

Maureen and Mike

Mansfield Library

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

Archives and Special Collections

Mansfield Library, University of Montana

Missoula MT 59812-9936

Email: library.archives@umontana.edu

Telephone: (406) 243-2053

This transcript represents the nearly verbatim record of an unrehearsed interview. Please bear in mind that you are reading the spoken word rather than the written word.

Oral History Number: 396-058
Interviewee: Greg Jergeson
Interviewer: Bob Brown
Date of Interview: July 29, 2009
Project: Bob Brown Oral History Collection

Bob Brown: This is Bob Brown and I am interviewing Greg Jergeson at his office in the Public Service Commission building in Helena on July 23, 2009. Greg, where were you born?

Greg Jergeson: I was born in Havre, St. Jude's Hospital.

BB: What year?

GJ: 1950.

BB: Was there any experience during that 1950s period or maybe the early 1960s, any experience or any person, that piqued your interest in politics, that caused you to become interested in politics and probably ultimately interested you in running for public office?

GJ: Well probably, the person that most piqued my interest in public office and public service was Francis Bardanoue. He ran for the first time for the legislature and was elected in 1958. And I recall one evening this fellow coming to our door and my folks telling him to stay for dinner, and I could tell that my mom and dad thought the world of this fellow. I couldn't understand Francis very well. I was only eight years old at the time, and here is a fellow that had a speech defect. But, I could tell that my folks could understand him. They had known Francis for a long time and (unintelligible) had worked with him on various cooperative things and Farmers Union kinds of things in Blaine County. Francis was a farmer, my dad was a farmer, and they'd had a long time association and friendship. And I could tell that my folks absolutely admired this person more than I'd seen them react to anybody else. They were supporters of his in the Democratic primary despite the fact that the neighbor right across the road was also running in the Democratic primary, and with whom they were typically friends, but Francis was who they supported. That's probably...he was probably one of the people that really drew my parents in, and then as a consequence...the whole family, into actually being active participants in the Democratic Party. They'd been involved in the casual kind of political things up until then. So, Francis from that very time was somebody that I looked up to, admired—was a model.

When I then got to the point where I wanted to run for office, Francis was my mentor and then when I did get elected to the state Senate, throughout our careers together, I always looked to Francis for his mentorship and wise counsel. And he was always afraid—he was always willing to give it to me. He was never afraid to give me the unvarnished kind of counsel that every now and then a guy needs.

BB: Can you remember an example of that? Can you remember an example of, maybe, a conversation you had with Bardanoue, or something about him that especially guided you or influenced you?

GJ: Francis actually was responsible for the creation of lots of things in the state government and the legislature, like the Legislative Audit office and the committee that goes along with it, but also the Legislative Fiscal Analyst office and the finance committee that goes along with that. I got an assignment to the legislative auditor's—or the Legislative Audit Committee—about the time when Francis moved over to the Legislative Finance Committee. There was a bit of...a little bit of turf battles between the two offices. But I became a great deal of a loyalist for the Legislative Auditor's office, and the legislative auditor, Scott Seacat, and I were great friends. Francis was at the Legislative Finance Committee and the Legislative Fiscal Division. In the '93 session when I was Majority Leader and Fred Van Valkenburg was Senate President, for some reason President Van Valkenburg—who was in the orbit of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst's office and the finance committee—he and Nancy Keenan and Ray Peck launched an attack on the legislative auditor.

Of course, I was a great defender of the legislative audit office itself, professionally, but also personally, the auditor himself, Scott Seacat and I being good friends. Apparently, some of the remarks that I made to President Van Valkenburg and to Nancy Keenan and to Ray Peck were not the most temperate I had ever made in my life. Francis heard about it and came to me and suggested that I had some fences I needed to mend, and due to the intemperance of some of my remarks. That he didn't want this to become a festering wound that would go on to affect adversely either the remainder of my service for how long it may be, or relationships with other people that I need to work with. He didn't varnish the message he came to deliver to me, and I listened to it and I went and had subsequent follow-up conversations with those people and we got over that hump.

BB: Of course Nancy Keenan went on to become the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

GJ: Well, at the time she was Superintendent—

BB: Oh, she was superintendent. I see. Okay.

GJ: —of Public Instruction. There apparently had been this sense that somehow the Legislative Auditor's office had been particularly helpful and used by Republican legislators in the whole school equalization thing that had been going on for several years. That the real good unvarnished kind of analysis was probably better coming out of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction's office. Of course the Republicans didn't trust that because Nancy Keenan was a—

BB: Not just a Democrat but a pretty hard-nosed one.

GJ: She was a pretty hard-nosed Democrat. So you had that kind of circumstance. The bigger part of the problem was Democratic legislators didn't use the Legislative Auditor's office the way they should have been doing, and it was the vacuum there and that Republican legislators had found that the auditors knew where money was and knew how to crunch the numbers, how to run the computers that had access to all the numbers and so they were using it and somehow or the other that was offensive to a few folks. But my purpose was to defend the professionalism of the office. There was actually a big fight about the budget for the Legislative Auditor's office on the floor between Fred and me over that particular matter. People were saying, "What's going on? The president and the Majority Leader are raising hell with each other."

BB: I think I remember something about it. Didn't remember the issue, but I remember something about that. I'm interested maybe more in the relationship between you and Fred Van Valkenburg because you served...Were you whip when he was Majority Leader?

GJ: No.

BB: But you were Majority Leader when he was president.

GJ: Correct.

BB: So you and he would have had an intimate working relationship. I'll ask you more about that in a few minutes, but I want to ask you first, Greg, how you'd define or how you'd describe your political philosophy and what shaped it?

GJ: Well, I've been accused of being everything from a liberal to a conservative. It depends upon what the audience wants to think of me, I think. For those who want to think less of me, they'll accuse me of being a liberal. The folks back home, I don't know. I don't think I ever felt I was particularly pigeonholed in any particular thing. I would characterize myself as being moderately liberal. I don't like the extremes on either side, and I'm not inclined...or after awhile I've learned that I think the far left in my own party can come up with some good ideas and some good notions, but it needs to be tempered very heavily with a dose of reality for there to be any practical effect in fashioning good public policy.

BB: You have any political heroes? People that you look up to? I mean, philosophically, and say, "That's someone that I greatly admire and I believe I greatly agree with?"

GJ: Well, it would start out and not only just the personal admiration for Francis Bardanouve, but he was a political hero of mine. He took on a lot of tough battles, and exemplified, I think, a standard that hard work, courage, and the application of intelligence can make a difference. When I think about Francis, he might not be a person who could get elected to office today given the kinds of requirements from press and media about how a candidate ought to appear, but his enormous intelligence, his dedication to finding answers and the truth, and his

willingness to work hard puts him at the forefront. When I think about figures with a state profile, Lee Metcalf was one of my heroes.

BB: Tell us about him. Describe from the heart your thoughts and impressions of Metcalf.

