

Maureen and Mike

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**Interviewee: Mike Halligan**  
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Bob Brown: I'm interviewing Mike Halligan in Missoula, Montana, on July 28, 2009. Mike served in the state Senate from, I believe, by appointment in 1979—

Mike Halligan: Nineteen eighty.

BB: Nineteen eighty until 2000.

MH: I actually termed out by 2002, so 2001 was my last session.

BB: So 22 years. Mike, what caused you to become involved in public service? What caused you to devote much of your life's career to public service?

MH: Well, my family was not involved in politics at all, and I did not pay much attention in high school. As a result of that, I ended up in Vietnam, and it was in Vietnam, and listening to the discussions of my men—I was a platoon leader—from the inner cities of Detroit and Chicago and New York; and for the first time I discovered a lot of the social, the political, the economic upheaval that was going on at the time that I really hadn't paid much attention to. So it was that Vietnam-era upheaval of society in general that kind of got my attention, and I realized then that politicians can kill. You know what I mean? It was this leap that Congress had adopted laws that took men and women into places that would get them killed, and I determined then after, again, listening to a lot of political discussion around issues, that I wanted to go into politics someday and that I could make a difference that way, but I had to go to school to be able to do it. So it was the '60s, the late '60s with the social, economic, and political upheaval and then actually being in Vietnam, realizing politicians can make a difference, can kill, and that I needed to potentially get involved in some way.

BB: Some of the men who served in Vietnam—and I know you were a lieutenant, you were a platoon commander, you were involved in combat—came home feeling resentful toward those who were demonstrating against the Vietnam War in the United States. Others came home, perhaps somewhat disillusioned by the Vietnam War, and were actually protestors themselves. Where would you have fit in on that spectrum?

MH: Well, when I got back, I was shocked at how resentful people were that when you said you were in the military, it was a visceral reaction by much of the public. When I went to school at the University of Montana in September of '71—and I'd gotten out in April—at the Sigma Chi fraternity house where I was living, you didn't mention that you were in the military. It was something that was a negative thing because of all the My Lai incidences and the other scandals

of killings had come out into the public. So really, my military experience, even though it shaped me individually, I didn't become resentful, I just was shocked by the experience that I received from the public. But it also helped shape me, under my understanding of the reaction that they gave me, that I needed to have a broader understanding of people's backgrounds and not judge them by one particular thing. So I think it helped me in that regard.

BB: Was the Vietnam experience what you think may have triggered your entry into running for elective office?

MH: I do think that, yes, the Vietnam experience was, because there was nothing else in my background that would have shaped me enough other than that triggering event of being there in a situation with...particularly listening to the political discussions of people who had gone to college, who were more heavily involved and paid attention. That got my attention as well.

BB: Then you returned home from Vietnam in '71, but then you sought an office...Didn't you run for the Public Service Commission?

MH: I didn't run for the Public Service Commission until 1980. Actually, in the '79 to '80 elections, so it was not until nine years later. So I worked on all the political campaigns of legislators—Mike Mansfield's last campaign I believe—just knocking on doors and that sort of thing. My political involvement: I ran for the city, a non-partisan study commission, and they elected seven out of nine, it was back after the Constitutional Convention adopted that provision, and I came in number nine out of seven as a graduate student, so it was my first elective position I lost. That was my first involvement running for office was in 197...What year would it have been? Seventy-seven, I believe.

BB: Could you describe your political philosophy, and what shaped it? I know the Vietnam War was important in triggering your involvement into politics, but you along the way adopted a philosophy of some kind. Tell about that.

MH: As I ran for office, I was a moderate from the beginning. I was never a person that held extreme positions or that wasn't a good listener and when I first got to the legislature we were in the minority. I sat in the back of the Senate—not by my own choosing, that was one of the last seats because I was a freshman—and sitting with some of the old bulls who'd been there for 20-plus years: Carroll Graham, moderate senator from Lodge Grass; Paul Boylan, moderate senator from Bozeman; and others. They were the ones that maybe they didn't know what they were doing, but they shaped a lot of my philosophy by just simply saying, "Halligan, you know, you may be re-elected here for the next 20 or 30 years, but if you don't work with the guys on the other side of the aisle, you're never going to get a damn thing done."

It was just listening to those guys, and then watching the way that when the Senate got into session, the old bulls would stand up and start roaming around, and that's when they would work their magic. These guys knew how to compromise, they knew how to make deals that

would make good public policy, and they knew how to...in a time when the legislature was in session when the Senate was there, no lobbyists were around be able to actually go individually talk to somebody. I guess I watched that kind of conduct and it kind of shaped my way that you don't do things by standing up on the floor and ranting and raving. You get your work done by talking to people, by communicating, by trying to see what interests them and see if there's a compromise that you could come to.

BB: You were elected as a Democrat and you served as the Minority Leader, the Democratic leader in the state Senate, I believe, for two terms. Of course, Missoula then there was an advantage of running as a Democrat. I'm not presuming anything, but why are you a Democrat? Was your family that way?

MH: My Catholic family out of Billings...John F. Kennedy was the first of my exposure to politics, and I actually rode my bike from Lewis and Clark Middle School then. I was a freshman in junior high; rode all the way to the fairgrounds by myself. I have no idea to this day why I did that because my family was not involved in politics, but we were involved—because the Catholics were heavily involved in that election—just to listen to John F. Kennedy when he came to Billings. I remember that vividly, but my parents weren't overly political at all. They never talked politics beyond the John F. Kennedy election. But I think as a Democrat as I look more at the values that Democrats stood for in terms of more the common man's issues, and issues of freedom of choice when it comes to the right of privacy and those kinds of things, that I fit more into that category than on a Republican side.

BB: So you arrived in the legislature, newly elected member after the 1980 election, and you mentioned that you were seated in the back row with the old bulls, the old moderate-to-conservative Democrats. So already those are part of your early impressions in the legislature. Though you might have been over there, maybe you'd been over there a time or two before, but just describe what it was like to be in the legislature then. What were your first impressions?

MH: My first impressions were that this is a good old boy's club. Even though I was 32, so I wasn't a young man when I was elected, but that it was a collegial place, that it was a place where friendships really meant a lot. That just the partisan bickering side that I didn't really know until I saw it later on during my career, you didn't hardly see it. There were differences of opinion and they were well stated on the floor of the Senate, but mostly people saw each other during the day. They went out to dinner, and they were friends beyond their legislative differences. I think that, more than anything else, was my earliest impression...was that maybe the public was seeing something that was the different sides not voting together and they saw the disagreements on TV or in the newspaper, but that's not the way the process worked in real life.

BB: It was pretty fraternal and—

MH: Definitely.

BB:—easygoing and that sort of thing. Did that change in the 22 years in which you served there?

MH: It absolutely changed, and I think with term limits passing in 1992 that was one of the most devastating effects on statesmanship, upon collegiality, on long-term vision, on the fraternal aspects of it. People just weren't elected after that with any long-term vision. There were short-term agendas, there were people who were there for one issue or two issues, and that just doesn't make for a legislative process that's designed to be deliberative and look at the long-term rather than the short-term.

