, and I don't wanna run again." Wonderful guy, just really got to the place where he really understands the general assembly and the way it operates and the funding and—but that's the system we're operating under.

TD: You have mentioned a number of legislators. Max Howell being one of them. Ben Allen.

BL: Yeah.

[02:22:45] TD: I'm going to ask you, if you would, to share with us some of the absolute favorite legislators that you've dealt with through the years. And then I'm gonna ask you for your least favorite legislators—not personally, but from the perspective of your own work. Who were your top five . . .

BL: Well, I'll answer the first one, but I might not answer the second one, okay?

TD: All right, we'll go one at a time.

[02:23:14] BL: Well, let me say it this way. I could not even begin to tell you how well received by the members of the general assembly that I've been over the years. I have never had any of 'em seriously, even though they might've disagreed with me, seriously have any kind of a relationship that was bad with me. [*TD takes a drink*] We could be on the opposite sides, but it's always been a friendly, very congenial, working relationship. And always been open to what we've had to say or what we've had to sell. There have been so many—when you start talkin' about from 1965 to now, that's a long period of time, and Cecil Alexander was a top person.

TD: From Heber Springs?

BL: From Heber Springs. John Miller from Melbourne, Ernest Cunningham from Helena. I'll just go down the speakers' list. Bobby Hogue. Back and more recent time, the current speakers, they're all top folks. In the senate, of course, you'd have to put Max and Knox in a top role and Ben Allen.

[02:24:53] TD: Now Ben Allen would not necessarily have agreed with you on everything.

BL: No, he—Ben and I were on opposite sides of most of the tax issues, and there were times when he would really give me a goin' over when I would come into his committee. But part of that problem was that this business community had more votes in his committee than he did. So it didn't go always the way that he wanted it to. And for a number of years, the business community had more votes in the senate labor committee than the chairman had. That was Senator Moore from El Dorado. But Senator Moore and I always had good relationships. It wasn't a—it was just a matter of the issues were controversial, and so one side went with the other. Guys like Lloyd George were great to work with. Doc Bryan. I mean, I could just go on and on. They were all super. Dick Barclay from here.

TD: Rogers.

BL: Charlie Stewart was a prince of a guy to work with, just a prince of a guy. Senator Elrod from Siloam Springs—just—B. G. Hendrix from Fort Smith. Just great guys. Doc Bryan was from Russellville. Earl Jones from Texarkana. Sittin' here thinkin' about—and I—to name the ones I least like, most people would say, well, you know, the controversy that Nick Wilson got in. But ?when? Nick Wilson is in the Senate and the House, and I'm dealin' with him, he was fine. I mean, we had a good relationship. He was a good senator. He was able to get things done, somebody you wanted to work with. Same thing as when he was in the House, when he was first elected from Pocahontas in the House. He right away became a person who knew how to work the system and was—you could see he was gonna move up. Guys like Buddy Turner from Pine Bluff, who was a speaker. Buddy Turner was a tremendous speaker. The—Mr. Thompson from Marked Tree, Nick Thompson's dad that's a prominent lawyer in . . .

TD: Was that Mack Thompson?

BL: Yeah. Mack Thompson was a good guy.

TD: Did you ever have any dealings . . .

BL: Bill Foster and John Paul Capps.

TD: John Paul Capps is still in the legislature.

BL: Still in the senate but good people. And good people to work with.

[02:28:04] TD: What about the Hot Springs delegation? That was a different group of people in some ways. Can you talk about any of those folks?

BL: Well, of course . . .

TD: Ray Smith, of course, was well known.

BL: Ray Smith was a—was an easy guy to work with. He sometimes would because of his constituency, not always find everything that we were interested in, nor neither would Q. Byrum Hurst, but they were not, you know, they were not un-nice to us or—one of the real guys that stands out was Senator Bell from Parkin. He was a tremendous longtime senator. He . . .

TD: Clarence Bell.

BL: Clarence Bell and Kenneth Camp, who worked for the State Chamber and, when Kenneth was the superintendent at Parkin, sponsored the first legislation dealing with the school-funding formula that we—they couldn't pass it that year that they offered it. Both of them were superintendents. School formula that they offered that didn't get passed. Lloyd George rewrote it, and the next year it passed, to start the school formula for public schools. And both of them were top-notch senators. They . . .

TD: I'm going to, at this point . . .

BL: Broadway and his boy are also good—are good legislators. [*Claps hands*] I'll stop there.

[02:29:51] TD: Shane Broadway?

BL: Sh—Broadway and—I said Broadway and his boy. I'm talkin' about the Jonesboro senator that just recently passed away in his . . .

TD: Bookout.

BL: Bookout and his boy.

TD: Senator Bookout.

BL: Shane Broadway's a good senator. Shane Broadway is one of those guys who has really spent the time.