GJ: I think with Metcalf, one, he was the kind of person willing to take on all tough battles. A lot of people—Mike Mansfield by much bigger margins than Lee ever did—their records weren't much different, but Lee Metcalf was willing to take on the battles, the frequent battles, for example, between cooperatives and investor-owned utilities. My family, being with their background in involvement with rural electric co-ops with the kind of, at the time, the progressive rural element for folks coming from that background, my family and then me, Lee Metcalf was kind of a hero because he took on the power companies. He took on the Anaconda Company in ways that Mike Mansfield never did. Now, I reiterate that I and the whole family broadly admired Mike Mansfield and marveled at, for example, his well-known ability to remember people that he had only met just briefly or only a few times, and I was the recipient of that memory and I fondly recall that. But, Lee was the fighter, and for those of us from the progressive side of rural politics in Montana, Lee Metcalf was kind of a hero.

There are times now that after I served all these years, both in the state Senate and on the Public Service Commission, I kind of, I every now and then mention that, you know, sometimes I'm feeling in my Bob Byrd mood. People say, "Well, what's that?" Well, Senator [Robert] Byrd back in Congress served with something like eight presidents, so every now and then he says, "Well, presidents come and go. Bob Byrd's always around." And, in my career, both in the state Senate and Public Service Commission, I've served with six governors.

BB: You began your service in the legislature. You only served in the state Senate.

GJ: I only served in the state Senate.

BB: You began when?

GJ: In 1975. Tom Judge was governor.

BB: Election of 1974.

GJ: Right.

BB: And you then put in 22 years total in the Senate?

GJ: Correct. Now, I had six years I was out, but I caught the tail end of Ted Schwinden's administration; his last two years, and then continuously the rest of the governors for the remainder of my terms.

BB: When were you elected to the Public Service Commission?

GJ: In 2002.

BB: So your term was up in 2010?

GJ: My governors were Tom Judge, Ted Schwinden, Stan Stephens, Marc Racicot, Judy Martz, and Brian Schweitzer. It wasn't like Bob Byrd who's always been in the United States Senate. I've had two different offices that I've had to be in to serve with six governors. But, the legislature is the third branch of government, independent from the executive, the balancing factor on the executive. The way we've set up in this country, and in the PSC itself, being elected on its own and is constituted as an independent agency.

BB: The PSC is the Public Service Commission?

GJ: Public Service Commission, and our responsibility is generally to regulate investor-owned utilities, the providers of electricity, natural gas, some telecommunications carriers, and privately held water companies, like Mountain Water in Missoula.

BB: You chaired the PSC for the last three years?

GJ: I wasn't chairman for the first two years and I've been chairman ever since, so by the time I get done, I'll have been chairman six years.

BB: You became chairman in about 2005 then?

GJ: Two thousand five, correct.

BB: You talked before a little bit about maybe your most memorable political campaign for the state Senate or the Public Service Commission, or maybe a couple of them. Are there some stories that you'd like to tell about your political campaigns that might help a future historian understand something about rural Montana politics in the 1970s or '80s or '90s?

GJ: I guess by the very virtue that I was 23 years old when I was running for the state Senate, my first campaign for the state Senate stands out as being very, very memorable because the conventional wisdom was nobody that young had ever been elected to the state Senate. The old constitution had an age requirement in it and that disappeared with the new constitution, but still, nobody had ever...I think, at one time, they said nobody under 40 had ever served in the state Senate. And Bill Groff, I think, broke that barrier or something. The election that you, Joe Roberts, and I got elected, there were three of us under 30, which some of the older hands found particularly remarkable. So there was this notion that a person in their twenties could not get elected. The district I had was large, it was rural, significant portions of it in particular.

BB: Your district centered around Blaine County?

GJ: Well, it was three counties at the time. Two and a half counties: Blaine, Phillips, and the western and southern portions of Valley County. It didn't include Glasgow, which was kind of a Democratic community at the time; it went around the edge of Glasgow. So you had the eastern half in particular was kind of Republican, and the western of the half of the district was—Blaine County—was Democratic.

BB: Phillips was the one that would have been more Republican, probably?

GJ: Would have been more Republican. It was interesting. I had the sense I could get elected to the House of Representatives. Blaine County was the right population to have one representative seat all by itself. Well, of course, my friend and mentor, Francis Bardanoue, was that House member, so when it became apparent that the incumbent senator, Swede Goodheart, was going to retire—

BB: Swede Goodheart—

GJ: Swede Goodheart from Malta. He was a Democrat.

BB: What was his first name?

GJ: B.J.

BB: B.J. Goodheart.

GJ: B.J. "Swede" Goodheart. We all knew him as "Swede." Great, great person. Another, actually in a way, turned into one of my mentors. He served for eight years in the state Senate, and then decided he'd had enough. So when it became clear that he wasn't going to run again, well the notion that I had was, of course, that we would get Francis to run for that Senate seat because he obviously could win it, and that then my entry to the legislature would be in the House seat from Blaine County. So, I was over at the University of Montana that winter of '74, and it was my last quarter at the University; I called up Francis and asked if I could come over and visit with him. It was the second regular session of the annual sessions experiment that Montana had, and so I called up and asked if I could come over and visit with him. And he said, "Yes, you can come on over." I think he knew why I was coming.

My friend Bruce Nelson rode along with me and we got to Francis' apartment and we started visiting. We talked for about half an hour and he says, "Well, Greg, we've had very pleasant conversation, but I think you probably came with a purpose in mind." (Laughs).

BB: Being wise and intuitive like Francis was.

GJ: Well, of course, and so I said, "Well, yes. Say, you know, Swede says he's not running for re-election to the state Senate."

Francis said, "Yes, I know that. I heard that."

I said, "Well, Francis, I came to ask you if you would please run for the state Senate so that I could run for your House seat."

He said, "I figured that's why you were driving over from Missoula to talk to me." And he said, "No, not going to do it. I'm going to run for re-election of the House."

And, of course, my face dropped, and Francis knew that and saw that and he knew that would be my reaction, too. He says, "No, I wouldn't..." For himself, he said he wouldn't consider running for the Senate, he was going to stay in the House. I saw no entry to the legislature with that happening, and I desperately wanted to get there because I'd been an intern during the '73 session and I'd watched all these young, vibrant legislators like Bob Brown and Dorothy Bradley really making their mark and I wanted to get in on that too. He said, "No, I won't run. You run for the state Senate."

I says, "Francis, I'm only 23."

"Yes, so?" he says, "You run for the state Senate."

I said, "Why won't you run for the state Senate? You can get elected. There will be no question about that."

He said, "Oh, Greg, I'm too old to be in the state Senate."

I said, "What are you talking about, Francis?"

He said, "Well, by the time...I'm starting to get a little aged now." This is in '74. He says, "I'm starting to get a little age now; by the time I've been in the Senate long enough to have any power, I'll be old and senile. But you're young. You get elected to the Senate; by the time you've been there long enough to have any power, you'll still be a young man."

I said, "But, Francis, running for the state Senate...I just...nobody thinks I could win that kind of race."

He said, "Oh, you just have to go out. You have to work very, very hard and let people know what you're all about, and they'll make that judgment. I think you'd be able to do it." So that's where the decision was made for me to run for the Senate seat.

BB: Was it a contested primary?

GJ: I had a contested primary.

BB: Did Francis support you in the primary?