BB: In addition to Boylan and Graham, are there legislators that particularly stand out in your memory?

MH: I'll tell this story about myself and one of my first experiences in deciding how I should vote on an issue that was very important to me and that was a flag-burning amendment that the veterans were supporting to criminalize the burning of the flag. Of course, I'm a veteran so I was very interested in making sure I was sensitive to veterans' issues, and I was prepared to vote for that bill on second reading when Chet Blaylock who'd been in the legislature—I think at least 10 or 12 or 15 years by then in 1981 when I first got there—stood up. He was considered to be the conscience of the Senate, I think that was his tag. He gave the most impassioned plea for the First Amendment and why and how important the flag was to us, but how important the symbol it was in a way that burning the flag was not the issue, that it was what was inside of us. I mean, this impassioned plea that literally changed my vote. Because here was this statesman telling me really that the freedoms in this country meant more than the cloth, it meant more than the red, white and blue, it meant more than all those things people were talking about. So I think, Chet Blaylock's one of those people that my early impressions...that I saw made a difference because he was ethical and he was honest and he was principled.

There were people like Jean Turnage, who as a freshman liberal legislator from Missoula, I went to him on several times with issues that I didn't understand or I wanted to work on. He was the Republican President of the Senate or he was the Majority Leader, and he was always a statesman to me. He was always kind, he was always courteous, and he was always professional. So he had a big impact on my understanding of a role of a leader and whether he was Republican or Democrat.

People like Francis Bardanoue, who had been budget chairman but never sought other leadership positions, I remember him standing up during a Democratic caucus when everybody was talking about raising taxes or changing the budget or kicking the Republicans if we had a majority, and he would stand up and say, "You can't do this. You've got to have a longer-term vision. If you do this, the people will un-elect you." In fact that's exactly what happened, and for 14 years Democrats were in the minority. There were people like Stan Stephens on the

Republican side, who I saw many times give very statesman-like speeches, not partisan speeches, but speeches that were reflective of how important the process of the legislature was to him and not necessarily partisan on an issue but something that I always held with me.

There were leaders probably in terms of style, like Fred VanValkenburg and John Mercer, who can be very aggressive leaders in difference in style from Jean Turnage and Stan Stephens, and very articulate speakers—very articulate leaders in their positions—and able to take positions and principled positions and develop forceful positions that would bring people around to their position just because of the sheer force of their personality. So there were people like that that I think I listened to and I learned from in the early days that helped me learn the rules, it helped me learn the collegiality, it helped me learn the ability to compromise, it helped me learn to be a leader. So there were lots of different lessons being learned there, and I was trying to pay attention as much as possible.

BB: Lobbyists.

MH: Lobbyists. There are eras that I remember more than others. Obviously the importance of the tobacco companies, the Montana Power companies, the powerful tavern owners' lobbies. When you look at Gary Langley for the Montana Mining Association, Jim Mockler from the Coal Council, Buck Bowles from the Chamber of Commerce, Phil Strope, who lobbied tobacco and oil and gas, Jerome Anderson, who did those tobacco and oil and gas as well. I mean, these were old bulls themselves who'd been around for a long time that were very honest guys. I think they were straightforward, they would always be forceful in their positions, but they were the hard driving, hard drinking, and tough sons-a-guns that you would see out. Jim Murry from AFL-CIO that you'd see in the Jorgenson's and Jorgenson's is where you'd go most of the time to be able to really talk politics and potentially get some work done, but—

BB: Jorgenson's is a bar and restaurant near the Capitol Building that was a sort of watering hole and melting pot for legislators.

MH: Yes, it was. As a freshman legislator, I think, the...Bill Norman, "Doc" Norman, was one of the Democratic leaders that warned me, "You probably ought to watch yourself and maybe not go in there either at all or very often because you potentially could get in trouble in there. Just because there are a lot of free drinks bought in there and maybe a free meal every now and then." But I also learned the lesson, too, that if you can't drink their whiskey and eat their food and still vote against them that you didn't deserve to be in the legislature, and I saw many of my friends there who were able to do that. That lesson was that, "Go ahead and get it all on the table. Listen to the lobbyists." Again from John Lahr, Montana Power Company, Gary Williams, Mike Pichette. Very good lobbyists who worked with us and [we] became friends with them and you could still vote no and they still respected you for the position you took as long as you respected their ability to be able to let their position get known.

BB: Now, Mike, I think it's commonly understood that lobbyists have to be honest, lobbyists have to be well-informed and understand their legislation that they're lobbying for or against. But they're some lobbyists who seem to be more effective than others, and my list would be similar to yours if I was to make a list. What do you think it is about some of those men that made them sort of in a league beyond the normal, old garden-variety lobbyist?

MH: I think you hit the first point is the most important thing is they had to be honest, and if they lost that credibility then they weren't credible with the legislature, whether Republican or Democrat. But I think they also had to be able to have a tremendous amount of tolerance inside them and respect for legislators who were honest with them. I think the effective lobbyists would come in, you'd know exactly who they lobbied for, they'd have all of the facts, they'd be able to research the facts so they'd be able to at least give you the most articulate explanation of their position and it was that that you respected. It was, "Tell me what you stand for. Tell me what you want. Tell me what you're looking for, so I can decide whether I think that is a good change to public policy or whether I need to meld that with other things I'm hearing from other lobbyists." So, effectiveness was that they respected you for, the ability to be able to listen to them. If you took the time to listen to their opinions and you were respectful of them, I think they respected the fact that if you couldn't vote with them or if you needed to amend what they were trying to do, or if you wanted to work on their issues and maybe it wasn't going to be this session, but you wanted to think about it, that they never ever got upset, never showed their anger. Never showed the fact that they were even upset with you. I think that more than anything else, that tolerance and respect of your ability to represent your district in the way that you thought was the best way possible.

BB: Now you became a leader of the state Senate at the same time Governor Ted Schwinden became governor.

MH: Yes.

BB: So for the whole eight years of Schwinden's administration you were a member of the state Senate, and you probably had numerous conversations with him. I assume you must have.

MH: Yes.

BB: What are your impressions of Ted Schwinden and if you have a story that might kind of typify Ted Schwinden and his leadership style.

MH: There were leaders at the time like Fred VanValkenburg and Bill Norman and Chet Blaylock and Greg Jergeson who spent more time with Ted Schwinden. As a freshman, I was only on the sidelines with meetings for most of the eight years while I was there because all the older guys, the more senior members, were moving up into leadership positions. But I was impressed with Ted Schwinden because he was not necessarily a Democrat or a Republican. I couldn't determine [it] because he was a moderate fiscally, he seemed to be a moderate on some of the

human and social service issues, and he was a moderate on education because he wouldn't give them all that they wanted. I saw a guy who literally, I think, represented what he felt to be the public interest of Montana, not necessarily any part of the state or any constituency group. It was that he was going to do what was best for Montana.

