

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: 396-076
Interviewee: Pat Williams
Interviewer: Bob Brown
Date of Interview: November 23, 2015
Project: Bob Brown Oral History Project

Bob Brown: This is Bob Brown, and I'm back with former Congressman Pat Williams who served—

Pat Williams: Are you recording now? Did she hit recording?

BB: It's recording, I think, yes.

PW: Okay.

BB: Who served longer consecutively in Congress than any other member in the history of the state of Montana. And we're continuing with an interview that we began on, I believe, the 20th of November 2015, and today is the 23rd of November. And so, we're here in Missoula, Montana, at the Mansfield Library. Pat, how would you describe the Butte Democrats as compared to other legislative Democrats? How would you describe yourself?

PW: Well, during my service in the legislature, two terms in the Montana legislature, I served in the House, and the Democrats, the other Democrats that served with me were more fun than a barrel of monkeys. They knew the legislative process, almost all of them, inside and out and they were wonderful bargainers, negotiators, arm twisters, pals, whisperers, and they were all out 100 percent for Butte. If it wasn't good for Butte, they weren't for it. If there was something Butte needed, they were all for it, and they would trade votes for it. They'd always be vote traders. And sometimes they wouldn't just trade votes within their own party, which is done now and then, they would, I think trade votes with Republicans, which was not all bad, but it was unusual. There weren't very many Republicans the Democrats could get to trade votes with them across party lines, and the same thing with Democrats doing it with Republicans, as Republicans doing with Democrats. But the Butte Democrats opened the door to wholesale trading if it could be something, particularly something that involved concrete and bricks, they'd do it.

BB: And so, just briefly, and hopefully you'll be comfortable with this, how would you describe yourself? How did you fit into that or not fit into that? Any—it's hard sometimes, I know, Oh Lord the wisdom be is to see ourselves as others see us.

PW: You know, yes, right, I love that quote.

BB: How do you see yourself?

PW: Yes, I love that quote—see ourselves. “Wad some power the giftie gie us” would be to see ourselves as others see us. Burns.

BB: Right. Yes, Robert Burns, right.

PW: Yes, it's a wonderful quote. Well, I don't know how others saw me. I saw myself as one who was somewhat reserved about vote trading. It seemed to me that the issue at hand was the issue at hand, and shouldn't be given away because there might be something over there under the bush. And so I wasn't as good at, I suppose maybe the term is as good at vote trading as some of my colleagues. But neither did I, you know, abandon them when they wanted something for Butte. I understood that fully, and I tried to do my part as best I could. But they couldn't always count on me to vote yes or no based on the fact that we got something from Butte unrelated to the issue we were voting on. So, I'd describe myself that way.

BB: Good. We're going to switch topics now. We're going to leave Montana, because you left the legislature to serve on the staff of your legislative seatmate, John Melcher. John Melcher had been a state senator, and then he'd actually been elected to the State House, was your seatmate in the Montana House, and when he was elected, I believe in a special election, to serve in the United States House of Representatives from Montana's Eastern District, when we had two districts. You went back to Washington, D.C., with him as a legislative staffer. And I'm just curious to know, because this is a totally new chapter in your life, what are your memories of being a legislative staffer?

PW: Yes, John and I served as seatmates. I was fortunate enough to get this this wise, aggressive politician and officeholder as my seatmate. As I mentioned in this interview earlier, the seatmate in my first session was a fellow named Bill Christiansen from Hardin, who later went on to be Montana's lieutenant governor. So, I was quite fortunate to have these two guys, and I got to sit next to them. Bill, or, John, yes as you've said, Bob, John got elected in a special election. When a member of the House leaves office for any reason, the only way that person can be replaced is through election. Members of the House cannot be appointed. So, there had to be a special election for Melcher. He won that election, I think against Bill Mather—

BB: That's right.

PW: Yes, Bill Mather. We had talked about that earlier. And—

BB: Battin. Congressman Battin resigned to become a federal judge [James F. Battin].

PW: Nixon appointed Battin to a federal judgeship in Butte.

BB: Yes, and that's what created the vacancy.

PW: And that created the vacancy, that's right, thank you. I helped John do two things in Washington. One was set up shop. You know, get started, get our feet on the ground. And the other thing was to be his staff guy with regard to a number of issues, but most critically, organized labor. John was a friend of organized labor in the Senate and the House. That is, the Montana Senate and House, even though this was a guy from eastern Montana where organized labor did not have nearly the membership that it had in western Montana. But nonetheless, on some issues of critical importance to labor and to Montana, John voted in a way that labor liked. But not always, and he was from eastern Montana, so he knew he had to walk a line very carefully, and he hoped that I'd be able to help him with that. And I hope I did, but I made good friends doing it.

Being a staff person in Washington, D.C., for a member of Congress, working on Capitol Hill, is a tough piece of business. There are long hours, there's mail to be answered, there's the phone to be answered, and constituents in Montana have always felt fairly close, I think, compared to most other states, to their members of the House or Senate. And so, there's no problem in calling them, or in writing to them. You know, the first question on people's minds, when they had a problem in Montana—Ross Toole [K. Ross Toole] said, when Mansfield announced he was leaving—the first thing on their minds were, “Well, we'll call Mike.” (laughs) When they had a problem, they would call the federal government. Well, they also, you know, would call Arnold when Arnold Olsen was in the House, or they'd call —when Dick Battin was in the House. Well, they called John Melcher, from eastern Montana, so we had a lot, a lot of work to do, believe me. Serving or staffing on Capitol Hill is no circus. I think many people believe that, but there's a hell of a lot of long hours. I had my family back there with me, we went back with one child, and after three years we came home with three children. And I always thought it was the humidity.

So, the family was back there, and here's a short story. We took our son Griff, who was our firstborn, and at that time our only born, down to see the Mall, the wonderful expanse between the Lincoln Memorial, Washington Memorial, and the Capitol Building. And we took him down to romp on the grass, and we took him to see the Lincoln Memorial. And went inside the Lincoln Memorial, and he looked up at Lincoln seated in that huge chair, the memorial of Lincoln. And about a week later, Griff said to us, “Dad, Mom, do you think we could go back down to that grass, and I could sit in Mr. Lincoln's lap?”