TD: He works on it full time?

BL: Full time. He tries to understand the school program and . . .

TD: I'm gonna ask you one more question dealing with elected public officials. Then I want to talk about your family.

BL: Okay.

[02:30:26] TD: I'm gonna name each of the governors that you've worked with.

BL: Okay.

TD: And I want you to give me a quick reaction to them.

BL: Okay.

TD: Orval Faubus.

BL: Orval Faubus made a great contribution to the state of Arkansas by realizing that we needed to change the way we were doin' industrial development and creation of jobs. So he organized a group to write the legislation that created the AIDC, and then he moved forward with it from there. I think that was the initial step that got us to the place where we really started developing, and he saw the value of bringin' Rockefeller into the state and usin' him in a positive way.

[02:31:20] TD: Mh-hmm. Rockefeller himself went to . . .

BL: Rockefeller, of course, right from the beginning, he had all the new Republican issues to overcome. And he worked at 'em gently and quietly. He had some prison problems that he had to deal with, and he dealt with those. He made himself available. For example, he would get his major department heads, ESD, AIDC, state planning, one or the other ones, and invite me. And oftentime we'd go out to Adams Field, and he'd be there with his airplane, and we would fly to St. Louis or Shreveport or New Orleans or someplace and come back. While we were on that trip, he would be talkin' to us about what he wanted and what he saw was necessary to grow Arkansas and what he would hope that we could all work together on to ?get done?. And . . .

TD: One of Rockefeller's major areas of contribution to Arkansas was in peaceful race relations.

BL: Yes.

TD: He oversaw the integration of state government, for example, hiring large numbers of black employees. Also—but he started really quite early. When he first came to Morrilton, he had a black farm manager . . .

BL: Manager, who was a . . .

TD: A guy named Atkinson.

BL: And he was a very nice guy.

[02:32:59] TD: I was going to ask you if you had a chance . . .

BL: And I met him and his wife a number of times, and he was always super friendly and very knowledgeable.

TD: Mh-hmm. He only died a few years ago.

BL: Yeah. I had lost track of him.

TD: I once had Peg Smith, who was married to Judge George Rose Smith . . .

BL: Rose Smith.

TD: She told me that one time Rockefeller was coming to their house, and he said he was bringing his farm manager. And she said, "Good, we'll have some tea." And so she said when they got there, he had a black man with him. And she said, "That

was the first black person I had ever had in my living room, and I served tea to him."

BL: Oh yeah.

TD: So what an experience that was for Rockefeller to set a whole different stage and agenda for race relations.

BL: Yeah.

[02:33:50] TD: Dale Bumpers, following Rockefeller.

BL: Dale Bumpers. Dale saw the need for increasing funding and really promoted an increase in the income tax. We were not necessarily on the very same page on that issue and I—my good friend, Martin Borchert, and Charlie Venus were helpin' him with that, and I told him, I said, "You're gonna raise more money with this program than you can possibly imagine, and it'll be way more than you're talkin' about." And sure enough, as it turned out, they did have—farmers all got rich that year and paid more taxes than they'd ever paid. And as I recall, he had to have a special session to help spend what he had left over on other things. But I thought he was a tremendous leader. His heart was in the right place, and frankly, I was so happy when he didn't run for the senate and decided to serve a second year 'cause he brought a lot—people liked him. When he made speeches and talked about his program, you could just feel a

whole lot better feeling after it was over.

TD: Yes. In his later career, people began to talk about Dale Bumpers as kind of an imperial person. Well, that's not the way Dale Bumpers was known . . .

BL: No.

TD: . . . to most Arkansans.

BL: No.

TD: He was known as having a tremendous touch for the common person.

BL: Right. He was perfect. You just—you—even if you didn't agree with him, you could not keep from likin' him, and you could not keep from understanding what he was tryin' to do. And for the most part, it was all very good. Arkansas needed some more money in those days. It was—we were not doin' all that well. No. It just—we were creating more jobs, but we weren't, compared to the nation, we weren't jumpin'. We're small. Small towns, small employers. The biggest employers we had was the aluminum people and the paper companies, and the rest of it was all pretty small deals. And he—I thought he really stepped into a time when it just was a good time to come.

[02:36:42] TD: And he was succeeded by David Pryor.

SL: Tom, one moment, please.

BL: Okay.

[Tape stopped]

[02:36:47] TD: Okay. We just finished talking about Governor Dale Bumpers and later Senator Dale Bumpers. And Bumpers was succeeded by David Pryor. Talk about David Pryor and your relationship with him.