The story that I would have is that I went to him and talked to him about local governments. I thought that the closer that the decisions were made locally that the better decisions they would be and that the legislature ought to get out of the business of dealing with and telling local governments what to do. Ted Schwinden would have none of that (laughs). He said, "You know, it's something where local governments, if they have the ability to tax, we end up with a balkanized state with taxation and a mix that's a mosaic that just doesn't work for Montana. Their budgets will all be different if we allow them tremendous budget authority. They'll raise property taxes and that's just not a responsible thing to do. With regulations we are a different state between east and west, and if we allow them to adopt all their own regulations for water and environment and air and you name it and gambling, that it just wouldn't work." So he put me in my place very quickly with respect to my wild idea about maybe adopting a whole new amendment to the constitution to give local governments more control.

BB: My experience with him was similar, though I probably saw less of him than you did. But he had great self-confidence. He wasn't a braggart, he wasn't a showman, but he could make a decision and look you in the eye and tell you what he thought. You probably had the self-confidence to back down from it if you could talk him out of it. But he was also one of the smartest guys I ever knew. From the Republican point of view, we regarded him as conservative. In some cases, maybe more conservative than some of us.

MH: That's right.

BB: But he was somewhat of a partisan, also. He wasn't necessarily a liberal Democrat, but he was a fairly partisan Democrat in spite of his conservative tendencies, especially with money. At least that was kind of our impression.

Stephens. You've already commented about how he could give a good talk in the state Senate that wasn't particularly polarizing and that sort of thing. But then he became governor and that's a different job, maybe requires different skills. What were your impressions of Stephens as governor?

MH: In fact, I was very surprised at the way Governor Stephens surrounded himself with people, like-minded people and he seemed to—from the very get-go, from the appointment of all of his cabinet members to his inner staff—he seemed to distrust everything else that had gone on. That any employees potentially who had been in a deputy position in the executive branches, that sort of thing, that this statesman that I knew, maybe he was being coached by people that he trusted to go a particular direction. But he just seemed to be able to be surrounding himself with people who were going to protect him and maybe take him in a



direction that would move conservative values forward. But his inner-circle just didn't seem to have the impact in the legislature because they seemed to close ranks rather than be the statesman and the compromiser that he seemed to be in the legislature. I was surprised at the way he started his administration and he had some trouble with some of the appointments that fell apart, some personal issues that they had. But from the get-go, he seemed to have distrust of the very legislature that he'd been part of for so many years as a business man because he was a very, very good business man. I think he wanted to run the state like a business, and it just doesn't work that way.

BB: Maybe sometimes, too, it's easier to be an ideologue when you're one of 50 in the state Senate. Though my impression of Stan as a senator, too, was the same as yours. I found him more ideological when he became governor than he was when he was a state senator. I've never been sure how to account for that either, but do you remember an incident, do you remember an experience when you met with him while he was governor? When you had a visit with him in his office?

MH: Again, I was so new. It would have been '87 that he was governor?

BB: He was governor from '89 to '93.

MH: Eighty-nine to '93...but it was actually on a weekend on the golf course with J.D. Lynch and Allen Kolstad, who would later be his lieutenant governor, and it was that first opportunity that I got a chance to actually get to know both Allen and Stan in a way that allowed me to be their friend for the rest of my time in the legislature and then beyond. I have a particular story...other than that Stan was the fundamentally statesman in his own right, and I think as a legislator, he was just a superb legislator and set a tremendous example for all legislators to follow then fell on a track while he was governor that just didn't seem to fit with his personality or his approach there, and I don't think that served him well as the chief executive.

BB: Marc Racicot.

MH: I got to know Marc probably better than Stan Stephens because as Minority Leader I would have the weekly meetings with Marc. I think he had a vision of the legislature, actually I think his impression of dealing with people was that he trusted people. There was this basic, innate trust of people, and so in the legislature I would hear about things that the more conservative Republicans wanted to do to the budgets, whether cuts or to the tax structure or things like that, and he would be having, of course, conversations everyday with his Republican colleagues, and during my meetings as Minority Leader with him, I would say, "Well, I'm hearing that certain things are happening to the budget."

He'd say, "No, I've already talked with my Republican leaders, and things are going this way."

I'd say, "No, I think you need to check on that."

I think he was naïve, even though I don't say that in a negative way at all. He wanted to trust people so much in their good nature that he didn't ever want to immerse himself in the politics of the mud, the blood, and the tears of the legislature. He always stood above that, even when he submitted bills, whether it was the sales tax or the de-regulation, the thing that he supported, that he kept his hands off. He never did immerse himself in any of the internal debates that were going on in the legislature, and he kept his people away from that. He was a moderate, and he was easy to work with. He was very much a gentleman and a statesman, but as they looked at his legacy, one of the issues was, "What is there that's of any substance here other than the fact that we've moved forward? We've got surpluses in the budget. Things are stable and there's a lot to be said for that." Montanans just kind of supported this gentleman as a governor, and that he was just keeping things on an even keel, and trying to make sure people felt welcome no matter who they were, Republican or Democrat. I think there's a lot to be said for that approach toward...although it doesn't necessarily work in the legislative process. It works to govern the rest of the state.

BB: Now, Mike, you know his moderation got him into some trouble with members of his own party, who were critical of him and felt that he was too moderate. There's a belief, and I'd just be curious to know if you know anything about this or if you were in on it, that Democratic leaders in the legislature at some point during his administration promised to back him on vetoes because of concern that the Republicans would unite against the governor of their own party to override him. Can you shed any light on that? Do you remember anything about that?

MH: Oh, absolutely. I know that I had to tell him on several occasions as we got near the end of the session that I knew certain bills were coming forward, whether they were budget bills or other bills that would affect the executive branch or state agencies, and that Democrats were very much opposed to those bills and that we would support him and I would stand up on the floor and support him. That we were going to make sure that if we could grab some Republican moderates that we'd be able to overcome any...or hopefully hold up his vetoes or prevent a veto from being overturned. So we definitely worked with him on that, and we, on several occasions, told him that we would unite in both the House and the Senate.

BB: Do you remember anything beyond that? Was there a bill that was passed by the Republican legislature that got on his desk and he vetoed it and the Democrats sustained him? Right to Work would have been an example, but I don't remember if it ever got to his desk.

MH: It never got to his desk. Right to Work was always part of the mix and some of those value-based questions, but most of them were budgetary, education-related where he wanted to fund the University system at a certain level and it was in the budget. I remember telling him [that] I knew that the plan was to take that money out of the budget and he said, "No, I believe Republican leaders are telling me that it's good."

I said, "No, you need to check on that." In fact I was right. So we would stand up and try to give him the votes on the floor to protect whatever...particularly in the conference committee in the final budget bill.

BB: Do you remember ever working with Dave Lewis, Racicot's budget director on those kinds of issues?

MH: Absolutely. Sure.

BB: Any story or anything about that?

MH: I was always on Taxation Committee so I didn't work with Dave until...now that I'm a lobbyist myself. I just had a lot of respect for him just because of his knowledge of the budget process, but no, I don't.