BB: Wow.

PW: And that struck both of us almost like a tiny lightning bolt. Yes, the closeness that that brings you to the history of Washington, D.C., and our heroes, regardless of policy, our heroes.

BB: The nation's capital is an inspirational experience for anybody.

PW: Isn't it?

BB: And I'm not sure it ever ceases being that.

PW: Well, when Tip O'Neill came out on a trip to Montana for me, I was pointing out different mountain ranges to them, to him. And both from the air and from the ground, and when Tip spoke, I think it was in Helena, —he went to Butte first, and then to Helena, short weekend, he had to leave. But Butte and Helena he gave three or four, four speeches, and in one of them, he said, "I can understand how these mountains can be so inspirational to people here." And I'm not sure folks knew what he meant, although he got a sort of a murmur of acceptance. But then he said, "You know, the Capitol dome is that way for me." He said, "Every single time I've looked at it, particularly at night, over 40 years it has been brand new to me each time, and an inspiration." He said, "I think, from listening to Pat, that's the way these mountains are to you."

So, when I was with Melcher, in part I was there to see, what is Capitol Hill like? I agreed to stop everything I was doing, stopped my job teaching. Of course, that year had ended for teaching. Melcher was elected in June of '60 —was, yes, elected in a June election in '69. And so I didn't, you know, I didn't interrupt the school year. So, I went back with him, and in part, I wanted to see what is this city like, what is Congress like? And when I left three years later, I was convinced that I didn't want to live there ever again.

The traffic was difficult, the city was not entirely safe, although not as unsafe as some have thought it. But there were areas you didn't go into at night. The nature of the place was busy, busy, busy. "I can't talk, I got to go. I'm sorry, I got to cut this short, I have something to do." And so, I was pleased not to be there, and had decided I would only want to visit, after my—the time with John.

BB: How ironic. And you know, too, as I think about it, because you were there as our congressman from Montana for 18 years, it probably helped you as a congressman, to be able to empathize with and understand what your staff was doing.

PW: Yes, it sure did.

BB: And to appreciate your staff in particular.

PW: Yes.

BB: Because you'd been in their shoes at one time.

PW: And it was one of the things that convinced me that, look, I had to work as hard as they did, or they wouldn't work hard. I thought if they saw me as a model, putting in 10-, 11-hour days, not that I asked them to do that, but putting in—I asked them to do a lot of 9-, 10-hour days, looking back on it. But I thought if they saw me working 11 hours five days a week, and then on a Friday or a Saturday go down to the National Airport, get on a plane, and come out to Montana and do the same thing for two days, and then go back, and start in on a Monday morning, that that would assure them that we were there to do the job that Montanans sent us

to do. And it was a, you know, it was more than a five-hour, more than an eight-hour day and a five-day week.

BB: Reminds me of something, I'll just interject here, it's not really a part of our interview, but maybe it kind of is. You and I knew each other a friendly personal basis during that period in your life when you were a congressman. And once, you came back to Bigfork High School where I was teaching, and you brought a flag to the student body that had flown over the Capitol Building. And that was a big deal, and you spoke to an assembly, and then you came down to my American government class, and did the class. And then, as you were leaving, I said, "You know, this has really been a lot of fun." And you had commented, too, that you really enjoyed the day, and that experience. And I said, "Well, what you ought to do is, you know, I know some pretty good fishing spots. And I'm kind of into fishing, and I know you're interested in the wilderness and outdoors, and that sort of thing. Why don't we set a date sometime next July or August where we can just go fishing for an afternoon?"

And you said, "Bob, my whole life is scheduled. I am scheduled almost all the time I'm back in Montana, and almost all the time in Washington, D.C. And sure as we're standing here, we could set that date, and there'd be a good chance I wouldn't be able to keep it. That's just—my life is so much that way now," and you said that's one of the things you regretted about it.

So, when you decided not to run for re-election later on, and you said you wanted to come back to Montana, I was one of the folks when I heard that who believed that. I mean, I knew you know, you missed Montana, and that you did want to come back. And well, it was a wonderful experience, of course, service as a congressman in the United States Congress. At the same time, God, that's got to be an existence like a rat on a treadmill, to a large extent.

PW: (laughs)

BB: Especially in a big state like Montana, and such a long distance from Washington, D.C.

PW: And so many fishing holes.

BB: Yes, that you can't ever—that you've just got a drive by.

PW: I drove by them all.

BB: Yes (laughs)

PW: I didn't know if I was driving by yours because you'd never tell anybody where they were (laughs)

BB: Hell, no. No, that's right, you had to go with me.

PW: (laughs) So, it was a treasure for you to invite me to come to them, and to this day, as of the date of this recording, we haven't yet gone fishing together.

BB: Nope, nope.

PW: So, it's been a long time.

BB: Well, we might still be—

PW: I enjoyed being in your class because it was a hell of a lot like being in a classroom again, that's been my life, you know, being in a classroom.

BB: (laughs) Yep. Okay, so, you returned to Montana and you ran for Congress in the Democratic primary in 1974. And you weren't successful. Do you have any recollections of that campaign, and what you learned from it?

PW: After Arnold Olsen—I came back to Montana, and I got—immediately got a job in education again, and I helped design and run a six-state education program that, by the way, took over and had its facilities on the old Glasgow Air Force Base. The Air Force had abandoned it, and long story short, we took over those facilities in a program called Mountain Plains Education Program. And it was six different states, and I won't go into the details of it, but it was a wonderful experience for me to both help design that program, and then have part in running it.

I was located, not in Glasgow but in Helena, although I was in Glasgow quite often. Then after, I think it was six years—four, five, six years—a seat opened up in the Congress, because Mansfield left, and Mel—no, how did it go?

BB: Well, I think what happened was, you ran for Congress in the Democratic primary in 1974, and [Max] Baucus ended up winning the primary.

PW: Oh, Arnold had—yes, Arnold had—Arnold Olsen had been defeated by —

BB: Right, Arnold got defeated in '70.

PW: Right.

BB: By Dick Shoup.

PW: Right.

BB: And Dick was re-elected in '72, and then looked like maybe a Democrat year, because of--

PW: Watergate, Watergate.

BB: The Watergate business. So, you and Baucus and Arnold ran again in '74—

PW: That was it.