BL: Well, David Pryor, when he became governor, was a little bit like Beebe is now. He'd had the experience of bein' in the house, and he had a relationship with a lot of the members of the house and some with the senate. Some of the goals and objectives that he had early on, like shifting the funding responsibility for certain kinds of activities to the local communities, didn't catch hold. But some of the things he did that I worked with him on—we were about to start to face one of the aluminum mills bein' closed, and David came up with a program to give them some incentives that I think kept open Jones Mills for at least two or three years. And I don't remember how many—how much money was involved in it, but several hundred thousand dollars. But he had a way about him that people also liked. They liked Barbara, and they liked him, and you could also see that he was headed for higher ground. He had a—there's just somethin' about his presence and the way he spoke, the way he dealt with

you when you personally wanted to talk to him, that let you know that he was interested in what you were interested in, and one of the real things he did to help us at the gas company, after I came to work for the gas company, Southwestern Energy had bought a lot of the leases on Fort Chaffee, and we were havin' trouble finding a time to drill between training periods on Fort Chaffee by the military. And Scharlau and I went to Washington and talked to him and Bumpers about our problems, and David had lined us up contacts at the Pentagon so that we were finally, in the end, able to work out a schedule so that Southwestern Energy could drill and stay out of the way of the training program. And I give David a lot of credit for helpin' us get that done.

TD: And of course, he was—he did indeed have higher aspirations and went to the US Senate and—after he left the governor's office. And he was succeeded with—by Bill Clinton.

BL: Right.

[02:39:55] TD: In Clinton's first term, that is. Did you have dealings with Bill Clinton?

BL: Yes, we did. One of the first things out of the box that we had with Bill Clinton was there was an effort to repeal the sales tax on food, and Bill and Hillary came down to our campaign office

and stuffed envelopes and helped us with our campaign to avoid him losing the revenue in that issue. And I don't think he'd even been elected yet. It was in the—he knew he was headed in that direction, but over the years, I—I've probably spent more time with him than any of the other governors. I just happened to get closer to him.

[02:40:48] TD: Well, he was also governor for a long period of time.

BL: Long time and—but I made trips to Europe with him on selling missions to get companies to come to Arkansas. And of course, the thing we talked about earlier, the issue of the Little Rock desegregation program was a major contribution to the state that I got to work with him on. We did a lot of sellin' Arkansas and plant work together. And Nucor-Yamato was just about to locate in Blytheville, and Dave Harrington and I and DeeDee, Charles Scharlau and his wife, Walter Turnbow and his wife, all went to Hilton Head the year he was gonna be chairman of the national governors. And Dave and I convinced Bill that the state ought to meet the request of Nucor-Yamato, and he agreed there at Hilton Head to do that. And Scharlau was on the board of the Haus Corporation with the then chairman of the board of Nucor. And they were gonna meet in Canada the next week, and Bill agreed to let Scharlau tell the Nucor chairman that he

would do what he could in the session of the legislature to be certain that that was carried out, and we'd meet our commitments in the deal. And I don't know how many times he'd come by the house and sit in that chair that we've kept with his name on it to talk about issues and projects, and it was a very, very good workin' relationship. And it just happened to be longer, and I was older and grew more in time. But with David and with Dale and with Rockefeller and then Faubus's last year, they were all good periods of time. Frank White was—he was a personal friend. He had worked at the bank across the street. He and his wife were close friends of ours, and there never was a day when we couldn't walk in his office, announced or unannounced, and visit with him. Just a super time.

TD: And I don't know if you were still active in the state chamber when Clinton left office . . .

BL: Oh . . .

[02:44:00] TD: . . . or had you retired by that point?

BL: I was—we were workin' here at the gas company when he left office and was inaugurated. DeeDee and I and the Scharlaus went to the inauguration, and as a matter of fact, my mother died while we were there, and they let DeeDee and I off at Pocahontas on our way back. I had gone to work at the gas

company when Bill was runnin' for president, and the gas company sent me to New York for a short course and orientation on the operation of a natural gas company, and particularly the utility side of it. And I was up there for almost a month. And his New York headquarters was about three blocks from where the hotel I was staying. And so I went over there every afternoon after we got done, usually six thirty or so, and did whatever there was . . .

TD: Volunteer.

[02:45:00] BL: Yeah, whatever there was to do in the headquarters. And it was a big headquarters, three or four stories high. I always was amazed at how hard the young people that were workin' for him—how much money they spent to dress down. [*Laughter*] They had the best jeans and the best shirts, the best shoes, to be dressed in jeans and shoes and shirts. [*TD laughs*] But it was a very interesting experience for us. And we made trips to Washington and visited with him after he became president a number of times. And—you just couldn't have—in my perspective, I couldn't have had a better relationship with any of those governors. I never had a feeling of bad relationships or "you're somebody that I don't wanna have anything to do with" with any of 'em. They always made me feel

good. They always wanted to do for the good of Arkansas. They wanted to build a better economy. They wanted to improve education and build better highways and roads, the same kinds of things that we were interested in. And a lot of it could have very well been because of who I was workin' for. That made me more important than I would've been otherwise, and I know that, and I appreciate that. Just as an individual off the street, it would've not carried near the weight as to have been workin' for 1,500 prominent businessmen and women around the state.