GJ: I went to Francis and I said to Francis that a fellow by the name of Frank Billmayer, [who] farmed about 30 miles north of Harlem, got into the race. I think some of the older generation of Democrats up there had searched around, worried that I'd be too young to get elected. They were looking for what they thought was the older candidate who'd be more appealing to the district. I don't think it was particularly that they didn't like me; they were worried about the age factor. It really was a consideration for Democrats. So, it was a contested primary, and I went to Francis and I said, "My God, Francis, you encourage me to run for that Senate seat. Now, Frank Billmayer's in it."

He says, "Well, you're here to ask me to publicly endorse you?"

I said, "Yes."

He said, "Greg, let me give you a piece of advice. If you go out and work your heart out and win the election on your own...I could give you an endorsement and it would probably mean you would win it. But if you go out and do all the hard work and win it on your own, you communicate with the people, then a few years down when tough things come up in the legislature...If you have earned your election not because somebody else endorsed you but because you went out and talked to the people then when the tough decisions come, your people will know you, they'll trust you and they'll depend on you in a way they wouldn't if they have only voted for you because I've told them to."

So, I didn't get an endorsement from Francis in that primary. I went out, though, and I worked very, very hard, and knocked on doors, and Frank didn't do that sort of thing. He had figured out that, well, this barely older than a teenager can't possibly get any votes, and people are just going to vote for him because he's a well-known farmer. Well, I beat him in the primary.

Then for the general election, my opponent was a fellow from Chinook—my home town in this district, and we were on the western end of the district—by the name of Clay McCartney. Clay McCartney was a big oil and gas man. He'd been an active Republican for years. He'd been mayor of Chinook. Pretty well known, actually and well-enough thought of. God, now I've got to figure out how I'm going to win that election. I wanted to prove those people wrong who thought, "Well, maybe we shouldn't nominate Jergeson because of the age factor." So, what's the best way? Typically, advisers for a campaign will say, "Concentrate your campaign at the beginning on where the people are. Then if you have time towards the end of the campaign, go out where people are scattered, and it takes a long time to get from one person to the other. Concentrate in town." But, I got to thinking about that, and in this case, it was this big, huge

district, spread lots and lots of miles. It'd be easy enough for Clay not to know where I was campaigning.

So I flipped that. I went out early in the season, early in the summer actually; and when I had the time from my responsibilities helping on the farm, I went door-to-door in the country, in Phillips and Valley County. And then when it got to be right at Labor Day, is when I started hitting the doors in Malta and in the little town of Fort Peck and where people were clustered as they would, Dodson and Saco and Harlem. That's when I started hitting the population centers, and Clay didn't pick up that I had done all that other work in those rural areas. Phillips County is a pretty heavily Republican county. We ran even in Malta, and that was doable between Democrat and Republican. I beat him in the rural areas, where typically Republicans roll out their biggest margins, and it was because I'd been out there and visited with all those people. It was also probably another factor in '74 election, and I should be honest about it, that was Watergate year, and—

BB: So, too, a good year for Democrats statewide.

GJ: It was. Part of it, whether they were crusty old Republicans in the rural areas or people, a railroader living Malta, '74 was the year when they all said, "Well, gee, maybe it's time for young people, new blood, somebody else because what's gone on with Watergate hasn't worked very well." I have to admit that helped me out. Then because all 50 of us were elected to the Senate in that election due to the new constitution, we drew straws for Senate terms, and I drew a two-year term and had to run two years later. My opponent that year was another fellow from Chinook by the name of E. L. Lockett. I worked hard, and I won that election by a big margin. Then, the next most memorable election was 1980.

BB: Which was a Republican year.

GJ: A Republican year. Reagan landslide year. Swede beat me.

BB: Now Swede Hammond is the same nickname as Swede Goodheart.

GJ: Correct, correct.

BB: And so Swede Hammond—

GJ: There was a huge Scandinavian population throughout the district. With a name like Jergeson, I'm not exactly tuned out of that.

BB: Yours is a Scandinavian name too.

GJ: Grandpa came from Denmark.

BB: So, Swede Hammond was Howard Hammond. What was his background?

GJ: There was some farming background in Phillips County, but he'd gone on to become an educator, a teacher and then a school principal and superintendent. He moved back to Phillips County and resumed his farming about the time he decided to run for the state Senate. He'd been in Big Sandy until about a year before he moved back to Blaine County...or to Phillips County. He was west of—

BB: He'd lived west of your Senate district but was still known up there as a school administrator and a coach.

GJ: Sure, sure. He had a half-brother named Swede, Swede Olson.

BB: The third Swede (laughs).

GJ: (Laughs). You know, historically the Scandinavians influence in Montana politics had been fairly progressive, and the Northern European. But, things were changing a little and there were some families that were genuinely conservative. Swede's family, I think, was.

BB: Hugo, the galloping Swede, was the Republican governor back in the '50s. But anyway, so you're challenged by this well-known school administrator who's got a background as a farmer and rancher and that sort of thing. Had he retired at about that time? Is that why he was able to run for state Senate?

GJ: He'd retired from his education career. I think he was helping get his boys going on the ranch up in the Whitewater country.

BB: So, tell about that race then?

GJ: Well, there are times I think that maybe having won four years early by a big margin, I thought maybe I could ease off. I'm not sure I campaigned as hard as I needed to to win it.

BB: Swede Hammond was a pretty competitive guy.

GJ: Very competitive guy. He campaigned in areas where typically Republicans wouldn't campaign. He campaigned out in the reservation. If you're trying to upset an incumbent, you probably try to at least peel away some votes from the incumbent's stronger territory, so he went out and campaigned hard on the reservation. I was late getting to the campaigning that I should do...should have done, and in my previous campaigns neither I nor my opponents had ever run radio. Swede started running radio and had raised money to do that. There were a whole lot of things. It was interesting. I carried Chinook as big as I had ever before or have ever since carried Chinook, and other than Clay McCartney having edged me in Chinook after that election two years later, I carried Chinook by a two-to-one margin. Usually, the top vote-getting

Democrat in Chinook. And so, I did against Swede where people knew me, but the further east you got where people didn't know me so well, and you get down in the Phillips County, and they knew Swede a lot better. They knew this guy running for office for the first time in Phillips County better than they knew the incumbent. Just the nature of the geography, somewhat. I didn't do the work I needed to overcome that, and Swede beat me.

BB: But it speaks well for you and him, I think, that the people that knew him tended to stick with him and the people that knew you tended to stick with you too. And in 1974 when the tide was moving with you, you were competitive in those Republican areas; but in 1980, when the tide was moving against you, you weren't, especially against someone who was well-known in those areas.

GJ: Right. I lost that election. It hurt a little bit, but a lesson I gave when we had our valedictory remarks as terminative legislators—for me the end of the 2001 session—some of the eight-year senators were so emotional about leaving the Senate, and I pointed out, “You know, it's a great place to serve, wonderful people you serve with.” But I found out in my own life, if I'd have gotten re-elected, I'd have been in Helena, and I wouldn't have met Barb. She was a Lewistown girl working in Havre and it was because I was home in Chinook that winter, I met Barb and I have a wife and two girls I cherish more than anything else in the world. Okay, you have a disappointment of losing a contest for office, but wow, there was a silver lining in that dark cloud for me and that was my family.