BB: And Baucus prevailed in the primary. And then, I think—

PW: Two terms later—

BB: Two terms later—

PW: Baucus left, and that's when I ran and won.

BB: Exactly, yes.

PW: But you've asked me to talk about when I ran and lost, and that memory we have—

BB: As much as anything what you learned from it.

PW: Exactly, okay. I went to Arnold Olsen, who'd been a fine congressman, but had lost, and I said, "Arnold, I'm going to run for your old seat."

He said, "Oh, Pat, I wish you wouldn't. I'm going to run for it again. I can win it back against Shoup." And so another young guy—I was young, and another young guy named Max Baucus decided he was going to run. And then Arnold said to me, "But Pat, I want to run," as I've said, he said, "I want to run."

And I said, "Well,"...No, I've got this wrong, Bob, the dates are, the dates are wrong, I'm sorry.

BB: Well, I think you had that conversation with him in '72, and you deferred to him. You said, "Okay."

PW: Yes.

BB: And you stood aside for him. Well, then he wanted to do it again in '74, and I think you'd felt, "Well, look, I deferred to you once, now, I'm not going to—"

PW: Yes, I'm not going to defer to you again.

BB: Shoup's beat you twice already, and so—

PW: Yes, that's right. And once Arnold got in it—

BB: That Arnold did get back in in '74, yeah.

PW: He got back in it again. And then, I was—Shoup had had his two terms, and Arnold decided he was going to get back in it again, which split the labor vote.

BB: Right.

PW: And of course, we were just running in Western Montana at the time. And then this young fella Baucus decided to get in it, and Arnold and I split the, sort of the standard Democratic vote, and Max picked up all the new or reform Democratic vote, and he won. I think if either Arnold or I had run alone against Max, it was close enough, in the end, that maybe one of us would have won. But Max was a was a good candidate, he did that thing about walking across Montana, and Ekalaka to Yaak. And he won that, he won that primary. Then, two terms later, Max went to the Senate. Decided to run for the Senate.

Montana's difficulty, it seems to me, politically, has been that we've never had a House member—I say never, in recent history, in the history of most of our lifetimes—we've never had a House member that stayed put very long to gain seniority. And Max was one of those who moved to the Senate. Senator Metcalf, one of the great senators of all time, also served in the House from Western Montana, he left and went to the Senate. Mike Mansfield, who we all know was a great senator, served in the House, same seat from Western Montana, he went to the Senate. So, Montana never was able to get the kind of seniority they needed, and so one of the things I said to people when I was running was, "Look, all—I'm not going to promise you anything except rolled-up sleeves, long hours on the job, and I'll stay put in the House. I'm not running for the House because I want to be governor; I'm not running because I wanted to be a senator; I'll be perfectly satisfied to serve in the United States Congress as a member of the House of Representatives." And in that election I went—in the open election I went door-to-door. Thousands and thousands and thousands of doors, along with my friends.

BB: And I remember your commercial was, "Ding dong," on the radio or television.

PW: Williams for Montana.

BB: "Door-to-door for Congress."

PW: Montana. For Montana.

BB: Oh, "Door-to-door for Montana."

PW: (laughs) Yes, people say, "What the hell you running for? You don't have what you're running for on there." But I decided the word shouldn't be "Congress," the word should be

“Montana.” So, I ran “Door-to-door for Montana,” although on some of my signs, I'd obviously put the word “Congress.”

BB: But Baucus did this walk.

PW: He did the walk, yes.

BB: And you did, I think, a more specific variation of the walk, four years later. Because it was that you were going to their houses.

PW: Right.

BB: And so, they'd hear this on the radio. My grandmother was an example of that. I told you this story before.

PW: Yes, right.

BB: And that, my grandmother's mostly Irish, and a guy named “Pat,” she thought probably was.

PW: (laughs) Yes, right.

BB: And you were there at her door, and she'd heard your radio commercial, and that sort of thing. So, you made a very favorable impression on her.

PW: That did it. Oh, thank you. Well, you know, going door-to-door—not to complain about Max's walk—but going door-to-door was much more specific, much more reliable, and certainly a better learning experience than simply walking down the highway into a storm alone. Although I credit his footwork. My goodness, can you imagine all those steps?

BB: And that election, for all the hard work you invested and it, turned out well for you. You won the election—

PW: It really did. That election was—I'll exclude myself from this, but that primary election, on the Democratic side—included the best candidates that have ever run against each other for the Congress. I'd list them, but we'll leave somebody out. But it included John Bartlett, your and my friend from Whitefish—

BB: From Whitefish, right.

PW: It included George Turman, who had been a lieutenant governor, J.D. Lynch, longtime legislator, fine legislator, from Butte. Dorothy Bradley a leading candidate and reformist, as she had proved in the legislature, and had a wonderful mind.

BB: Gary Kimble, he was the other one?

PW: Yes. And the Native American candidate that you're saying, Gary Kimble. It was a fine group of people, and I was so fortunate to come out with the majority I did in the primary election. And then on the Republican side, people nominated the former secretary of state—

BB: The guy who was going to become secretary of state, I think. Jim Waltermire—

PW: Jim Waltermire. He would be—he was—it preceded his election to secretary of state. I think I said former. And Jim was a terrific candidate. He got around, he was personable, a lot of people liked him. Unfortunately, just a few years later he perished in a terrible airplane landing accident in Helena. And so, I—there I was elected to Congress. Now, the first day your eyes pop open, you say to yourself, “Holy smokes, I'm Montana's congressman.” It's a really kind of an unbelievable experience to suddenly be a congressman. You'd seen these guys all your life, and admired them, and now you were one of them. So, it meant not just waking up, but getting up and going to work.

BB: I've heard that the new members have a candlelight dinner in Statuary Hall. Was that a tradition when you started out?

PW: Yeah, it was. It was a tremendous affair.

BB: I'll bet it was.

PW: You go into the old Statuary Hall, which was once the seat, the chamber, for the U.S. House. And no lights except for candlelights. And there you are surrounded by some statues of some of the greatest American heroes, including Montana's Charlie Russell, the artist.

BB: And Jeannette Rankin, I think.

PW: Jeannette wasn't selected yet.