[02:46:59] TD: Right. Now I want to change the subject to your family.

BL: Okay.

TD: I have had the pleasure of knowing DeeDee, but she's your second wife.

BL: Right.

TD: Who was your first wife?

BL: My first wife was Barbara Smith from Little Rock. Her father was Dr. W. Meyer Smith. We had two children, Dianne and Melinda. Melinda lives in Little Rock and has one son, Cy, and a—and Cy has a grandson, River—all livin' in Little Rock. And my daughter Dianne lives in Harriet, Arkansas and she . . .

TD: Harriet?

BL: Harriet, which is right outside of Marshall. She has a daughter, Linda Lee, and Linda Lee has two daughters, Cali and Ali.

TD: So you have three grandchildren.

BL: I have three—I have two grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

TD: Great-grandchildren.

BL: And after we were divorced, I—DeeDee and I had the same maid, and one day the maid told DeeDee that she ought to meet Mr. Lamb, [*laughter*] that "he be bald headed, but he be nice." So it was through her introduction that I met DeeDee, and we fell in love, and I married her and Scott and Ross, and we moved up on Cantrell Street.

[02:48:41] TD: So you had two daughters who were already out on their own when you met DeeDee?

BL: Right. Right.

TD: And she had two sons still at home?

BL: Still at home.

TD: So you had the pleasure of helping raise two sons.

BL: I did, and it was a very good experience. And they both went to the university and graduated, and they went to Hall High School. DeeDee then was teachin' the first grade, and we had a lotta fun things. She had—would—had a reading program, and we went

over to Ross's elementary school and got Wayne Woods to come and fly his balloon with the idea that we would drop some of her reading material in elementary schools around the city. Well, it happened to be such a windy day, we couldn't get the balloon up. But we had fun doin' things like that.

TD: Yeah.

BL: And she and I made eighteen trips to Washington representing the State Chamber and AIA and visiting with the president and his wife and others over the years. And so . . .

[02:49:55] TD: Speaking about visiting with the president, I should've asked you this earlier, when he was under investigation by prosecutor Kenneth Starr, were you ever approached by Kenneth Starr?

BL: No. Never.

BL: No.

TD: I know that you would've known lots of people whose lives were impacted by that.

BL: Oh yeah, it was sad, very sad. And, you know, that speech that Dale Bumpers made in that case was a masterpiece, just a masterpiece. And I—just—when he picked the Little Rock for his library, I was so pleased. And I've seen him a few times since then, but not a lot. Just on occasions, once in a while I'll run

into him.

TD: Mh-hmm. I want to back up a little bit and ask a final question that I should've asked early on and didn't, so I'm kinda cleaning up now.

BL: Okay.

TD: And you can also throw anything in, at this point, that you would like to.

BL: Okay.

TD: But let me ask you about Associated Industries of Arkansas.

BL: Okay.

[02:51:25] TD: Why was Associated Industries started . . .

BL: Okay.

TD: . . . and why would it need to be separate from the state chamber?

BL: The Associated Industries of Arkansas was started in 1948 as an independent organization primarily to be a voice for manufacturers. And there are always issues that are specific to manufacturers alone. For example, when I was there at the AIA state chamber, the issue of utilities charges between classes of customers, the industrial class of customers was carrying a disproportionate share of the load for rate increases. And we formed an organization, a committee within the AIA and began

to intervene in electric-rate cases in order to try to levelize that rate allocation between classes of customers and probably, oh, raised a million dollars for lawyers and consulting firms. We never did intervene in a gas company case while I was there, but we intervened in maybe eight, ten years of electric-rate cases of all the AP&L, Southwestern Electric Power Company, OG&E and were never in a place of disagreement with the utilities. When the industry group made its decision before I left that it would like to also deal with the rate return on the equity of the utility companies, we told 'em, "Look, that's an issue that you can't do with a organization that's got all kinds of members in it. You've got to figure out another way to do that." So they left us and went to the Rose Law Firm, and they're still doing—they're still intervening in various cases, gas and electric. But that is an example of the kind of issue that a manufacturer organization would take on by itself. And there are others, like transportation issues, that only deal with—they're in the truckin' business, so they have a set of issues dealing with transportation and . . .

TD: Does AIA still . . .

BL: And environmental issues.

[02:54:14] TD: AIA still exists . . .

BL: Yes, it's still a part of . . .

TD: . . . and it's associated with the state chamber.