BB: Judy Martz.

MH: I thought as Minority Leader and a legislator, working with Governor Martz, it just seemed to me that her impression of Democrats were [that] we were part of some camp that...I'm not using the right word there. That there was an inherent sense of partisanship, an "us versus them" that seemed to permeate that administration, and so even if you walked up to the governor's receptionist and they knew that you were a Democrat, you did not feel welcome. I don't think she wanted to convey that message at all, but I think there was this permeation of this aura that she was going to bring state government back on track again and get pro-business, and we're going to move Montana forward in a certain way and everyone else better get out of the way. I think she surrounded herself with people who reflected those values, so she was difficult to work with in that sense. If you didn't, if you weren't with her, you were against her, and that's just not the way the legislative process works.

BB: She was relatively inexperienced, of course, coming into the office of governor. You were never in the legislature while our current governor, Brian Schweitzer was governor. Any thoughts or impressions on him? You've been a lobbyist since he's been governor so you might have some—

MH: Well, I think my impression is that even though I don't believe Brian has the proper respect for the legislative process in its ability to deliberate through issues, I think he is a strong executive that has taken advantage of the fact that term limits have kept the legislature from being as effective as...so he's been able to really..."Manipulate" is too strong a word because manipulating would be what you'd be able to do when you've got a body that isn't functioning correctly. So Brian's been able to effectively run the state and push the legislature around during the time that he's been governor. He's a very strong personality, very, very intelligent man, and he's got people that understand the legislative process that work in his inner circle. I think he's someone who is a force to be reckoned with just because of the sheer force and

dominance of his personality, and it doesn't work well with the legislature that is supposed to be an equal branch of government when he will make comments about the fact that they're out drinking whiskey instead of doing their jobs. He could be a lot more effective if he spent a little more time understanding the legislative process.

BB: Back before term limitations when there were men in the Senate—Jean Turnage and Bill Mathers and Chet Blaylock and so on—some pretty old, strong men, his leadership might not have worked as well as it does now with this new era of term limitations, would you agree?

MH: I would totally agree. Yes.

BB: Yes.

MH: There would be a tremendous push back from the old guard. In fact there was push back against Schwinden when Schwinden wanted to do things potentially that were more moderate than the Democrats wanted. There was a big push back by Democrats who would not give him what he wanted, and nowadays the Democrats just seem to roll over and not want to buck the governor because they can't put together the coalitions to do what they want to do.

BB: Many of them haven't been there for a long time. They haven't maybe developed a firm sense that they're confident in a particular area or something like that where they think, "Well, I know as much about it as he does, maybe a heck of a lot more. I'm not going to get shoved around by him." For people who are relative newcomers to the process, that's a pretty bold thought to have.

MH: It is.

BB: Yes. Now I'm going to go back and just ask you to use two or three descriptive terms for each one. So if I said Ted Schwinden, what would the, maybe, two or three terms come to your mind?

MH: Moderate. Intense. Agriculture. I mean, it's something that...because he had that rural, down-home, straight-at-cha, shoot-'em-straight approach. So that's more two or three words, I'm sorry.

BB: Stephens.

MH: Statesman. Respectful. Very articulate in his presentations. A strong leader.

BB: Racicot.

MH: As a former attorney general, always knows his facts extremely well. Very much a gentleman, very much a statesman. But not a guy who likes to get involved in details, particularly in public policy details.

BB: Martz.

MH: Likes to, I think, govern from 40,000 feet and has other people manage the details. A very articulate spokesman for very conservative values that she represents very well. Partisan.

BB: Schweitzer.

MH: Strong personality. Very intelligent. Very partisan.

BB: What legislation most stands out in your memory because you were there for 22 years, so I'm thinking there probably were...May be hard to know for sure, but there must have been two or three bills that kind of stand out in your memory.

MH: Deregulation is by far and away the biggest, I'm sure you've heard that before, and I did not vote for it, but it's the worst decision the legislature's made in the 100-plus years of our history. But other issues that I think are—

BB: Explain just for some historian that might be listening to this tape in the future, just in a general way, tell about deregulation.

MH: Well, the Montana Power Company had an integrated system that owned the power source along with the power poles and the lines and the distributions systems. They actually owned through some other companies the actual coal and other things that would go into the power plants. They saw the handwriting on the wall that they could not compete with the Enrons of the world and the larger utilities. So, they came to the legislature with a proposal to essentially deregulate the power plant portion, the power source of the utilities, the Colstrips 1, 2, 3, and 4, as well as the dams that they owned.

BB: When they say deregulation, Montana now has a Public Service Commission that's elected by the people in the state, and prior to deregulation—and maybe to some extent since deregulation but certainly prior to deregulation—the regulated utility companies such as the Montana Power Company and the Montana-Dakota Utilities Company and Pacific Power and Light Company had to go to the Public Service Commission to get permission to raise their rates, and so deregulation basically cut them loose from that regulation process. At least that's how I understand it.

MH: It did.

BB: Okay, and so people, they could charge any rate they wanted to, provided that they could be competitive in the free market.

MH: That's right.

BB: The result was—

MH: Well, I think the other part of that is that if they could value their assets based on what they would be able to sell the power in the open market. Their assets under a regulated system would be worth X and the assets under a deregulated system would be worth ten times that. So, for them to sell their assets, they had to have a deregulated system. When the legislature finally dealt with that, we were the only state...Well, actually there were two or three other states at that time that were taking a look at deregulation and I think a couple of them had actually passed it, although the bills had not gone into effect yet. Those states, afterwards, rescinded what they had done, and Montana ended up being the only state in the nation that adopted deregulation under the assumption that there would competitive power. Then right after that passed, Enron went bankrupt, or it fell apart, and there was effectively no competition out there to be able to compete with the Montana Power Company. And so—

BB: You said Enron. What was the connection?

MH: Literally the utility that was based in Texas that was essentially buying power plants all over the country or owned power plants, or providing power. It was one of the three or four biggest in the nation, and because their price for power was at four or five cents a kilowatt hour, Montana Power's was at around three cents a kilowatt hour, so they were still competitive. But they saw that when they went out to bid on contracts to try to expand their business, they essentially couldn't compete against the Enron's of the world. So they needed to deregulate and sell the assets and get out of the regulated utility industry or just get out of the power generation industry all together.

BB: When the legislature deregulated Montana Power Company and the other utility companies of Montana, then in the case of Montana Power as you mentioned, the value of the stock of the company rose considerably because investors thought, "Well, now that Montana Power Company isn't restricted by the Public Service Commission, it allows it to just have a minimal profit all the time. It just allows it to stay in business all the time." So the stock wouldn't be as valuable as a company that could charge what the market would bear.

MH: That's right.

BB: So they sold out at this much higher price as the result of deregulation, and then the price that was charged to Montana ratepayers or electricity consumers afterwards when the monopoly was broken up...How did it work then?