BB: Yes, a huge one.

GJ: I wouldn't trade that for anything. The other thing is, a person creative enough to get into the legislature is probably creative enough to find something interesting to do outside of the place. I think it took a while for some of the others who had only served eight years who were so emotional. Those of us who had served like I did, 22 years in the Senate, though mine was broken up; Mike Halligan 22 years, was kind of like...great place to serve. But there's life outside these halls, and there's things about you that tell us about you outside of what being in service here means.

BB: Before we leave this, was there any issue in the 1980 campaign? Swede Hammond's on the radio, is he hammering on an issue or was it just purely which one of you had the most friends and which one of you did the most thorough job of campaigning?

GJ: Well, I don't recall that he articulated in a particularly hard-hitting way that Jergeson's liberal and I'm a conservative. That was the basic tenor of the campaign—

BB: But he didn't focus on a vote of yours in the legislature or an issue or anything like that?

GJ: No, not particularly. The four years before E. L. Lockett had run an ad about a couple votes I'd cast. I'm going to have to get back to another Francis and Clay story actually. In all the years

Francis served he had most of his years when nobody ran against him, but something like in 1964 Tim Babcock had convinced this great, great lady in Chinook who had a little radio station every half hour every day from Chinook, it was a Chinook-centered radio station, Maida McCartney. Anyhow, Tim—

BB: She's Clay's wife?

GJ: Clay's mother.

BB: Oh, Clay's mother.

GJ: Anyhow, Tim Babcock convinced Maida to run against Francis. And it was almost like, well, Francis is likely to win so it's just a sacrificial kind of thing that parties frequently calculate putting up a candidate to keep somebody busy or to do whatever. Maida had told me afterwards, after I'd gotten in the Senate, she says, "You know Greg, I knew I couldn't beat Francis. I wasn't really actually interested in beating Francis." He was so wonderful. Francis called Maida McCartney up with about two weeks to go before the election and asked her if she'd been campaigning up on the Big Flat, Turner country up north of Harlem. Maida says, "No Francis, I just haven't had time to get up there."

He says, "Well, have your coat on at eight o'clock tomorrow morning. I'm taking you up to campaign on the Big Flat." Francis calling Maida, who's running against him (laughs). He's going to take her up there and make sure she gets introduced to people on the Big Flat. She knew a good share of them because she had some family connections up there. So he took her up there and they went farm to farm and went to the café in Zurich, and he kept introducing this wonderful lady who's running against me. Everywhere he went he harvested votes in the whole thing.

BB: That's gracious and gallant, but he couldn't have been legitimately too worried or he wouldn't have done it.

GJ: Well, no, I don't think he was particularly worried about it, but it was kind of the nature of Francis. When Clay and I ran against each other, we didn't hit each other with anything. It was, we both campaigned on our own, for ourselves. So two years later, E. L. Lockett runs...By modern standards they weren't that hard hitting. It was in the newspapers: Did you know Greg Jergeson voted such and how, on a couple what were in those days considered hot button issues. I don't even remember what they were. "You need somebody else to represent you in the state Senate" kind-of-thing.

Well, Maida spent a lot of time at the Senior Center, and those ads came out in the newspaper and Maida McCartney announces at the Senior Center that "she had never voted for anybody but a Republican in her entire life." But, Francis was so nice to her when he was campaigning against her, and Greg and Clay were so nice to each other, my son, Clay and Greg, and they

didn't say anything nasty about the other, not one word of nasty. She said, "I don't like this dirty politics and I'm voting for a Democrat first time in my life. I'm voting for Greg Jergeson." Well, I don't know whether Maida finally could bring herself after all those years to finally vote for a Democrat, though she stated it publicly and said she did. It doesn't even matter. The word spread all over Chinook, "Maida is voting for Greg." I think that is what probably cemented this kind of two-thirds phenomenon in Chinook of the votes there.

BB: Because the McCartneys had some friends there and the Jergesons had some friends there, and they all coalesced around you. A lot of them. Most of them.

GJ: Yes, sure. Yes, they did. Everybody in the Senior Center walked out, "Whoa, Maida's voting for Greg. Yes, I guess we'd better." Well, and we don't like dirty ads, but they were tame compared to what goes on now in politics. Then I was out for the six years. Ted Schwinden appointed me to the Board of Investments. That was interesting; I learned a lot there. I was just a layman. The other board members, of course, were bankers and lawyers and that sort of thing.

BB: So, after your defeat in 1980, you spent several years appointed by Governor Ted Schwinden as a member of the State Board of Investments, and then ran again for the Legislature in '86, six years later.

GJ: There had been re-apportionment done after the '80 census, and it split my old district. Instead of Blaine and Phillips and Valley being together, Phillips and Valley went east and Blaine went west into Hill County, Havre.

B.B.: So you got a new district, maybe, a little more favorable district.

GJ: A new district. A little more favorable. Now, there could have been a major obstacle in that new district, the incumbent senator was Stan Stephens from Havre.

BB: Who became governor.

GJ: Who later became governor. But he decided for whatever reason, I guess, to not be in the state Senate and casting votes in an '87 session that [would] come to bear in a governor's race in '88, so he didn't run for re-election. He knew I was likely to run, and it might have been a tough race because I would have come out of Blaine County with some strength and Havre and Hill County are primarily Democratic, so it would have been an interesting race. But he didn't run; my opponent was Bob Severtson, who had been in the House from Havre. Somehow in the process leading up to that election, Bob Severtson had...when Bob Severtson lost to Bob Bachini for his House seat in '84, he blamed, somehow, and I'm not sure how he rationalized this, but he blamed Stan Stephens and Allen Kolstad for his loss to Bob Bachini. He said some not terribly polite things about both of those fellows. And it turned out in that '86 election of mine against Bob Severtson in Hill County, the precinct in Havre that was my best precinct was the

Republican precinct out of 10 precincts. And folks up there who were friends and business associates of Stan Stephens, and they didn't like the things that Bob Severtson said about Stan. Through thick and thin and subsequent elections that precinct always stayed solid with me.

BB: Is that right?

GJ: It's kind of interesting how things roll around.

BB: Yes, it really is. Greg, when someone enters the legislature for the first time, even though you'd been there before I think as a representative for the students at the University—

GJ: Right, and I was the legislative intern in '73 session.

BB: Okay, so you might have formed your first impressions then, but when you're an actual member of the Legislature you probably form a more complete impression of it. And of course, you're immersed in it. What were your early impressions as a legislator? Was it like you thought it would be, and if so why, and if not so, why not?

GJ: It was, I mean, I had been there long enough to know that if you're going to want to spend many years in the Legislature and on a long-term basis have good influence, you need to ease yourself into that process. The seniority system is kind of an institutional phenomenon; it's not written down in a book anywhere. It's just what is. You go into a body like that, the folks who've been there, who've learned the ropes, have learned some expertise in their particular committee subject area; they're secure in their own skin about where they're at. They don't look real kindly on some whippersnapper come in and tell them how things are going to be. So I made up my mind when I went into the Senate, in fact I asked rather to be seated out by some of the other newcomers to the Senate like Tom Towe or Joe Roberts or some of those folks, I asked to be in the back row seated between a couple of what were kind of known as conservative Democrats.