BB: Wasn't selected yet?

PW: She was selected in—they got a statue of her, and by the way, Statuary Hall was overburdened with the marble of statues, and they were afraid the weight was going to collapse the floor, so they began to put all the new statues that came from legislative recognition of a person in the state. Each state has two statues of their hero or heroines, in the Capitol Building. So, when Jeannette Rankin—bless her, I knew her—And so when Jeannette Rankin came—statue came to come to the Capitol, a wonderful likeness of Jeanette, the architect put it in a corner of a hallway. A corner that people didn't go to. And so, I went to Tip

O'Neill, the speaker, and said, "Gee, Tip, if this statue really goes to this hallway where they want it, you're going to have a thousand women outside protesting."

And he said, "Oh, they won't know about it."

Well, I said, "Yeah, my wife's going to tell them. So they'll be here."

He didn't know about Carol's organizing powers, but he said, "Oh, your wife."

I said, "No, seriously, Tip. You've got to come and take a look and see where they're putting her. This, the first woman in Congress. Without the protest, Tip, we got to move her."

And so, he came and looked at it, and he said, "No, you're right. You can't put the first woman in Congress in this side chamber here where nobody—inside a hallway." And so, he had the arch...I went to the architect of the Capitol and complained about it, and he ignored me, and so that's when I went to Tip.

I went to the architect first, then I went to Tip, and Tip said, "Well, let's have a meeting." So, he brought the architect to the Capitol, himself, myself, and Carol. And all of his references, all of his questions, all of his recognition, was to Carol. "Well, Carol, tell us why this is important." And Carol knew the history of Jeannette Rankin back and forth. Carol knew two of Jeannette Rankin's staff, and had had long interviews and visits with them. Tip was very impressed with Carol's knowledge of the first woman, and so Tip said to the architect, "So, what do you think about all this? Shouldn't she be in a better place?"

The architect said, "Well, we hardly have any more room, Mr. Speaker, but we'll put her wherever you want."

Tip said, "No, I think we'll put her wherever Carol Williams wants."

And so Carol picked out a spot just off at the corner of two main chambers in the in the Congress, and that's where she sat until there was a new place, and Carol now—or, Jeannette now occupies a spot in this new place, right outside the Capitol. Where most of the statues are now, you come down the main stairway, and they're right in front of you, is the first statue you see, the first woman in Congress. So, she's been in two places, both of them wonderful.

BB: What a good story. And I think people, unless they listen to this interview, would probably not know that story—

PW: Yes, never know it.

BB: So that's great. So, you're a new member of Congress, and what an exciting, overwhelming experience. What were your committees, what were your first committees? And do you

remember anybody specifically, early on in your legislative career, maybe another committee member or a chairman or somebody, that especially made a strong first impression on you as you were beginning your career in Congress?

PW: I chose a committee called Education and Labor, and it had all the education jurisdictions under it, the ones that the federal government has. And same thing with labor. By labor, it doesn't mean organized labor, it means workforce. So, issues like minimum wage or Davis-Bacon [Act] or worker safety, along with all the other education—along with education issues, would come to that Congress. Of course, I chose that because I was an educator.

The other committee I chose had jurisdiction over federal land, and goodness knows there's a lot of federal land, a third of Montana is federal land. So, that committee had jurisdiction over that, and it also was responsible for the federal jurisdiction on Indian tribes. You know, the tribes' connection to government is tribe-to-federal. It's not tribe-to-state, it's tribe to federal, first.

BB: Right.

PW: And so, having jurisdiction on that was very important for Montana, so I got on those two committees and went through the, you know, the processes there. The person on both committees that stood out the most to me was a gentleman, he's passed away now, bless him, but his name was Morris Udall. Mo Udall, M-o. Mo Udall. And Mo Udall was a both a character and a force in the United States Congress. He was from Arizona, and I used to play golf—although I played very few rounds seriously while I was in the Congress, but I was pretty good at it. And I went golfing with one member of Congress, oh, about a year after I was there, and then Udall came up to me, and he said, “Say, I hear you're” —his quote was—“Hey Pat, I hear you're pretty good with the sticks,” meaning the golf clubs. He said, “How would you like to go out and play with me sometime?”

I said, “Well, you know if I could—I go home every weekend, almost. But if I certainly—you're the chairman of the Interior Committee,” you know with all this jurisdiction. I said, “Certainly appreciate the honor.” I said, “What's your handicap?” Which in golf means, how well do you play? There's a number, you know, associated with it. And he said—I said, “What's your handicap?”

He said, “What's my handicap?” He said, “Look at me,” he said, “I'm skinny as a rail and I'm 6-foot-4, I have one eye, and I'm a liberal Mormon. What's your handicap?” (laughs)

BB: (laughs)

PW: That was Mo. We never did get to play golf together, but he was a wonderful, wonderful chairman, and a wonderful member of the House. When things would get too serious, they didn't get very mean in those days, but when they'd get a little rancorous, Mo would usually

stand up and have something to say that would calm down both sides. He had 22 rules, and so he's—(laughs) some of them had to do with decorum in the House. He'd stand up and everybody would get quiet, because they wanted to know which rule he was going to cite. He'd say, "According to Udall rule number 16, when in doubt about a bill, try reading it." (laughs) Everyone would laugh about that, and realize they didn't know as much about it as they thought they knew about a bill. I sure enjoyed being with Mo. Another guy that I was terribly impressed with was a fella that came when I did, so he wasn't a senior member, and not a lot of people in the country know his name, but they sure do in Washington state. The state of Washington, and Seattle. He had been an alderman in Seattle. His name is Mike Lowry. L-o-w-r-y. Mike later became governor of Seattle—

BB: Governor of Washington.

PW: Or, governor of Washington. Yes, it's like being governor of Seattle, isn't it, with all those people there. And he was a good governor, only went one term, but he was a fine legislator, and just smart as a whip. And he and I spent a lot of time together talking about what it's like to be a freshman here, and what do you have to do to move along. I decided that being, you know, only one member from Montana, of course, from Western Montana, in those days, and then later all of Montana, I decided that, look, I had to be able to take advantage of being the only one from Western Montana. Because that's pretty unusual in the Congress, one member for all that landmass. And so I decided to use that as a way to work my way in to people in Congress who had real authority. You know, those who had seniority, and see if I couldn't make a difference by getting to know them.