MH: Well, there was a safety valve in there that the rates could not change for two years to allow competition to potentially come into the state, to allow Montanans to be able to find a power source beyond the Montana Power Company. So the stock essentially was stable but they could still—only 50 percent of the power they generated stayed in Montana, the rest of it went out of state—so they could still sell 50 percent of that power then out of state, and that's why their stock went up to 60 bucks or whatever it ended up being from 20 or 30 dollars before. Once that—

BB: But the Montana Power Company generated most of its electricity.

MH: Absolutely.

BB: So they were involved heavily in generation, they were involved in the transmission of electricity, and they were involved in the literal distribution to the meter on somebody's house. Then when they sold out, they sold the transmission part of it and the distribution part of it separately from the generation part of it.

MH: Yes, they did.

BB: Why is that important? I don't know if it is, but is it to the average Montanan?

MH: I guess the overall issue for average Montanans was the fact that the utility power production source got sold. The utility lines, the poles and the wire really was a distribution system that could have been used by anybody, so that didn't make much difference to the average consumer. It was the fact that we potentially, within two years of deregulation passing, we're going to have to go out on the open market just like you buy phone service, and try to find somebody to provide you power that would be at a competitive price. Prices, as we know, soared, and people were not able to find power and there was no competition out there.

BB: Other bills or issues? The sales tax you've mentioned?

MH: The Godzilla. The Bruce Crippen Godzilla sales taxes, I think...Bruce had two, maybe three during the time that he was there because it was a huge plan. At least the Democrats felt that the Republican plan was to eviscerate the property tax system and eviscerate the income tax and other revenue sources for local governments, as well as schools, and be able to then potentially have people in those constituencies come to the legislature and cry for a sales tax. Bruce—Senator Crippen out of Billings—had bills in that he called Godzilla 1 and Godzilla 2, 3 and whatever, and we went through those hour after hour and none of them ever passed the legislature because all of them required a vote of the people. One house or the other would end up killing the sales tax because there would be an unholy coalition that would be put together and that would be the Democrats who wanted new revenue. If they didn't get new revenue they would vote no on it. The Republicans said, "If there is new revenue, we won't vote for it." Both of them, the Republicans wanted property tax relief as a huge component of

it. The Democrats could care less about that but wouldn't support it. So there were never the constituencies that would be able to put together to try to get that done.

BB: One sales tax proposal did get through the legislature and get on the ballot. Do you remember that? It was in 1992 when Dorothy Bradley and Marc Racicot both supported the sales tax although they were different kinds of sales taxes as you've just mentioned. So, the 1993 legislature, I think, attempted to try to kind of combine their two philosophies into one proposal, and they placed it on the ballot. Any thoughts or recollections about that? Were you involved in that?

MH: I was not, but I think the huge issue was that schools and local governments and the human service community and the social service community saw the sales tax as an opportunity to potentially get new revenue into their programs, the education community in particular. There was, I think, 30 million of new revenue, I can't remember but it was very close to that and that was a pittance compared to what all of them needed so there just wasn't the constituency to support the switch from [property taxes]. Then when you looked at, if you were conservative Republican or even just the average taxpayer and what you were paying in your property taxes on your home, the reduction that was proposed in that sales tax bill was so minimal that you were going to be paying still high property taxes as well as an income tax on a family of one, two, three or four. So it was a bad sales tax bill and it needed to die.

But it was something that really set the tone for the fact that the public wasn't going to support a sales tax for the next, probably 20, 25, 30 years because of the bad taste in the mouth that came from that particular debate. But the other issues that came up: restrained [streambed?] access, I think that we put together that lasted 'til just this last session and they just fixed up, tinkered with, a little bit. Then workers' compensation, we voted to tax employers and employees to be able to handle the massive deficits that were there, and that was bipartisan in the way that was done. I think the business equipment tax, it was at 13 percent at some point and now that's down to 3 percent. A lot of that was done with bipartisan votes. Those were big issues back in those days to try to generate some—

BB: Economic activity.

MH: Economic development in Montana. But the budget cuts, when Schwinden came in for two or three or four of his sessions, we had 200 million dollars, 250 million-dollar deficits. So I think it was Republicans and Democrats trying to work together to try to figure out where you cut the budget, and so it wasn't really spending, it was cutting that was my first experience in the legislature with Schwinden and working with...watching him and the big...I forget what they call the summits of leaders at the end of the session where they all met in the governor's room down with...I remember Stephens and Turnage and VanValkenburg and Doc Norman or all those guys around the table trying to work out agreements in the last three or four days of the session. I think, I don't know if it worked or not. I can't remember whether they were able to



agree because we ended up going back to caucus and probably doing more agreement there than we were able to do in front of the general public.

BB: Yes, and the television cameras.

MH: The coal tax fights. The Republicans always seemed to want to get to that Coal Tax Endowment; the Democrats would never let them do it. Whether it was under Stephens or Racicot, I think there was always plans to try to get at that endowment because we did have deficits. People thought, "This is time to use the rainy day fund."

Democrats said, "No, it's not." There were huge fights about using that Coal Tax Endowment, which I think is approaching now a billion dollars in the state.

BB: Is there a particular piece of legislation that you were involved with—either as the sponsor or importantly were involved with it—that you are proudest of?

MH: It may seem odd to say this, but I was the sponsor of the seat-belt law. I mean, I think we've saved a lot of lives and I've gotten a lot of criticism from people over the years for invading their privacy in their car. But as we know it saves a lot of lives. The other areas that, because I was a family law attorney and I worked as a deputy county attorney doing child abuse neglect and juvenile justice and mental health commitments and those kinds of things, I have changed or I was the responsible party for moving those issues into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I think I'm most proudest of the fact that if you look at our family laws, if you look at the juvenile justice and the mental health laws and the crime victims' laws and those kind of things, my fingerprints are all over those. So trying to, again, help kids, meet our constitutional obligation of giving kids the rights they deserve, which are in our constitution, and then helping victims of crime. I had the first Crimes Victims' Bill that was ever passed; it was one of my bills. A lot of social service kind of human service issues, but things that really meant a difference to constituencies that I represented and worked with all the time.

BB: You were always, I think, a member of the Judiciary Committee, weren't you, when you were—

MH: Yes, I was for 22 years.

BB: And chaired it, I think, a time or two.

MH: No. I chaired taxation a couple times, but there were always...because I chaired tax at the time when there was somebody else in line to do judiciary whether it was Joe Mazurek or Bruce Crippen.

BB: Then, what was your other committee?

MH: Well, I was on Ag, you know (laughs).

BB: No, I didn't know (laughs).

MH: I was on Ag near the last two sessions, two or three sessions I was on Agriculture because I wanted to learn more about that topic and I loved it. I was on Natural Resources Committee, I was on Local Government Committee, so in the afternoon, I switched around a little bit just to give myself some diversity.

BB: What was your greatest frustration?

MH: Boy, that's a very good question. I was in the minority for 16 out of the 22 years I was there. Then, one of those was tied in a session. Probably the greatest frustration would also be the greatest strength that helped me now. The frustration is when you have a good idea and you're in the minority and having the majority just ignore you, and too often I think that leaders who aren't statesmen will not listen to the Democrat or the Republican that's in the minority. I think if you do that, you will gradually move yourself farther to the right or farther to the left, and move yourself away from the middle that really will keep you elected for a longer period of time. So the frustration would be that the majority party just refused to listen most of the time to any good idea that you might have.