B.B.: Paul Boylan or Carroll Graham?

GJ: I sat between Cornie Thiessen and John Devine. I thought it was a pretty good learning experience. Now Carroll Graham was an interesting fellow: "First, Greg, I have to give you some advice. You're a young guy and I have to give you some advice."

I said, "Yes, Senator."

He said, "Well, you know, here's the rule. You can steal my horse, you can mess around with my wife, but damn it you leave my water alone."

Whenever we had water issues, I always kind of thought, "This is something to be very, very careful with," because, particularly in rural areas, water can set neighbors against each other.

It's the root of all sorts of things in ways that maybe the other sins he listed wouldn't. I think he was being facetious of course. I kind of made up my mind to be a backbencher, deliberately so. There's some risk in that; I wouldn't make a mark if I got defeated in the next election. I think it's one of the kind of problems with term limits is people can't imagine that they will beat it because they won't be in that body 12 years later or 15 years later. So if they're going to be of consequence they kind of figure they have to start right away. That there isn't this thing that you can spend a lot of years and finally, after being a plugger for a number of years, then you really start to be of consequence. They have to make their mark early, and I think it's problematic for the existing legislature.

BB: In the 22 years that you served there, and I know the answers to this is many, but be as specific as you can. There were numerous legislators who made an impression on you. Some of them profoundly good, some of them profoundly bad, some of them profoundly important. Are there three or four from the 22 years you were in the state Senate, are there three or four or five state legislators who especially stand out in your memory and why? We already know Bardanoue.

GJ: Right, and so he's on that list. He's always on the list. I don't need to go say any more there. Matt Himsl, who was a colleague maybe even kind of the mentor for you that Francis was for me.

BB: I think that's correct.

GJ: He and I really got to know each other when we served together on the Audit Committee in '77 through the end of '80. I know I highly admired him and I've heard that he had had some compliments to offer about me, and that would be something particularly memorable for me to hang on to is that I had earned his respect. Chet Blaylock was somebody that I got very close to. He was Minority Leader and I was whip in the '79 session. He'd been an old school teacher in Chinook, way back, he was school teacher in the fifties. Actually had my oldest brother and older sister as students when he was in Chinook, and then he and I served in the Senate together. Bill Mathers from Miles City, Republican, was somebody I really learned to admire a lot, and Republican Tom Zook. It's kind of interesting. Tom and I were on Finance and Claims Committee together and the Finance Committee.

BB: So you might have gotten to know Tom when he was a Representative?

GJ: He was a Representative. I got to know him then when he had replaced in the House, Gerry Devlin, who was a seat mate of mine during the '89 session. And I got along great—

BB: That was when some of the majority Democrats sat on the Republican side?

GJ: No, '89. Jack Galt was president.

BB: Well, you and Gerry wouldn't have been seatmates would you? Because Gerry was a Republican.

GJ: Right. Republicans are sitting on Democrat side.

BB: Oh, so he's sitting on your side.

GJ: That's right. And I guess they thought he was secure enough in his Republican skin that they could afford to seat him next to a Democrat—

BB: I think that's true too.

GJ: —and I guess the Democrats decided I was secure enough that they could seat me next to Gerry, and we got to be good personal friends. That's one of the things that we can maybe talk about that later. Personal friendships are aside from the politics. But Tom Zook and I got to be good friends, and vote pretty much alike. But we had a special session near the end of his service and mine balancing the budget or something, and we were both staying at the Days Inn, but these two old farmers, Tom Zook and Greg Jergeson, would get up and have breakfast together at the Days Inn. We'd talk about family and how the crops were doing, all sorts of topics that didn't have anything to do with politics. We were just having these conversations. Well, one day, another Republican senator from southeastern Montana decided to join us for breakfast and sat down with us, and he kept trying to pick fights with me. But the issue that he was trying to pick a fight with me, ended up him and Tom having the argument about it. Coal-bed methane and water and the allocation of mineral royalties.

BB: Keith Bales? (Laughs)

GJ: Yes (laughs), and it was like, Keith, I'm northcentral Montana. I don't have an iron in the coal-bed methane fight. The change on how federal mineral royalties are allocated to local governments and school districts and stuff is a proposal from the [Judy] Martz administration, and it's not mine. I don't have a fight with you, Keith. He kept trying to do these kind of fights. It was Tom that was arguing the points on those. The next day Tom and I had breakfast by ourselves; Keith didn't join us again. Keith was just a brand new freshman in the House. He was in his learning process about how this kind of thing works. I don't hold it against him. I suspect that I probably made those kind of, I'm assuming, certain kinds of mistakes when I was a freshman too, about who certain people are, what they're all about, and how they're going to react, and how I might approach them. I think that happens. I think if a person's fairly good humored about it or maybe have to go mend the fence later, other legislators won't hold it against them permanently. But, it depends on how it all plays out.

BB: Senator Fred Van Valkenburg was a man that had bold instincts and strong opinions and that sort of thing, who you served closely with during that period of time. Just summarize Fred if you could.

GJ: Well, Fred was almost the proverbial engine on the railroad. They say don't stand in front of a moving train. When Fred decided certain things were going to move, things moved up there. Very, very bright guy, but you don't stand in front of Fred when he gets to rolling. He was not afraid of battles, and sometimes there were internal Democrat battles because he challenged "Doc" Norman for president—or floor leader—in any case, in one of those sessions. So Fred and Doc are both Democrats, both from Missoula, so he wasn't afraid of getting mixed up in that kind of thing. The other side always knew that they better be on their toes, or Fred will figure something out and roll over them.

And there were a couple sessions, and I think it was...well, '91 Democrats were back in control of the Senate, having not been in '89, and I think the expectation was that the Democrats wouldn't be able to balance the budget. This was in the regular session, and Fred found something. He's digging around stuff at the Legislative Auditor's office and Legislative Finance, and he found some changes in accounting measures that enabled us to balance the budget. We went home from the regular session with a balanced budget. Now, it turned out, given the way agencies were spending their money a little faster—they weren't managing their cash flows—that we had to go into special session and balance the budget all over again because the money had run out later in '91 when the infamous seven percent solution came along. But, he could do that; he'd find ways to figure out to balance that budget in those years. The other side, your side, just, "Where in the hell did he come up...?" But, it was something they couldn't argue with. "Yes, it does..." and our constitutional requirement is leave here with a balance budget.

BB: So Fred was a very shrewd and creative thinker as well as a very determined and very strong leader.

GJ: Oh, he was. He clearly was.

BB: His major adversary in probably a decade of state politics, the two most formidable figures in my experience in the Legislature, were Fred Van Valkenburg and John Mercer.

GJ: Oh yes. Absolutely.

BB: They were the two gladiators, weren't they, of our era there, I think.

GJ: I think putting John Mercer in the category of among the top, say, two or three of the most powerful Speakers is easy enough to do.