BL: The state chamber. It has one set of management. Goin' back a little bit further, we organized what is now the Arkansas Environmental Federation at the AIA state chamber in order to deal with all the environmental laws that were comin' down the pike. And the officers [*clears throat*] of the AIA, excuse me, were primarily the execs of the companies. They wanted to involve their technicians, the people who dealt with environmental issues, water, air, wastewater. So we organized the Air and Water User—we called it then the Air and Water Users Federation. It's now the Arkansas Environmental Federation—to deal with that. They helped write all of the—all the environmental laws that Arkansas now has. That's another example of why you would have—like, the same thing is true with the state-chamber side of it. We organized the Arkansas Good Roads Association to—which still is in existence, to promote [*takes a drink*] the construction of highways to help contractors, but also to help the communities get more money and build more roads. That brings about . . .

[02:55:59] TD: Is there anything you would like to bring up at this point that I might not have asked about?

BL: In the early times of when I was at the state chamber, we had

an organization that was headed by Wayne Stone in Pine Bluff, with a lot of other prominent business people, who did a study on regional airports. And that study showed that a regional airport would be needed up here, and a regional airport would be needed in Little Rock. The downtown Little Rock business people were not real enthused about that idea of movin' the airport further to the southeast so Hot Springs, Pine Bluff, Little Rock could really be the—but it never got off the ground. They ultimately did move it further southeast, but at the time, they didn't. [02:56:59] Here in Northwest Arkansas, they located a site and had an election to try to build a regional airport. Coach Broyles headed it up, and it failed. When we came to the—to work for the gas company, there was two major Northwest Arkansas projects and a eastern Arkansas project that the gas company wanted us to work on. They wanted us to help lobby for the John Paul Hammerschmidt Interstate Highway Program, and they wanted us to help lobby the airport through. At that point in time, I was the chairman of the Arkansas Aviation Aerospace Commission, which is not a big deal, but the title is okay. [*Laughter*] And we have a photograph here of the first presentation that we made in Washington to FFA—to FAA for funding for the airport. And Uvalde headed the group. I think

we—the photograph is made in Senator Hutchinson's office. But it was the first presentation. We had a meeting here when we got ready to have the elections because we had to have some elections up here to actually get the [*unclear word*]. Uvalde and Carol came over here. What first had happened is Dr. Van Laningham—Mrs. Van Laningham—was comin' to work for the chancellor, and so Scott was comin' with her, and Scott had been the capitol reporter and the city reporter that I had known for a long time and he . . .

[02:59:03] TD: He covered the airport.

BL: Yeah, and he was here. So what I could see that we—all the campaigns that I had run on issues, you had to have a good writer. I mean, among all else, you had to have somebody that could communicate to the public in the newspapers. And I knew that that was what we was gonna need, and so I got—we had—DeeDee and I had Carol and Uvalde come over here for coffee, introduced Scott to 'em, and Scott got hired. Uvalde and him worked together through all of the periods of time in building the airport, and now he's head of the—he's the staff—chief of staff at the airport. And it just was a wonderful marriage and a wonderful program to put together. In the first summer of the construction, and we were gonna have funding problems during

the summer from construction because the federal funds wasn't comin' down fast enough. So we were gonna lobby Jim Guy Tucker for a grant and was doin' it and had him and the staff convinced that they would give us a three-million-dollar grant. The day that Huckabee took over for Clinton—I meant for Tucker, and Tucker was bein' dismissed, was the day the grants were gonna be issued. Tucker and Huckabee's staffs would not agree to the three million dollars, and Huckabee was not there, largely because the state police had forgotten to go pick him up, [*TD laughs*] that he was the new governor. The next day, Huckabee agreed to a six-million-dollar grant to the airport, and it was a big help to get the summertime cash. It was a marvelous thing to work on those projects. When we passed the legislation dealing with the regional airport here, Tom, we also included the air base in Blytheville and made it a regional airport. So as chairman of the Aviation Aerospace Commission, I was able to help get grants to expand those hangars over there. And under the old air-base operation, the tail fins hung out of the hangar. They—their mechanics could work on 'em, but for commercial planes, you gotta have 'em all enclosed. So that was our extension of the hangars. [03:02:15] Since that time, my—and I went on the ADFA board, I suppose we at ADFA and

AIDC have made available maybe as much in bond cap and loans, maybe $140 million over there to try to help Mississippi County recover from the loss of those jobs at that air base. And they've done a lotta good work over there, a lotta good work and we . . .

[03:02:47] TD: Well, Mississippi County is holding its own.

BL: Yes, it is.

TD: They've got that junior college.

BL: They got the junior college. They got this new coal-fired plant that's about to be finished. ADFA gave them $100 million of the bond cap that they can—or issued 'em. Didn't give it to 'em. Issued 'em, for the environmental equipment. And I've been really happy that I was in a place to work on that kinda thing. When I was at the state chamber, one of the issues that we worked on was lobbyin' for the money to build the School of Business building. We worked the . . .