BB: But you also, I think, took the advice of Senators Boylan and Graham, and you did work with people on the Republican side. I mean, I'm speaking as one who knows you.

MH: When I look at the numbers—

BB: (unintelligible) you're one of the reasonable guys (laughs).

MH: (Laughs). When I looked over the 22 years I was there and all the bills that I submitted—I submitted a lot of bills—that 61 percent of my bills passed during that entire time, even though the Republicans controlled most of the time I was there. That tells me that I found ways to work with the other side in tangible ways that would allow me to get my bills through. One of the bills I didn't mention was this Plain Language and Contracts. So if you go buy a refrigerator or a stereo or anything, or a car, and you look at that simple contract that tells you how much you're going to borrow and how much interest you're going to pay over that period of time, and what your payments are going to be, I submitted it one session and the bankers killed it. I went back and said, "Listen, Chase, Manhattan Bank and New York has a simple contract called Plain Language and Contracts. We should just do that in Montana." Once I showed them that, the second session...But today if you go borrow any money, my bill is the reason why those contracts are so simple to read.

BB: Well, good.

MH: So that's one of those long-lasting things. That's under the current, under the radar.

BB: I think it's important too. Before we go into the last question or questions in the interview, I'd like to explore with you your experiences in political campaigns. Now, Missoula was still somewhat competitive politically when you started running back in the 1980s. As we are conducting this interview, the Democratic Party has a huge advantage here in Missoula, and it probably had an advantage too, for that matter, when you started running, but maybe not as great. Is there a political campaign for the state Senate that stands out in your mind?

MH: One of mine?

BB: Yes.

MH: My very first one, actually...it was my second campaign—

[Telephone rings; brief interruption]

MH: I got appointed to the Senate in 1980 so I had to run two years later. In the middle of that, I also went to law school over at Gonzaga [in Spokane], and so I had been absent in my district for nine months and there had been a story about it. I don't know why, I never did try to hide it, I was just over there. So, someone filed against me in March of the filing deadline when I was still over in Gonzaga clear till the end of May. So, the campaign that stands out is trying to drive back to Missoula on weekends, get my law studies done.

BB: Was this in the primary that somebody filed against you?

MH: Yes...no, no this was in the general, so I still had to come back just to be able to campaign and show my presence and go to meetings and that sort of thing. Then, just having my opponent identify, at that time, what I felt were just moderate issues in education or in human services or in the environment, that he felt that I was an extremist. There was some literature that went to the doors that made me look like somebody that I wasn't. I guess all of us have had those kind of experiences in campaigns. So when you are not used to the election process and not used to the campaigns, for someone, all of a sudden, this literature shows up at the door, you think everybody reads it, and you think everybody believes it. So, it's that shock, but when I look at it today, it was innocuous stuff. It was stuff that really was just, "Halligan voted for four or five budget bills that spent a whole bunch of money." Or, "Halligan voted for environmental things that are going to stop business."

Whereas nowadays I think the rhetoric has gone, has ramped up, tenfold, and the articulation of negative comments about an opponent is...mine was innocent compared to what is there today. My recollection of campaigns were they were always very tense, and the most amazing thing about it is no matter how hard you campaigned, you never knew if you were going to win.

Absolutely never knew. So, that was the most amazing and interesting part of it is, “You know, if the public says no then I’ll agree with that.” But you just don’t know until the vote’s finally in.

BB: Who was your opponent?

MH: Art, and I trying to remember his last name, and it’s a long last name. I will remember it in a few minutes, but I— [Art Brackebusch, 1982].

BB: He was your first serious opponent when you were over at law school.

MH: Right.

BB: Other opponents?

MH: Well, there’s Art, and then there’s another guy. Kathy Ogren’s husband, Ben, and I can’t remember—

BB: Kathy Ogren’s a prominent business woman here in Missoula.

MH: Yes. She owns Bitterroot Motors, and she’s married to Mark [Fisher], and I can’t remember his last name, but he ran against me. He had plenty of money, and I remember thinking, “Okay, well I won pretty handily in my first election that I can...I’ll do some work.” Then all of a sudden in September when the World Series comes, there’s commercials by this Mark Hansen [Fisher], or...my god, I can’t believe I can’t remember that name. They’re very good commercials, very well done, and he’s running against me big. So I think I called the station, he spent about 5,000 dollars, which back in 1985, it was a lot of money. That was my first experience at somebody trying to, what I thought was buying an election or pouring money into an election, when I was just barely in the raising of money process. I think what you articulated earlier is that Missoula is mostly Democratic, and no matter what he would do, my district was strong enough to be able to stay with me even if I only raised a third or a half of what he raised. But that scared the daylights out of me when I all of a sudden saw the commercials come on during the playoffs as well as the World Series that close to the election.

BB: Because a lot of people do watch the World Series.

MH: That’s right. I couldn’t afford to buy a spot during the World Series, and he had bought five or six during those games.

BB: Now Mike, you also ran for lieutenant governor in 1992. Tell about that. Tell about how you came to be your party’s nominee for lieutenant governor, and tell about the campaign.

MH: This is really interesting. I’d gotten to know Dorothy Bradley just because of her work on lots of issues in the legislature, mostly environmental and human service, and she was on

budget committees and that sort of thing. When she decided to run for governor, I didn't know her that well, but we started talking during that legislative session, just in the hallways or just, you know, in the House or in the Senate when she would come over, I would go over there. One evening, I went back to my desk and there was a yellow sticky note on my Senate desk. It said, "No sweat. 7 a.m." I had no idea what that meant, but it was right on top of something, "No sweat. 7 a.m." It didn't have an initial by it or anything else. So I went out to Jorgensons that night, and happened to run into Leo Berry and Leo Berry, I didn't know, was heavily involved in helping Dorothy potentially run for governor.

BB: Now Leo Bradley...or Leo Barry was a member, I think, of the Schwinden administration.

MH: In State Lands.

BB: Commissioner of State Lands. Well-known attorney in Helena who was a semi-active insider in the Democratic Party and a prominent lobbyist and attorney.

MH: For the Burlington Northern.

BB: For the Burlington Northern, the railroad, right.

MH: Right, so I had a few drinks and ended up talking to Leo and said, "Leo, I got this odd message on my desk that said 'No sweat. 7 a.m.'"

He just kind of quietly said, "Oh, why don't you meet Dorothy there at the No Sweat Café in Helena, which is down on one of the streets on Last Chance Gulch at 7 a.m."

BB: "No sweat" doesn't necessarily mean...that didn't mean anything to you.

MH: Right, no. I mean, I've never been there, never even heard of the café before. So, by happenstance I run into Leo. If I had not run in Leo, I don't know whether the events would have occurred the way they did. So I met Dorothy there.

BB: Just you and Dorothy?