BB: Probably of all time, but certainly of our experience there. Fred and John were the real big men in the process. I just see those two, I think it might have been in the '87 session, but it was when Fred was Majority Leader. Fred was Majority Leader two or three times before he became President, and the Republicans were concerned because of his boldness and his tendency to go ahead and sometimes to win by intimidation, that Bruce Crippen was the

Republican Minority Leader when Fred was the Majority Leader and that was the thinking. It was that Bruce Crippen was his—

GJ: Bruce was Minority Leader when I was Majority Leader.

B

B: Was he? Fred was Majority Leader I think three different times.

GJ: Fred was Majority Leader in '91. I think between him and "Doc" was in the '87-'89 session. Now it may have been when I was out. I'm not sure who was the leadership, but in the '81, '83, '85 sessions when I wasn't there. I think Fred might have been there at one of those times.

BB: Well, what I remember is a discussion in our caucus about how, "You know Van Valkenburg can really be tough. He can really kick somebody around on the floor and the guy we've got is Bruce Crippen." So there was a comment made that either Bruce was going to have to take Fred on in a particular bill or, my thinking was, that we pick Bruce as our Floor Leader because we thought we needed as mean an old herd bull as they had for their guy. What session that was I don't—

GJ: Whether Bruce was...I don't remember whether he was Floor Leader in '91. I know he was in '93. We, of course, sat across the aisle from each other.

BB: Yes, that's when Fred was president.

GJ: Yes, and I was Majority Leader.

BB: Well, that might even have been the thinking. But Bruce was, I think, he was Floor Leader twice. I think—

GJ: When I think back, Fred was, and in the Senate in some respects—or traditionally modeled after U.S. Senate, or back in the days when we had a lieutenant governor—the real power was the Majority Leader. Fred was enormously adroit at being a powerful Majority Leader.

BB: Regardless of who the Senate president was.

GJ: Right. Joe Mazurek was president in the '91 session when Fred was Majority Leader. Joe was a very strong president, but Fred was the powerful force there in that team. Well, then little old quiet Greg wants to be Majority Leader, and Fred becomes President. But in some respects, and Fred's a good friend and I like and admire him, but Fred didn't exactly quit being Majority Leader because it was things Majority Leaders do that he did so well. He kept doing those. I've almost wondered if, and I don't know whether my caucus had held me in that kind of esteem, we might have been better off in that '93 session if he'd been Majority Leader and I'd have conducted the Senate as President. He could have done the things that Majority Leaders are noted to do.

BB: The way it broke down on our side, and I think you just described it the same way, is that there never was a president of the Senate in the 1889 Constitution. There was a Speaker of the House, but the Senate didn't have a figure equivalent of the Speaker of the House because the lieutenant governor in the old traditional model did the presiding and that type of thing. And so—

GJ: He might even be of the other party of the majority, and so they'd never trusted him with any power.

BB: But when we went to an organizational scheme in the Senate with the new Constitution more similar to the House, still it was hard to give up the old tradition of having the Majority Leader be the guy in charge. So the Majority Leader in the Senate is a bigger job than the Majority Leader in the House. The Speaker in the House is a bigger job than the President of the Senate. That's kind of how it's evolved in Montana. And the way we did it on the Republican side of the Senate during my experience there for the most part, was that the Majority Leader was the war chief and the President of the Senate was the chief administrator, kind of like the chief of staff. The President of the Senate coordinated the legislation between and among the committees and rode herd on the committee chairs to make sure they're getting their bills to the floor, determined what bills would go on the floor agenda, tried to make sure you—I always tried to figure out how much talk was in each bill so I knew about how long that board was going to take to get us back to where the floor sessions began again. If there were important meetings that needed to take place, usually they took place in the President's office and that sort of thing, but in terms of mixing it up with the other side and developing some kind of political strategy, that was the Majority Leader's job. I think, what your saying, was Fred was better at that.

GJ: Fred was better at that than I was. So whether it was he should have stayed there and I went the other, I don't know. That's kind of an academic issue, but he was better at that than I was. Even though I probably am considered a partisan, I guess I don't even apologize for that, I was never as comfortable with this whole thing of fine tuning the tactics and the strategies that all pointed to the next election and the effect on everybody else. And the Majority Leader really does have to do those sort of things.

BB: John Harp was a real good Majority Leader for the Republicans and he was the Majority Leader when I was President. And I think I helped John, and I think John helped me because I think we had leadership styles that complemented each other and didn't conflict with each other.

Governors. You've already talked a little bit about Governor Schwinden, but I'm just interested, Greg, because we've all had impressions of people over time, and so if you could kind of describe Governor Tom Judge in a way that would kind of help us understand what kind of a guy he was and what his leadership style was, how would you do it in a few sentences?

GJ: I think Tom turned out, on reflection, my favorite governor of the six I served with. He was very much a bold-style kind of politician, but I think he pushed the Legislature and administration into doing a lot of the progressive things that the groundwork had been laid for by Forrest Anderson and the new Constitution. I think he actually pushed all those through. Now what was interesting, was at the end of his second term, those of us in leadership and the Legislature going to meet with the governor and lieutenant governor—and by then Ted Schwinden was his lieutenant governor—is at that point in his second term, he'd kind of lost interest in this whole being governor and I think he had thoughts about somehow being a U.S. senator. But those options were being rapidly closed off by [John] Melcher and [Max] Baucus so there wasn't a route there. So, he decided to run for a third term, so he wasn't as attentive later in his career as he was to these kind of policy issues that were important that marked that very progressive kind of era in Montana politics in the state government.

As we had found him to be less attentive, leadership found him to be less attentive in that last session in '79, most of our communication was with Ted Schwinden and it was this kind of thing: "Wow, Ted will be a great governor because, boy, he really pays attention to us legislators." Well, I lose the election; Ted gets elected governor. He names me to the Board of Investments, and I have to come down and visit with members of the Senate because I got confirmed and stuff. Already within three weeks of him becoming governor, Democrats in the Legislature are unhappy because Ted Schwinden doesn't talk to them in the way he did as lieutenant governor. Now, whether it's institutional or it's the handlers or what goes with being in office at the level of being governor, or you serve with somebody you know really well and they get to be a member of Congress or U.S. Senate, and the same old kind of relationship that existed before that can frequently not exist later. Some of it is just that they don't have time.

BB: There is the separation of powers thing, too. Structurally, that builds a little bit of a wall between legislators and governors—

GJ: But the complaint from Democrat legislators, when I came back from my confirmation and when every month I came here for Board of Investment's meeting, I stop up and see how everybody was doing, and the complaints about Ted, they said he was talking to the Republican legislators; of course, they had the majority. But, you almost hear that about every governor, that complaint about every governor, "He spends most of his time talking to..." Yes, I think Republicans complained about Racicot being too attentive to Democrats and I've even heard a few folks somehow or the other think that Brian's [Schweitzer] been too attentive to...though most of the Republicans these days don't give him much opportunity to be attentive to them that I can tell.

BB: Okay, so how would you contrast Judge and Schwinden?