By the way, Bob, here's an example of how you get power in the House. Not necessarily in the Senate, but in the House. You either have to have a lot of members from your state, or you have to get seniority. That's it. Now, you can do the second one, seniority, by you know, being clever enough and friendly enough, and line up with enough other members from other states to get seniority. But that's it. Here's the thing that lot of people are surprised by. California has more members of the House, which course is done on population, than Arizona, New Mexico Colorado, Nevada, Utah, Idaho, and Montana combined. So, that shows you, we just don't have the power, right? So, you got to get seniority. That's why I made that earlier remark about Montana's problem is it can't get seniority in the House. Now, we've more than made up for it by having really good, outstanding members of the Senate. I mean, one of them, of course, everyone knows Mike Mansfield was leader of the Senate, for heaven's sakes, from this small, small populated state. So, we've made up for it there, but we haven't had it in the House.

BB: You know, Pat, Arnold Olsen, we mentioned him earlier, was a congressman from Montana for 10 years in the 1960s. And I remember he told me one time, just—I had two or three conversations with him, and he said, "Well, you know," he said, "What I ended up doing," he said, "I was back there for a few years" and I think he had run into the same problem. You know, he didn't have much seniority then, and he was one of two members of Congress, and I

remember he told me, too, he said, "Well, Jim Battin votes against everything." He said, "Jim Battin never makes any friends for us."

PW: (laughs)

BB: And so he's always voting against stuff. And so he said, "You know what I did?" He said, "I made myself a member of the California delegation."

PW: Oh, wow.

BB: He said, "I was with those guys, I hung with them, I made sure they knew they always got Arnold anytime they need him." And he said, "I think it worked for me."

PW: No—

BB: He said, "Generally, they helped me, and that was a big important Western delegation." And he said, "That's what seemed to me to be the best thing I could do."

PW: Well, that's a marvelous story. What I did was make myself a member of the Massachusetts delegation, because of Tip O'Neill.

BB: Yes, yes.

PW: And Joe Moakley, and a couple of other pals, ended up real pals with them. And, God, it helped me to beat hell. And when push came to shove and I was out of friends, I'd go see Tip. And Tip liked me. He knew about Butte, he wanted to go to Butte, never been there. We went out to Butte. But that's exactly right. If you're alone, you have to not only be friendly and knowledgeable, but you have to attach yourself to something.

BB: Yes. Because of your friendship to Tip O'Neill, did that help you become a whip? You were a Democratic regional whip? Tell me about that.

PW: Yes, Tip took a shine to me, and I went out of my way, frankly, to cozy up to him. Not only because I liked the guy. You know, he was this big, tall, wonderful old Irishman, and he was, by the way, Tip was not a—well, I guess he was. I was going to say, "Tip was not a backroom politician. I guess he was, but not in the Congress. Overtly, he was not a backroom, cigar-chomping, smoke-filled room colleague of ours. Tip was a reformer. Some of the great congressional reforms, in our lifetimes, were because of Tip O'Neill. Now, some people would say, "Well, he had to be urged, or pushed into them." He didn't lead them all, but he knew how to compromise so well that he knew how to get them done. Get a reform accomplished, even if it wasn't a reform the reformists wanted, he'd get half of it, or three-fourths of it for them. And some of them he promoted himself. So, he was a real performer.

But above all, he was a street politician. A guy who truly believed that all politics were local. And it may be now all politics are federal. I mean, after all, you can—if you're a Democrat candidate, you can defeat somebody by putting a George W. Bush's face on their face on a commercial, right, if you're a Republican. As has been done during the year of this interview, you can put Obama's face and name on a candidate running on the Democratic side, and defeat that candidate. And so that has federalized our politics a little bit more than when Tip came up with that famous thing about all politics are local. There was a time in in in Tip's second or third term as speaker when Democrats were in great disfavor. The government seemed, to many, like Tip O'Neill, it seemed bloated and out of place, and old-time. And so they used Tip as a as a cartoon character in campaigns—

BB: Symbol of government.

PW: A symbol of government, yes.

BB: Big, bloated.

PW: And at that time, when Tip's fortunes weren't going very well, I invited him out, to come out to Montana, come out to Butte and Helena is what we ended up deciding. And Tip said to me one day on the steps of the Capitol, is—I happened to be leaving when he was leaving, and our trip was about two weeks away. He said, "Pat," he said, "I said I'd come out to Montana but," he said, "We really didn't have time to talk about it." And I thought, "Oh God, he's not coming." And he put his arm around me as he'd often do with people, and he said, "Listen, old pal." Quote, "Listen, old pal. Are you sure you want me out there with you? Do you want to be seen with me now?" Because his...you know, his ratings had dropped, not at home, but around the country, and people were beginning to have a serious dislike of government and a dislike of Tip.

I said, "No, it'll be okay, Tip." I said, "We don't—you know, we don't get many speakers to the House in Montana, and people out there very polite, and they take it as it comes to them. And you'll be wonderful for them. They'll like you, and both sides will respect you."

Well, it turned out that was true, but you know, wasn't that so kind of him to say, "You sure I should come out right now? I'll come out whenever you want me, but right now..." Yes. Tip came out to Butte, we had an overflow crowd; we had to turn people—wanted tickets, you had to tell them, "No, we don't have any more tickets to it. And we overflowed room, and Tip was...only insistence to me when he came out was no police. "I don't want any police around me. I don't want any cops around me."

I said, "Why not?"

He said, "Well," you know, he said, "I get a lot of threats," and he said, "Your sheriff out there, and your chief of police have been on the phone with our secret service, and we've told them

the speaker doesn't want any uniformed police." He said, "So, there might be a few guys who are packing out there, but they got to be in regular...(unintelligible)." And I said—

BB: Civilian clothes?

PW: Yes, civilian clothes, yes. I said, "Why is that, Tip?"