MH: Just me and Dorothy. So we had a chance to talk—

BB: She left the sticky note on your—

MH: Yes. She had left the sticky note.

BB: What did she— (laughs)

MH: Well, I think she assumed that maybe Leo had already talked to me, or some of her people had talked to me to make sure that I knew what was going on. But nobody had. So we had this wonderful discussion and she actually broached the subject with me that she was considering me as a possible lieutenant governor candidate. I said I was flattered and that I would be honored, and what else do you need to know? So we developed a dialogue and talked for a few weeks, and then after the end of the session, she called me and offered me the position to run with her, and I accepted immediately. I had already talked to my wife. My several memories from that are so positive are that we talked about my differences, for instance on capital punishment or on business-related issues or railroads or whatever, and she said, "Mike, don't worry about that. You just simply tell the truth. That's the easiest way to do this, is you always tell the truth. If we have differences of opinion then I'll end up making a decision one way or the other because I'll be governor. I welcome your opinion even if it is different than mine."

So that from the get-go was a great way to start a campaign with someone. Being able to tell the truth. Secondly, was the respect that she had for her own way, her genuine way, of running her own campaign, that she would not give a political answer. If you asked her a question, no matter how controversial it was...and I think she got a question near the end of the campaign of whether she would commute Duncan MacKenzie's sentence.

BB: Duncan MacKenzie. A brutal, terrible murderer under the death sentence in the penitentiary.

MH: That's right. Murdered a young teacher up in the Hi-Line.

BB: Her position had been that she was opposed to capital punishment.

MH: That's right.

BB: So then the news reporter or whoever said, "Okay, well if you are, would you commute the death sentence of Duncan MacKenzie, who everybody in Montana reviled as the most horrible—"

MH: That's right. It wasn't actually a reporter. She was on one of the Northern Ag Network radio programs during the last weeks of the campaign—

BB: So it was an answer to a caller's question.

M.H: A caller's question, which was a planted question. So she answered, "I don't know. I'll have to look at the facts of that case to find out for sure." That was the honest answer. That was the only answer she could give. It wasn't a political answer. But that went like wildfire out there.

She was asked another question about whether the agriculture has too much influence on Fish and Game Commission. She said, "I don't know, but perhaps they do," which went like wildfire through the ranch and farm community. But she gave an honest answer. She didn't know, and she wanted to find out. It was being with this genuine person. So if we lost that election, it wasn't because of any terrible things we did at all. It was because we were honest throughout that whole campaign and just simply told the truth in the best way we could. If it didn't resonate with people then that was it. But she treated my family with tremendous respect. We had two young kids at the time and we always...They were very gracious no matter where we went. We had places to stay for the kids and everything else. So, I had a wonderful experience there, and there isn't a negative memory that I have during that campaign.

BB: That's great. You tell one funny story that I think, I've heard you tell this before, that I think occurred during that campaign. It was about a memorable flight in an airplane with Senator Cecil Weeding.

MH: I have a very memorable flight.

BB: Well, tell me about that (laughs).

MH: The campaign wanted me to go to the Buckin' Horse sale in Miles City. So, because Dorothy had to be somewhere else, I was supposed to go to Miles City to the Buckin' Horse sale. Cecil Weeding had wanted to help out the campaign and Cecil was an old, wild and crazy rancher from Jordan, Montana. Great old guy. Not that old, he just looked like he'd been drug behind a truck.

He was always having a bad hair day. So I called Cecil at his ranch in Jordan and he said in his old voice, "Oh yes, I'll bring her into Billings. You know and she's a low-wing..." which I didn't even know what that was, it's just where the wing isn't above the top of the fuselage or whatever—

BB: You're in Billings and you need to get up to Miles City and back in a hurry. Cecil's the guy you knew in the state Senate, you understood he had an airplane, you called him up and—

MH: He volunteered it. He said, "I use her as a crop duster and everything else so she's a bit dusty and everything else. If I shut her off, I'm afraid I won't be able to get her started again. So when I come into"—I think whatever the aviation is down there—"you jump on."

I stayed outside that thing. I was supposed to meet him at seven in the morning. Sure enough he lands in this old crop dusting plane and I get in and there is dust one fourth of an inch thick all over that airplane, inside of that airplane. We get in the airplane, I put the headset on, and he taxis out and we take off and he's flying west. We're supposed to going east. So finally the tower, literally, I'm listening to this on the headset, the tower called him up and goes, whatever his call sign was, "We thought your flight plan showed you going east to Miles City."

Cecil, "Oh, oh, yes. Oh well, yes, okay." So, I mean, he just had kind of maybe a senior moment or something like that, but we were just flying west. He decided he'd turn it around, so we turn it around, we landed in Miles City. We do the Buckin' Horse sale and then after that we have to go up to Plentywood and do a big Democratic dinner up there.

So, we finished the Buckin' Horse sale just in the evening and fly up there just before it's getting dark, and we barely hit that landing strip. It's a very small landing strip in Plentywood, and Cec didn't have the instruments to be able to turn on the lights in the airstrip. So we just got [in] just before dark. So we do the fundraiser, and we get out about ten o'clock at night, and it's darker than heck, there's clouds everywhere. It's not raining, but it's one of those darker than heck nights that you cannot see in front of you. So Cec says, "Well, I think we can get down the runway with where we came from. So I think I can make it down there. I've got my headlights on my plane, and that'll get us down the runway."

We proceeded to get in the plane and somehow, I mean, you could just barely see the pavement in front of you, but he gunned that thing, and we were up in the air, and you could not see anything else. It was just as dark as can be. I couldn't even see Cecil next to me, it was that dark. Except for the little dim lights that were in the plane. We got up in that plane, and got to about 3,000 feet or so, and all of a sudden the lights went out completely in that aircraft. We'd already passed the Fort Peck Reservoir that had the lights on it so you could see where it was, and we were headed over that vast designated primitive area in which there is not a light for 40,000 acres.

So, it is dark, and you cannot see a thing. I'm freaking out, "What do we do?" So at the headset I says, "Cec what do you want me to do? Have you got a flashlight?"

He says, "Well, I don't know. Why don't you check in the back?"

So I took my headset off, and I jumped in the back and dust is flying everywhere. So I'm searching all over the back, and lo and behold, I find that flashlight. It takes 10, 15 minutes to climb all over the place. I get back over there, and I give him the flashlight, and he started to work on the dials, and it actually worked. I can't believe that the flashlight worked after all that dust was in there, and as he's shining the flashlight on the instruments.

I said, "Cec, I'm feeling some stuff over here near my legs. I'm wondering if you could shine that flashlight over in my way?" So he shined it over, and I had about six mice on my right and left thighs that had climbed up my legs and were on my thighs and then I looked down—

BB: They had crawled up inside your pants legs.

MH: No, there were a couple on top of my pants legs. There were a bunch down on my ankle...there were probably ten more mice down in the cockpit.



BB: That you'd disrupted probably.