GJ: I think Schwinden was, philosophically, a bit more conservative than Judge. I do think that Ted probably ran a bit tighter ship. Now, I think they both generally appointed good department directors and were not afraid to delegate responsibilities to qualified department

directors. But I think Ted was a bit more attentive to what may have been going on. Tom was a little stronger in the great ideas: "Let's have this great idea. Let's have this agency work with legislators and get this great idea rolling. Then you go run it. You're a good director. You run it." Ted was a little more engaged. I don't think that he over-managed or tried to micro-manage his agencies in a way that was destructive. I never got that sense. It was one executive re-organization thing that kind of framed my view about those sorts of things. Ted Schwinden decided the Department of Health was too big, Health and Human Services was too big, and therefore, we're going to deliver, properly deliver services to all these people and not spend anymore money, maybe even save some money by dividing this huge big department, Health and Human Services, up into Health and Human Services and the Department of Family Services. Well, then you had two agencies, neither of which were probably funded properly given the kind of, just meat-grinding kind of issues they have dealing with the vulnerable populations.

So I became a skeptic about this whole thing. When you're in trouble you reorganize government and somehow or the other that's going to solve your problems. So then a few years later when Marc Racicot decides, "Gee, we've got these problems with these two agencies used to be one, now we have problems with Health and Human Services and Department of Family Services. Let's reorganize and put them all back together again." I don't think he got any further along an answer to helping deal with those problems than Ted had with the first re-organization which took them apart.

I'm a bit skeptical of executives when they say, "Well, we're going to solve problems by reorganizing government." It's like, well, it could happen, but I don't think that's going to make it happen. Mostly, you solve problems by putting good people in that can do good work.

BB: You solve problems with good problem solvers.

GJ: That's right, and I think that that was the hallmark of Tom Judge, Ted Schwinden, Marc Racicot and Brian Schweitzer largely. I think that was probably the signal failure for Stan Stephens and Judy Martz. They each had some good cabinet officers, very good people, but it was overshadowed by the people who became well-known to the public for not being very good people. So the public perception that any of the agencies were well-run declined because there were a few who didn't do well at all.

BB: Did you know Stan Stephens?

GJ: Well, I mean we were senators together in the '70s from adjoining districts, then I succeeded him in the '70s. Of course, he came from Havre with a Democrat town, a railroad population, and he had Rocky Boy Reservation in his district at the time, so there were some influences towards the Democratic or liberal, progressive side on Stan as a state senator. But my experience with him was that he was firmly in the middle. He was the kind of guy: "We're going to work things out. Democrats and Republicans each have enough strength where we're

going to have to work some of these things out.” Frequently, the House was in one hand, Senate in the other. Then when he got to be governor, it completely changed. He drew a line: “It’s going to be my way or the highway,” kind of thing. I didn’t understand. I was surprised that changed. Now when I talked to people at his former radio station, they would say, “He thought running the state government as governor was the same as being the owner and CEO of a radio station. ‘I own it, I’m the boss, I tell you what to do, and that’s how it goes.’”

Governors are powerful, powerful people, but there’s...institutionally there’s just no way that they can have that same level of executive power that that CEO of a business, particularly a business he owns himself, is able to exercise. I think that’s part of where Stan got off on the wrong foot. He had trouble coming up with good qualified people because certain things like Health and Human Services are not the kind of thing that Republicans really want to run. To find a Republican who wants to run the Welfare Agency in the state is just a little tough. I’m sure there are good people out there [who] really care about their poor neighbors and stuff and genuinely...In fact called Tom Keating a bleeding heart conservative because there were certain...You Republicans were always going nuts. You were never going to get the budget balanced because this bleeding heart conservative was willing to spend money on poor people, on people with addictive disorders and all the other kinds of problems that Health and Human Services has to deal with.

BB: Tom Keating was a Republican senator from Billings who was an ultra-orthodox conservative on everything but a few areas that were of special interest to him.

GJ: That’s correct.

BB: On those areas he was, I think you correctly categorized him, as a bleeding heart conservative. But on virtually everything else, he was pretty far to the right.

Marc Racicot.

GJ: Generally, I had, all the way through his administration, and I knew...After the tumult of Stan Stephens being governor and the terrible relationships with the legislature that kind of went both ways in some respects that we get this new governor. I’m Majority Leader and Fred’s president and Marc Racicot is governor. So we started out on a pretty good relationship with each other, and in some respects it held up. His last session, I was a little disappointed with Marc in that he called the Democratic leadership [to a meeting] and because I was not a formal leader anymore, but had been around for so long that the leadership, Steve Doherty and Mike Halligan and those guys, when there was a leadership meeting with the governor, they’d ask me to go along with them.

Well, there was a discussion about the bill to reduce business equipment taxes, and Marc kept saying, “Well, that’s too expensive. The Republicans have made that bill too expensive. Can you Democrats show me that you can sustain a veto? If it’s too expensive, I’ll have to veto that bill.”

So we had a couple procedural votes, and both the House and the Senate proved we could sustain his veto. With that, the Republican leadership pulls the bill back. It was actually in the pipeline to get to the governor's office. They pull it back out of there and decide that we need to negotiate some more. When they got done negotiating, it was even more expensive. So I jumped John Harp or somebody on the floor and I said, "How'd this get more expensive? The governor—and you said the governor wanted to re-negotiate because the bill was too expensive, and it's more expensive now. What happened?"

They said, "This is what the governor wanted." They said that on the floor. It's like, wow! It's what the governor wanted? I've had some—

BB.: What happened then? Do you remember?

GJ: Well, I've been told...I never asked Marc about it. I was told that it was at that point he was developing his great friendship and relationship with Governor Bush. A couple companies that owned refineries in Montana had a stake in the taxes paid on those refineries [and that] had caused some calls from Austin to Helena to get the governor to make the magnitude of the tax breaks for the refineries bigger. Now that's a Republican lobbyist, whether he had direct knowledge of that or something that those guys had speculated about, I don't know.

BB: But the more expensive version of the bill did pass and was signed by the governor?

GJ: That's right. After he had asked us to show that we could sustain a veto—

BB: On the less expensive version.

GJ: Yes, so I felt like we were sorely used by Marc in that. It's been kind of a little burr under my saddle of my otherwise, more or less, positive feelings towards Marc. It's just a matter of my disappointment in him.

BB: Judy Martz?

GJ: Well, in some respects, Judy caught the political flack for some policy decisions made in the previous administration that she wasn't responsible for. Electricity deregulation that Marc supported very strongly didn't hit the fan until—and the consequences of it and cost to the consumers didn't hit the fan—until Judy was governor. I think that and the tax shifting that went with some of the tax relief that was offered to...rather than across the board for everybody, was given to certain elements, like the business equipment tax—caused a shift in tax burden to homeowners. So homeowners seeing their taxes going up while Judy Martz was governor, well, she wasn't responsible for that whole setup. I think those are a couple of policy matters where she lost public support over decisions that were made by the previous administration and she wasn't responsible for. Some of the other problems she had as governor

came from inexperience in a political realm. Having come out of her family-owned business with her husband and the nature of what a CEO can do in business compared to what a CEO can do as governor, I think that—

BB: She and Stephens might have been a little bit alike in that respect?