TD: The University of Arkansas . . .

BL: Yeah, this one here. We lobbied the board of trustees; we lobbied the legislature; we lobbied the governor for funding to build the facility and even helped try to help raise money for the furniture. And when John Owens got to be the dean there, I helped him create the ar—the council for the business school and

recruit the first people around the state, since he didn't know 'em, to be members of the council. So we've had a lot of activity with universities. I was on the Independent College Fund Board. I've been on Arkansas Technical Institute's board, the council, Arkansas Economic Education Council and . . .

[03:04:27] TD: You knew Bessie B. Moore, I'm sure.

BL: Yes, very well. I always told her, "I'll do whatever you ask." [*Laughter*]

TD: So did everybody else.

BL: Everybody else. And . . .

TD: They called her the u—some of her friends called her the USS *Bessie B. Moore*.

BL: Yeah. [*TD laughs*] The—one of the really best things that's happened to me is marrying DeeDee. The meeting her and marryin' her and her comin' to the state chamber life with help and energy and vigor—one time we had some Japanese industrial prospects in Little Rock, and they wanted to have a home meal in some home. And the guys asked me about it, and so I got—went in and got on the phone and called DeeDee and said, "DeeDee, this has been a request." And she just right away said, "Well, how much time will I have?" And I said, "Well, how much time does she need?" And she said, "Oh, maybe an

hour and a half." So we trucked six of 'em out to the house there on Cantrell. She fed 'em a wonderful home-cooked meal. And she's done everything from stuff envelopes to help with things like that. On one occasion we were at Trapnall Hall on—raisin' money on one of these issues, and she was helpin' us with it. I can't even remember the issue, but ACORN was picketing our building.

TD: Yeah. [*Camera beeps*]

BL: And one of 'em . . .

KK: We're outta tape.

TD: Uh-oh.

[Tape stopped]

[03:06:12] TD: Okay, let's go back and start with the—Trapnall Hall. You've got a meeting over at Trapnall Hall to raise some money.

BL: We were raisin' money for one of the issues over at Trapnall Hall. I can't remember which one it was. But we were inviting various business groups to come, like, twenty-five at a time or somethin', make our pitch to raise money from 'em. And ACORN was pushin' and picketing and wanted to have a press conference there. But one of the girls went up—one of the ladies that was in the picket deal went up and pushed on the door that DeeDee was holding, and it pinched her foot. And it kinda hurt

her but caused her to give a big yell, and the lady [*laughs*] jumped back and walked off the floor. And so she's done yeoman's duty and . . .

TD: Even keeping ACORN picketers at bay.

BL: At bay. [*Laughter*] Had to—but helping wherever she could, whenever she could, and bein' a gracious host and lovely mother and loving wife and spent lots of time, even now, with my lobbyin', she is—she goes with me every week, helps me with the computer, and I honestly probably couldn't keep up without her helpin' me today 'cause it's changed so much, and my computer skills are not what they oughta be.

[03:07:50] TD: Today in your lobbying, are you representing your employer exclusively?

BL: Yes.

TD: You're not taking other clients.

BL: Right. Southwestern Energy is the only fully-integrated natural gas company in Arkansas. It does exploration, production, transportation, and has a local utility company and has an LNG plant. No other gas company—so when you talk natural gas issues, you talkin'—somewhere along the line Southwestern Energy's got an interest in it. When I first came to work for the company, I was director of community and industrial

development for Southwestern Energy and reported directly to the chairman of the board. As time when on, I moved over and became a vice president of Arkansas Western Gas Company, and for years I continued to do all the governmental affairs for all the companies. This last session primarily concentrated on just the utility company but helped with the issues dealing with the exploration and production. Every session we've had some kind of an issue dealing with the production of natural gas and there—they will continue over the years. The—I believe it was four years ago, we passed some legislation that changed the field rules for drilling for natural gas. Prior to that period of time, you could only drill one well in a section of land, and you could get an exemption to drill a second well with an awful lot of high-quality geology information, but not very often. And that had been the way that Arkansas had been drilled out for years. Around the southbound—south boundary of the Arkansas Basin, the people knew there was a lotta pockets of gas that were not bein' drained with one well. Part of it's 'cause of faults under the ground. [03:10:18] But at about that same time, Southwestern Energy had discovered that the Fayetteville Shale was producin' some gas. The way the Fayetteville Shale gets its name is up on College behind that Chinese restaurant, it surfaces. And