And he said, "Well, look at me?" He said, "I'm six-foot-three, I weigh 300 pounds, I've got this huge shock of white hair," and he called it a cauliflower nose, you know, most people refer to cauliflower ears. Said, "I've got this cauliflower nose." And so he said, "I've already got a big arrow saying, 'Here he is.'" (laughs) "Yes, I don't need cops around me so people can find me. I don't need red lights spinning on the top of cars." And he was half kidding and half not. And—but his life was being threatened more of—regularly in those couple of years. And so, yes, no cops, even though he loved the policemen, they were part of his entourage.

BB: But you were kind of his—part of his entourage, I think. You were kind of a part of his inner circle.

PW: Yeah, I got to be, yes.

BB: And so, didn't that probably aid you in becoming the whip?

PW: Yes, and of course, that was your initial question, and I should have answered more directly. It did, it did. That, and knowing Mo Udall, getting to know Mo Udall so well.

BB: Had Mo been the whip in this region of the country?

PW: He had. And they would have a—they would have an election of regional whips, and only—Mo insisted that only freshman from the region be involved in electing the regional whip. It was way to give power to the freshmen. Odd thing to do. So, there were about 12 votes, 12 freshmen, and I said, "Well, I'd like to be a regional whip."

Mo said, "You know, Pat, you're just right for this place. You ought to run for regional whip, and it's only freshmen that can vote."

I said, "Oh, God, that'd be great." So, I ran—

BB: As a freshman?

PW: As a freshman. Because it was only freshmen who were going to vote. And they'd vote for a freshman. So, nobody else would get in it, you see what I mean, except freshmen.

BB: Yes.

PW: So, I got in it, and then another freshman, a friend of mine from New Mexico, Bill Richardson, who people now remember—

BB: You bet.

PW: Yes, he was a guy who could get Americans released from foreign prisons, and their—you know, and he became an ambassador. Bill Clinton named him an ambassador. So, Bill ran, and I won. And Bill came up to me afterwards and said, “You know, this is the first election I've ever lost, Pat.” I checked his record, he had never been elected to anything else before, so saying this is the first time he lost wasn't much of an honor to me, but—(laughs)

So, I was regional whip, and I know that a large part of it was simply because of Mo Udall, and Tip O'Neill putting the word out that, “Hey, you know, we like this guy. This guy's going to be okay, and he's—” for whatever reasons. So, I got those two guys as friends, and it really helped me. And after Tip stepped down, a fellow named Jim Wright from Texas that took the speakership. And Jim and I were absolute pals because of boxing. And we would see each other at boxing matches on the East Coast, and especially in Washington, D.C. We'd both go, and occasionally we'd see each other. So, we got on the—back in the chamber on the floor, you know, during weekdays, I'd say, “Hey Jim, I saw you at the...sitting down front in the...”

He'd say, “Oh, yes, I'm a boxing fan.”

I'd say, “I am, too.” So, we started going together to fights. And there weren't a lot of fights, but there were enough, we'd go to—that is, if you got out of the Congress there weren't a lot of fights. And we'd go. So, I became friends with him. And it was under him that I became a deputy whip of the House, of which there were five. So, that was real authority.

BB: Oh, so that was a different deal?

PW: That was a different deal, and that was real authority. I had to be elected by the entire House, and I was.

BB: Was it still a regional focus, or was it just—

PW: No, it was nationwide. Nationwide focus.

BB: Okay. There were just five assistant whips?

PW: That's right. And I was one of them.

BB: Well, that's a neat deal.

PW: Yes, and that was a—that was a red-hot thing. And then they did, what we think is the first time was ever done in in congressional history, but you can't tell, you can't find it in the in the books. But, because of my association with organized labor, which was always very good—I didn't, usually didn't have a hundred percent voting record with them, but I had 85, 95 percent year after year, and I understood the critical issues for protecting workers and helping workers in America. So, I became the first whip associated with only one set of issues, and that was issues of the workplace. So, I managed issues of the workplace in the Congress for the 10 or 12 years I was deputy whip. And that was real power. That was serious power. There were other people that were involved in that, like the chairman of the Labor Committee, you know, the education, the labor committee which I was on. And of course, the speaker and the majority leader, but I was—I was the guy who was, the fella that was winding up the machinery, to make a workplace issue come forward onto the floor and then try to get it passed.

BB: And I know you were instrumental in the workplace safety legislation.

PW: Yes.

BB: That passed while you were there. And I want to hear about that. But also, just as an aside, I think I remember this, I think you told me one time that your interest in boxing was shared by John McCain?

PW: Yes.

BB: The senator from Arizona, had been a congressman from Arizona.

PW: Yes. Right, right.

BB: The presidential candidate.

PW: Right.

BB: What was that? Did you and he cosponsor a bill?

PW: Oh, you have a good memory, Bob. Those of us that watch these things tend to have memories about them. I sure appreciate your memory. Yes, I had tried for years to get some boxing reform legislation. You know, the czar of boxing was the guy with the hair that stood straight up—

BB: Don King?

PW: Don King, thank you. You know, wait until you get my age, you won't remember all this. (laughs) Bob's six, eight years, 10 years younger than I. Don King, how could I forget that name. I usually don't. He was kind of the king of boxing, and sometimes he'd own the fighters in both

corners, so he had an absolute monopoly on the game. King was all right, I'd met him. He was a kind of a brusque guy. But—so, I decided, not because of Don King. I thought this long before I ever got to Congress, that there ought to be some kind of structure in boxing. And I don't want to take too much time with this, so I'll just say it this way. If you think of sports, you usually think of leagues. There's a National League and an American League in baseball, the same is true with regard to football, they have their leagues. Tennis has an association. Boxing had nothing. That's why Don King was able to come in and fill the void.

Well, boxing should have a structure, and included in that structure should be boxer safety. Just like workplace safety in any profession. Now, boxing is not safe by its very nature, and so you can't make them 100 percent safe, you actually can't even make them 60 percent safe. But at least at major events, you can have an ambulance standing by, for heaven's sakes. You can have a real ring doctor. You know, they call them ring doctors, but you can have a real one with a degree in medicine. You can require headgear in the training for boxing. You can reduce, as they have, boxing from 15 rounds to 12 rounds. You can have rings of a certain size and ropes with a certain tension. You can do things to make boxing a little safer. So, I tried to do that. My legislation had been rejected and rejected and rejected for a number of reasons, usually because boxing owners would interfere with its passage, and because some people, like Don Trump—Donald Trump, The Donald, right, because he owned a lot of the venues. And so it was difficult to—I don't think Trump entered the fray much, but it was diffic—although I got to know him through it. But it was difficult to get this done.