GJ: I think they were a little bit alike in that respect. That was the whole interesting thing, why Marc picked her to be his lieutenant governor at the time when Denny Rehberg decided to resign as lieutenant governor and run for U.S. Senate against Baucus. I don't know why he couldn't have run while still lieutenant governor, but it must have been something between the two of them. So, he resigns, creates this vacancy for lieutenant governor. Well, there were several knights of the roundtable wanting to be the next governor who wanted then to be picked to be lieutenant governor because their view of the world. John Harp and Chuck Swysgood, and any number of others that had the notion that they'd like to be governor, could be good governors—

BB: Just to make sure this is understood. Denny Rehberg was the lieutenant governor under Marc Racicot, and he resigned—

GJ: Well, he had started as lieutenant governor under Stan Stephens—

BB: That's right, but that was to replace Allen Kolstad, who was elected lieutenant governor under Stephens and then resigned to run for the U.S. Senate. So, Rehberg was appointed by Stephens to be lieutenant governor, and Racicot retained him as lieutenant governor. Then when Rehberg decided to run for the U.S. Senate, he resigned, and at that point there were several people that you mentioned that were all interested in becoming lieutenant governor to replace Rehberg because they knew that since Racicot was term limited out, they'd have the inside track on the Republican nomination for governor when he left office.

GJ: Right.

BB: So you're saying that it was somewhat of a mystery to a lot of us around there that these pretty well-known and experienced legislative politicians didn't get Governor Racicot's appointment and instead this less well-known person, Judy Martz, did.

GJ: You know they say about politicians who have the opportunity to appoint people to civil office that you end up with one ingrate and 10 angry honchos. The disappointed office-seekers become your enemies in certain circumstances, and the person you appointed may not be particularly appreciative of what you've done for them. So, Marc was faced with that kind of situation. He'd have one of these knights of the roundtable in the Republican party who'd already, because they'd been a legislator, been accomplished in the political world, probably might be an ingrate. And these other guys would be really angry because they would see their route to being governor was foreclosed. So I think Racicot looked at it and said, "Well, I'll

solve that because none of them will be mad. I'll appoint or I'll name my lieutenant governor as Judy Martz because she's never been in politics. She was a staff person in the Butte office for Senator [Conrad] Burns. Nobody would expect her even." I'm sure Marc never expected her to run for governor.

BB: Whatever attributes he was looking for certainly weren't mine. That the guy could think because she's so much different than me or these other guys like me who were all vying for that position.

GJ: He at least knew that all these other guys would look at Judy and say, "Well she's not likely as a successor so we might still have a route we can make to the governorship." But they didn't take into account that she has an ego just like everybody else around in this stuff. She was lieutenant governor, watched what was going on and decided she could be. The further complication then for all these other folks was out on the far right: [University of Montana law professor] Rob Natelson, the Harps and the Swysgoods—

BB: The Republicans—John Harp, Chuck Swysgood. A few others thought, "If we run and she runs..."

GJ: We'll split the vote with her. Natelson will get the Republican nomination, and then we've got a disaster on our hands. So—

BB: So they gave her a free trip? They decided to—

GJ: Well in fact, they rallied round her in order to keep Natelson from getting the nomination.

BB: Schweitzer?

GJ: I think he's a good idea man. When I was approached about what I think about him running for governor, I was like, "You know Brian Schweitzer..." I supported him when he ran against [Conrad] Burns, but it struck me that where the coin of the realm is, great ideas, that he would personally be more comfortable in the United States Senate, where it's always the great ideas. That he wouldn't necessarily be that comfortable with the nuts and bolts of running a government. I think he's been able to manage that difference pretty well. Some of it came from, I think generally, he picked very good people to run his agencies and as his close advisors. I would rate him as a good governor, and I'm a bit removed down here from the legislative process to know whether there was some better way to have worked with the legislature than he has. I'm not in any particular position to figure that out, partly because the nature of the legislature's changed in my opinion from when I was there; so my memories of the legislature and how it worked with governors or in the case of the fights with Stan Stephens, how it didn't work. I'm just not attuned to that kind of thing and to even offer advice to the administration on how better to work with the legislature in getting things resolved up there.

BB: How would you describe him? What's his leadership style? Is there something, an experience or a conversation that would kind of typify his leadership style, his approach to the office?

GJ: I think he's very thoughtful when he's alone. He must be. And he's very, very bright and studies a lot. But when he starts framing his notions of what directions we ought to go on a variety of different issues, I think he's kind of figured that out where he wants to go. I think it's full speed ahead and everybody better figure on getting on board. He's almost the executive branch version of [the] Fred Van Valkenburg legislative brand.

BB: Greg, we've just got a few minutes left. As you look back over your career in politics, which was mostly in the legislature but I don't want to narrow this question to that, it could be while you were a member of the Public Service Commission as well, is there a particular piece of legislation that you consider perhaps to be the most important during all the time that you've served?

GJ: Well, not that I introduced. When I first got into the Senate—

BB: Well, that's going to be my next question.

GJ: I introduce the Family Farm Act, and I was big on keeping corporations from taking over rural Montana.

BB: My question was going to be two-fold. What's the biggest piece of legislation you've felt will have the most impact, the most significant in the 30 or so years of your experience in public life, and then secondly, in terms of your own involvement. So I think maybe the Family Farm Act would be the answer to the second question first.

GJ: Well it is, but I had that experience and then the bill failed. And I was kind of disappointed in that. But I kind of figured out for myself, I'm not the kind of guy suited to introducing the big groundbreaking policy initiative in the legislature. Particularly when I came back and Pat Regan, another one of the legislators I greatly admired, got me on Finance and Claims Committee, and I became a specialist on state budgets. So, if I had something I point to in my own experience in the legislature that I think is a real matter of consequence it was all that work I did on the appropriations process and budgeting.

BB: That was your reputation. That was your reputation as a real expert on the—

GJ: And that's where I was happiest, rather than trying to find some policy initiative that I could get people inside and outside the legislature all wound up [about], and somehow or the other get through the legislature. I think probably to the negative, I think deregulation was probably the biggest policy mistake—electricity deregulation—was the biggest policy mistake the legislature has ever made. Bar none. We're still struggling with trying to re-fix. We don't get

back to what we lost, but to get some semblance of something that will be an ongoing matter of stability. That's the most consequential bill.

BB: No question.

GJ: Unfortunately, I have to say it's the most consequential bill in the negative.

BB: (Laughs). Anything else on that? We've got just two or three minutes left. Anything you'd like to say on deregulation or anything you'd like to see just in summarizing our interview.

GJ: One of the things I've noticed in [this] job because it's focused on utility matters, by and large, is that our work here at the Public Service Commission really does bore down several layers deep into the details of the kinds of issues we're dealing with. It's not their fault, but legislators...Because they're covering the whole universe of issues from A to Z, and even though they specialize a bit in committee, it's inevitable. It's not their fault. Is that they really only get down into issues at the very skin layer level and not into the detail. Sometimes too much information can screw up your judgment, but on the other hand, the problem they have is not enough information informing sometimes major important decision on public policy. That's exacerbated by term limits because then they're not there enough years to learn that—

BB: To really master the details. Greg, thank you for your public service.

GJ: Well thank you, Bob.

[End of Interview]