geologists name a shale by where it surfaces. And they had some wells down in the Arkansas Valley where they had drilled through this shale and normally had just considered the shale to be a handicap to get to the sands that they wanted to drill in. A couple of those wells were producin', maybe three, producin' a lot more gas than the tai—than the others were, and that the records would indicate they should produce. So they began to do the research and determined that, yes, they had fractured the shale, and yes, it was leakin' into the wells, and that they ought to do some further research because then the Barnett Shale in Fort Worth and north Texas had started, and so there were more knowledge about shale production. Plus, gas prices were above five dollars, which made it a more economical opportunity. So with that, they started drillin' test wells and determined that they could produce it. But likewise, the legislation that we passed, which would allow more than one well to be drilled in a section, was necessary for drillin' in the Fayetteville Shale. [03:12:02] So of the economic contribution that I feel like that I really made to the company was bein' able to lobby, without any opposition, that piece of legislation. When we went to the senate with that piece of legislation, Herschel Cleveland was the sponsor of the bill, and he was speaker of the

House. Herschel didn't come down. Jerry Bookout was the chair—senator chairman of the ag and economic development committee and he—when Herschel didn't come, he just said, "Well, Mr. Lamb's got a piece of legislation that he'd like for us to consider, and, Bob, why don't you just sit down and tell us what the bill does?" So I did describe it to him, but in closing, I told him, I said, "I believe, personally, that this piece of legislation has the opportunity to create the biggest economic impact, from a natural gas production standpoint, in the history of the state, equal to what we've seen in the [19]30s and the [19]40s." And it appears to me that it's certainly gonna turn out that way.

[03:13:23] TD: Well, Congressman Hammerschmidt certainly thinks so, too.

BL: Yeah.

TD: He's talked with me about it, and he's—he foresees a great boon coming from this.

BL: We—our company alone has since purchased ten new drilling rigs just to drill there. They've created two new companies in Conway, one to do the drilling and one to do the gas gathering. And they plan to build an office in Conway. They've probably already employed up to 500 new people in the area, maybe more than that now. They recently made a $250,000

contribution to the University of Arkansas Community College at Morrilton to train the people to work in that industry. And if it develops out like it currently looks like it's goin' to, it will do what I projected—predicted it would do. It'll be a tremendous economic benefit to the state of Arkansas over a long period of time. And the drilling of the faults in the areas which would not have been able to have harvested gas in the traditional area of the valley is going to be a new economics-development project for all that area. And you can—every month when Oil and Gas Commission meets, you can see new applications for welling. Oil and Gas Commissions thinks enough of the future of the Fayetteville shale that they moved their offices from El Dorado to Little Rock so that they could more quickly handle all of the problems and opportunities that come from the applications for those wells and lookin' after the work afterwards. [03:15:46] But big-time piece of work, and I'm proud I got to be a part of it. Proud I got to be a part of the airport and the interstate highway and just hundreds of plant locations. Little things, Tom, just little things. Recently, the—just bein' able to vote at the Arkansas Development and Finance Authority on the college-bond program. There's twenty-six locations and seventy-six projects that I can take pride in. Just bein' able to be a part of

that $250 million worth of projects is a—is—has been a great thing. I was able to vote on the bonds that we issued for the Washington Regional hospital, $86 million. Maybe, like, $2.5 billion worth of housing bonds, all kinds of housing projects for kids who are just gettin' their first home to elderly people and . . .

TD: Assisted living.

BL: Assisted living people all over the state. [*Claps hands*]

TD: Yeah.

BL: Just—if I hadn't have been in the jobs and the places where I've been, I wouldn't've been able to be involved in it.

TD: And you must have a great sense of professional accomplishment.

BL: Yes, I have a great feeling of pride for what I've done. And—I—you drive by a place and see people workin' and know that, "Hey, this did happen. This occurred." You get a great feeling from that. And that—it's not somethin' you go blowin' your horn about it, but it's somethin' you can feel deep inside . . .

TD: Right.

BL: . . . that it was very worthwhile.

TD: That's a great ending point right there.

KK: Yes, some great comments.

DeeDee Lamb: Yes, it was.

[03:17:55] TD: Real quickly. When you married DeeDee . . .

BL: Yeah.

TD: . . . along with her came two boys.

BL: Oh man!

TD: And you had the opportunity to be a father . . .

BL: Twice [*claps hands*].

TD: . . . twice.

BL: And they were so much fun. We got—I got to see 'em through elementary school. I got to see 'em through high school and through college. And because I had been a coach and they played football, both at Hall and at—well, at Hall and in Forest Park Junior High School, I got a great thrill outta goin' and watchin' 'em practice and play and listenin' to them tell about their experiences. I tried not to do very much coachin'; that was the coach's role, but I sure enjoyed watchin' 'em and goin' to the games. And on one occasion, Ross had broken a bone in his leg, and he was so determined to play that he prepared his own splint and got it approved by the officials and the doctors, so he could play in his last ball game. [*TD laughs*] It was amazing the devotion they had, and they were both good football players. They're both good football players. And they're very fine young

men. They're very fine young men. I'm so proud of 'em as a stepfather, and I think they love me as much as I love them. They're always very attentive and . . .