And then John McCain and I decided—John was always interested in boxing reform, too. He'd put bills in the Senate and have the same experience I had, to having them killed. So, we decided to go together, and it was in my last term in Congress, and made one more try together. And we lightened the load, we had a lot—accepted a lot of amendments to our bill. It wasn't, frankly, nearly as good as it should be, but we did pass a boxing reform bill through the House and the Senate, and McCain said, we got to—as it was coming to its final passage, he amended it to say that it was the—that it had been sponsored by Williams, not McCain, he said, “Because Pat sponsored them before I did, and he sponsored more of them, and so I asked this amendment to have Pat Williams' bill substituted for my bill in the Senate” when it was on final passage. It was very kind of him. John's a—John McCain's a very generous guy. And unlike a hell of a lot of members of Congress, John McCain never worried about whether his name was on a bill. He sponsored a hell of a lot of them, but yes—so, he's—John's actually a pretty good guy. A pretty good guy with a bad temper, but a pretty good guy. (laughs) So yes, we got that done as a workplace safety issue. I was in other workplace safety issues, and I don't think there was a minimum wage bill that came through the Congress that didn't have my name on it, either as sponsor or cosponsor in the 18 years I was there. So, I was worried about—I worried a lot about making sure that America's workers, you know, had a stairway up.

BB: Pat, we've got about five issues, specific issues, that I want to talk about. And we've got at most a half and hour left.

PW: Okay, wow.

BB: So we've got to maybe spend five minutes or so on each one of these. But you've already touched a little bit on workplace safety. Do you want to say any more about that?

PW: Oh, I think—I think given that we have so many issues, maybe we'll move on.

BB: How about childhood disabilities?

PW: Yes, I passed a bill that was the only entitlement passed during my time in Congress. You know, Social Security is an entitlement, right. In other words, you turn a certain age, you're entitled to a check. A retirement check. That's an entitlement. Medicare is an entitlement. You get ill at a certain age, you get these, this kind of help from Medicare. So, I passed the only entitlement, and the entitlement was this: If you're an infant—pardon me, if you're newborn, and you have a disability, your family and you are entitled to certain assistance. Entitled by law. And so, you are presented with a basket of services when this little baby is born with a disability, and that basket of services are those services for children with disabilities, you know, closest to you. Let's say you live on a farm, maybe the closest thing is in Great Falls. But you're entitled to those. They're not always free, that isn't the point. The point is, you're entitled to know about them, you're entitled to some financial help in getting the care. Those—that entitlement also reached to toddlers who might—we might discover well after their birth that they have some kind of a problem. Dyslexia, or something that only comes. So, we called it The Infant and Toddlers' Disability Act, and it's a wonderful entitlement that's helped literally millions of Americans.

BB: Was your legislation the pioneer legislation on this subject?

PW: Yes. There had been no entitlements for infants with disabilities.

BB: Were there other key members of Congress or the Senate that were involved with you in that?

PW: Well, not in the beginning. I introduced it, hell of a lot of people jumped on board and associated themselves with the bill. But I was, I was the chief sponsor, and there were a lot of cosponsors with me, because the bill was so popular. By the way, what we did, so as not to burden states without their permission, is that we said, "This bill shall not be enacted until a state legislature accepts it by majority vote." And within two years, because of the delay in when people have their sessions, right, within two years, 50 states had ratified that bill, and accepted it, and accepted their portion of the payments for these children and toddlers and their parents who were burdened with these disabilities. So, it's been a great success in America, and really one of my, one of my proudest accomplishments. Maybe first place.

BB: That's wonderful. And which president signed it into law?

PW: Reagan. Despite the fact that there was to be no new entitlements under President Reagan, the part about allowing the states to accept it convinced him to sign it.

BB: Yes. And that says something about Reagan, too. I mean, you know certainly more about him and other presidents, and that sort of thing, but he was Mr. Conservative in his day and age, and yet it's unimaginable, in this day and age, I think anyway, that most people who are now considered to be conservative Republicans would be very interested at all in legislation like that. Maybe I'm wrong, but—

PW: No, Reagan had a big heart. Now, you know sometimes we thought he got a little hard about helping people, but he had a—I personally think Reagan had a big heart, and wanted to, really wanted to help people. And eventually, after a term, he realized that to do that, if you weren't going to have a deficit, you had to raise taxes. He understood that—

BB: He understood that.

PW: And he raised them. And he raised them more time than most of his predecessors have, and more times than the presidents since him have.

BB: I didn't know that.

PW: Yes, a number of bills that he supported to raise taxes, I believe were 17.

BB: Wow.

PW: Yes. And, you know, they were fair enough taxes, and, you know, he did what he could to not burn any particular class of income people. But yes.

BB: Wilderness.

PW: Yes, Montanans have a treasure out here. We have a lot of wild places, and most of them are on federal land. For example, all these Rocky Mountains that run through Montana, almost 100 percent of them are federal lands. And some of them, because of their quality, because they're necessary for communities, for example, they're watersheds, and communities need water. Or because they're scenic beauties and they're necessary for tourism. And finally, because they're wonderful habitat for some of the great roaming land animals left in the United States.

And so, I thought, as people before me thought, most particularly the environmental leader who doesn't get credit, Lee Metcalf of Montana, who was a sponsor, co-sponsor, of the very first wilderness bill in Montana in 1960, in the nation. 1964, Lee was one of the first co-sponsors on that bill, and really pushed hard to get it passed. So, I came along, you know, 15

years later and decided that there were other areas in Montana besides just the Bob Marshall, which Lee had put into wilderness. And there were a few other areas in Montana, but I decided that the definition of wilderness met—a lot of areas in Montana, and so I had a proposal that varied from time to time, because the proposal kept getting defeated and I'd try again. But I had a proposal which eventually would have protected 1,500,000 acres of Montana in either wilderness, or some other status. Perhaps it allowed a little more activity in the wilderness than the wilderness bill would, right, such as a National Recreation Area, which is what we have near Missoula.