MH: Absolutely. What we didn't know was that the mice had chewed through the wiring on all of the instruments, and so none of them worked properly. Here he is trying to adjust them and none of them worked right. So he realized that when the compass wouldn't go where it needed to go, so we thought, "All right, now what do we do?" We're up in the air, we're at 5,000 feet, we can't see anything. There's barely even, like, a farm light every once in a while. It's darker than heck, so finally we're flying and we must have flown for a half an hour like that, thinking we were going in a particular direction toward Billings when we really weren't. So finally, I saw, way off in the distance, a pulsing of a light, like a strobe, but it was way off the curvature of the earth.

I said, "Cec, just fly toward that thing. That's the only thing we know of."

So he says, "Well, let's give it a try." We flew and it took us almost 45 minutes to get to where that strobe was. As we got closer and closer, the sky kind of lifted a bit, the moon actually came out and as we came towards that strobe, we could see the Yellowstone River. The moon reflected off the Yellowstone River down below—

BB: So you were more or less going in the right direction?

MH: Yes, but we were near Forsyth, we were south of Billings quite a ways, because we went towards Colstrip where the strobe was. So, Cec says, "Hey, I know where I'm at now." So we just followed the Yellowstone River at about 1,000 feet all the way back to Billings. He landed that plane in Billings at one o'clock in the morning, and fueled up and made it back to his ranch and landed, somehow, on his farm without the instruments working. I don't know how he did that. Then he was later killed in a plane wreck. He ran his plane into a mountain.

BB: Same plane?

MH: Same plane. I was never real scared, it was one of those where the mice got my attention. But it was one of those things that you'd never [thought you'd] experience. Dorothy actually—

BB: Dorothy what?

MH: Well, when I told her that story about seeing the Yellowstone, having the moon come up over the Yellowstone, and then flying it back to Billings. It was the anchor to get us home. Bill Bradley actually wrote a book, Senator Bill Bradley, and part of that story is in the foreword of that book, about somebody, a wayward traveler in an airplane, not really mentioning my name or Cecil's or anything else. But the fact that the moon came up and it reflected on the Yellowstone, and we followed the Yellowstone home.

BB: So Dorothy Bradley told Bill Bradley that story?

MH: Yes, she did, and he used it in the foreword of his book. Now, I've never seen the book, so I'm going to have to sometime find in Dorothy's library that book so I can read the foreword and just see how much it connects with that whole experience.

BB: Now, Mike, one of the things I remember about the campaign between Marc Racicot and Dorothy Bradley in 1992 was that they had some phenomenal number of debates. They debated 30 or 40 times or something like that. The candidate running for lieutenant governor with Racicot was current congressman, Denny Rehberg. Did you and Rehberg ever debate?

MH: We debated a couple of times. One in Great Falls and, I believe, once in Billings or once in Helena. Dennis was an aggressive—Denny or Dennis—aggressive campaigner. But he was a sound bite guy and he could do sound bites much better than I could. When it came to talking about that he was for jobs and natural resource development and this and that. I would get immersed into the details, and I lose the crowd in two minutes. He did a much better job on the campaign trail just being able to articulate the broader values, whereas I was too much into the details. But, we got along well, and still get along well since he's congressman. But he followed the path that I would have liked to have followed. Because if I had been lieutenant governor, I would have liked to have run for Congress or for Senate, and so I congratulate him for what he's done on that.

BB: Should just maybe mention one thing. Bill Bradley, who we commented about before, has no Montana connections but was a U.S. Senator from New Jersey and ran at least once for his party's nomination for president.

MH: Former NBA basketball player.

BB: Yes, former NBA basketball champion too. And, I think, Rhodes Scholar, I believe. Mike, just to kind of wind up our interview; historically, how do you think that the era in which you served in the legislature will be remembered and why?

MH: Well, I think, first and foremost, I think it will be remembered as an era of statesmanship where it was the last time that you would have the average years of service in the legislature be 15 to 20 years. Even though there was always turnover of probably 20 to 25 percent every time, there were always those long-time-serving legislators that you could have as mentors, you could learn from, etc. I think even though there were certainly some issues passed later on like deregulation that shouldn't have happened, I think that era, when you look at the deep friendships that were made—the collegiality, the fraternal nature of it—that it was a time when people had a lot of respect for people's opinions and they didn't necessarily think that their opinion, their agenda, was something that needs to be adopted for all of Montana. They would automatically assume you'd roll out that issue and just find out what the public thinks of it, and let the process work. I think there was a respect for the legislative process that doesn't exist

today. That was the integrity of a process that was deliberative, it allowed for transparency on its own, it wasn't a worded vogue (?) back in those days. But, I think it was an era that people, because of the friendships that you generated, there was more respect for people's opinion and there was more natural compromises that came out of it. I think that's what it will be known for.

BB: But because you can contrast it with how it changed, I think that memory's even more vivid. Because I think you were there more than me in a period of transition. I started my service in the legislature in 1971, and I finished in 1995. What I remember, the last two years that I served in the state Senate, I received more angry letters, more, I suppose, telephone calls—I can't remember that for sure—and felt a great deal more like a controversial figure than I had in the 24 preceding years. So I think that the change started in about 1994 when it was significant, and then term limitations just pounded it in. When term limitations took effect in 2000, then beginning in the 2001 session, I think that the legislature was a very different creature than it was in the 1991 legislature, ten years before.

MH: I think that in the old days, compromise was viewed as a leadership strategy, not a sign of weakness, and I think today, "Compromise, why should I compromise? I brought a bill, you ought to agree with the bill, and if you don't I'm going to...You are the problem. It's not me, it's somebody else who needed to compromise and not me." I guess I just see that lack of long-term vision as being the biggest deficit there.

Mike Mansfield has the quote that "A politician looks to the next election while a statesman looks at the next generation." I think that quote, more than anything else, reflected that era that we served in and now it's...Even though I'm sure that they're trying real hard, but just because of the fact that they're only there for eight years, they have a tendency to act like politicians rather than statesmen.

BB: Anything else in conclusion?

MH: One of the important lessons that I learned that I didn't expect to learn was whenever bills aim to reduce the size of the legislature or dilute the rural vote, I learned after a period of time—and it took probably a decade to do this—how important that rural voice was in the legislature. As the population gradually became more urbanized, they were losing population anyway, and reapportionment was going to take more of their voice away anyway because there'd be less legislators from rural communities. But I remember standing up, and people expected me as an urban legislator from Missoula, to support a change in the constitution that would reduce the number of Senate districts or some bill that somebody had in back in the '80s. I got up and opposed that bill vehemently just because the Jerry Devlins of the world and the Carroll Grahams of the world, all the senators that were from those rural areas that I thought contributed so much in terms of just their institutional memory and just their vision of what was Montana. Where the balance is, is in public policy. That if you just had a bunch of urban people doing public policy it would look a lot different and wouldn't be as balanced. So

there were lessons that I learned there that I didn't think I would come away, and I think I'm a better human being because of that.

BB: Well, thank you, Mike, and thanks for your public service.

MH: Sure. Happy to do it.

[End of Interview]