TD: Good.

BL: . . . you can't beat that.

TD: And thank you for spending time with us today.

BL: Well, I'm just glad to do it.

TD: I think it's going to make a good video.

BL: All right. I—if—there are so—have you turned that off?

KK: No!

[03:19:50] BL: Okay. There—we could stop it there, but I—what I was gonna tell you—there are so many economic development stories that could be touched, and I'll just use this one as an example. When the Agrico Chemical Company built that big chemical plant, agricultural chemical plant, at Blytheville, and the first time the gas contract came up for renegotiation between City Service Company and ARKLA, City Service and ARKLA couldn't get together. So the plant manager and the treasurer of City Service asked me if I'd set up a meeting with Witt Stephens and go to the meeting in order for them to see if they could negotiate a contract. So I rented a suite at the Sheraton, got Witt and the treasurer together, and they couldn't

reach an agreement. When Mr. Stephens left, he sa—told me "thank you" and put his cigar in his mouth—he—the treasurer of City Service told the plant manager to se—"get the plant ready to sell. We can't deal with this." Well, they did sell it. They sold it to Williams Brothers, and Williams Brothers was able to work out a contract. [03:21:16] But when their contract came back for renewal, they couldn't work it out. By then, Sheffield was runnin' Arkansas-Louisiana Gas Company, and Williams Brothers asked me if I'd set up a meeting between Williams Brothers and Sheffield. I did that, and they couldn't reach an agreement, so they closed the plant. Mack McLarty then became president of ARKLA. He came to me and said, "Bob, you—you've set up a meeting for them. How about settin' up a meeting for me?" We met over at the Coachman. He and I met over at the Coachman for coffee. I set the meeting up, and he and Williams Brothers were able to reach an agreement 'cause he wanted to market the gas. That started modern-day transportation of natural gas. Before then we didn't have what is called transportation customers, and the agreement that Mack made with Agrico Chemical Company was large enough in terms of the limits of the transportation customer base that we could include International Paper Company and ALCOA. And of course, today

Arkansas Western's got transportation customers, and Center Point's got 'em, and AAOG's got 'em. But before that, we didn't have a transportation rate. But there are so many instances like that that I've had the experience of doing and building. Talkin' about Clinton, one of the major issues while Clinton was there was whether or not International Paper Company was gonna remodel the paper mill at Pine Bluff. Well, we were able to get Clinton and officials from International Paper Company up at the old Little Rock Club one afternoon late and worked out a idea for a piece of legislation that would pass in the next session, which gave them a tax incentive which was sufficient enough to encourage them to rebuild that paper machine. And while my part of it was basically gettin' 'em all together, it was still a part of the activity.

[03:23:37] TD: When you write your autobiography, you could title it "Arranging Meetings: The Life and Productive Career of Bob Lamb." [*Laughter*] Have you ever thought about writing your autobiography?

BL: We have—DeeDee and I have talked about it, and I even talked to Scott Van Laningham one day about whether or not it would be worth—I don't know if I could ever pull it together, Tom. I—it would be a—it would kinda be a fun thing to do, but what would

I do with it after I got it done?

TD: Well, get it published.

BL: [*Laughs*] Yeah. Well, it's somethin' to think about.

TD: [*Laughs*] As if you don't have anything else to think about, huh?

BL: Well, I don't, really. I don't, really.

SL: Bob?

BL: Yes, sir?

SL: I have one question. It's has kind of a curve ball if—you'll have to look at Tom when you reply.

BL: Oh.

[03:24:39] SL: But if—what advice would you give a young lobbyist just starting out?

BL: Well, if I were gonna give advice to a young lobbyist startin' out, the first thing I would say, you got to always be honest and straightforward. You can never, no matter what, give misinformation. You have to give both sides of the issue to the individual legislator that you're talkin' to. You have to be sure he understands what the upside and the downside. And if you're always honest and forthright with 'em, they will always appreciate you. But if you ever tell them somethin' that's not correct or somethin' that you should've told them that's gonna hurt 'em, then they'll never trust you again. So bein'

straightforward, givin' both sides of the issue, bein' honest with 'em is the advice I'd give. And that above all else—that's above raisin' money for 'em. That's above entertaining 'em, in my book, anyway. Anything else you deal with with 'em is—it doesn't come close to bein' straightforward and honest on the issues.

SL: Thank you.

TD: Is that a wrap, as we say?

SL: If you guys are ready, we're okay.

[End of interview 03:26:20]

[Transcribed and edited by Pryor Center staff]