The bottom half of the mountainous area in Missoula, a famous Rattlesnake area, called "Rattlesnake" because of a creek, not because the snakes up there. The bottom half, 30,000 acres of the bottom half of the Rattlesnake is a National Recreation Area. The top half of it, the top 30,000 acres is a wilderness area where you can do less activity. You can have activity in there, but for example, you can't bring any motorized vehicles into a wilderness area, whereas you can a National Recreation Area, at least most of them.

So, the million-five included both of those combinations. The total was 1,500,000 acres of wilderness. Tried and tried and tried and tried. Both Senate and House, Democrat and Republican, tried and tried to get a wilderness bill passed and finally in 19—thought I'd never forget—19, early 1980s, we got a bill passed, and we passed it just a few days before adjournment. Passed it out of both the Senate and the House. Senator Melcher and Senator Baucus were extraordinarily important in helping get this bill passed. And we sent it down to the president, Ronald Reagan was the president at the time, yes, yes, Reagan, yes, and so we then adjourned and they all came home. All the members of the House and Senate came back home. And I was home, it was an election year, and I was doing a little campaigning at home, of course, and a phone rang at 7 o'clock, 6:30 in the morning. I was in a motel, I was in Missoula, and it was a staffer of mine named Art Noonan, who handled my outdoor legislation. And Art was in Washington, he said, "Pat, I know you're going to talk to the Sunrise Rotarians," I think it was. And so I—but I wanted to catch you went to them, because you need to know something. President Reagan vetoed the bill. And I said to him, "Art, I'm late and I'm not—I don't have my tie tied yet. I got to go. I—what, seriously, what are you calling about?" I thought he was pulling my leg.

BB: Oh, wow.

PW: A wilderness bill had never been vetoed in all those years. He said, "No, Pat I'm serious. And you might get a question there, so I wanted to—"

BB: Make sure you had a heads up.

PW: Because I didn't—I don't think I had the TV on, and no radio in the room. And I didn't know. And I was absolutely stunned. And I believe, to this day, that it was a political act on the part of President Reagan. It was a political act to defeat John Melcher who had helped in

passing the bill. Our pal Conrad Burns, and he really is our pal, he was running against John, and they were friends, but you know how politics are. You can run against each other. And Conrad Burns was running, and Reagan thought this was a way to help elect Conrad Burns, and not long after the veto, President Reagan was on Montana television with an ad saying, "I want to explain to you why I vetoed this bill." And he gave some reasons that really were offline, and you know, out of the ballpark. He said it was done under the cover of darkness when Montanans didn't know what was happening. Well, you know, most people don't watch what's happening in Washington, and so if you say to them, "It was done under the cover of darkness," their response is, "Yes, bet it was. I didn't know about it." And he talked about flaws in the bill that weren't flaws at all. But in any event, that personal ad, I think, went a long way toward defeating Senator Melcher's re-election, and elected Conrad Burns. Who was, you know, was a good senator and a dear friend. But that's what did it, I think.

Then later, we were able to get some wilderness passed, during this time and later. And I'll just quickly mention we passed, I passed—I—it took the whole Congress, but I was the sponsor. I passed the Rattlesnake Wilderness and Recreation Area bill, 30,000 wilderness, 30,000 National Recreation Area. And we passed, with a lot of help and other people's names on it—but I helping in the House—we passed the Lee Metcalf bill, which is down near Big Sky. Wonderful wilderness area down there.

BB: National Endowment for the Arts.

PW: Yes, I was assigned to a committee that had as one of its jurisdictions this little agency in Washington, doesn't spend much money, which is called the National Endowment for the Arts. And it has promoted, with very little money and not a lot of staff, particularly in its beginnings, it has promoted some wonderful things with a little bit of early money. You know how early money is so necessary in any effort to get going. So, the National Endowment for the Arts is a leverage agency for art in America, and particularly help in rural America where there's not a lot of money to have major galleries and whatnot. Among the things that the National Art is responsible for is Prairie Home Companion, the Garrison Keillor show. And the Vietnam Wall, Vietnam Memorial in Washington. So, and those are just two. It has done other things equally as enlightening and important, too. And it's done a lot of little things in places where they've helped put on art shows and whatnot.

So, along came the National Endowment for the Arts under the jurisdiction of a committee I was chairing. Now, I frankly didn't know a lot about the National Endowment for the Arts in those days. I've always been an art fan, but I'm not an aficionado. I'm not a curator. But I do think that freedom of expression is very important in the United States, and through the National Endowment of the Arts, artists answered the Constitution. Artists can be free, and get help to express themselves. But, along came an artist named Robert Mapplethorpe, and although Robert Mapplethorpe didn't get money for this particular art, he had a group of photographs—Mapplethorpe, who was dead by then, by the way—had a group of photographs, and the quality of the photographs was astonishingly good. But the subject of the photographs

annoyed a lot of people, including me. It was a photograph, they were photographs of males, nude. Including black males and white males, nude. And some of them were a little suggestive, right, and annoyed people. So, Jesse Helms was running for re-election. And—

BB: Very conservative Republican senator from North Carolina.

PW: Extraordinarily conservative guy, one of the strongest conservatives that ever served in the House, although—

BB: In the Senate.

PW: In the Senate, rather, in the Congress, I meant. And Jesse, you know, in the meantime Jesse was getting what he wanted for his state of South Carolina—or North Carolina. But he didn't want anybody else to have any anything. You know, so he voted no on almost everything, but he had a lot of power as a senator. And he got into this issue, and he used these photographs to say this is why the National Endowment of the Arts shouldn't be funded. Because it ends up funding, with your money, taxpayer money, pornography. So, the battle was—went on. Now, it shouldn't been much of a battle because this, the National Endowment for the Arts, didn't fund these photographs. What they did do was fund a museum, a gallery, they funded it to put in a new carpet and some lights a couple of years earlier. This gallery was at Penn State, by the way. The Nittany Lions, right, this popular—it was it was a Penn State gallery. And so, you know, it's quasi-public gallery, but they got some money for the arts, for lights and carpet and they showed the Mapplethorpe photographs on that carpet, right. I guess with the lights on. And so, that was enough to for Jesse to say they were funding government.

And you know the old Mark Twain thing about a lie goes around the world twice before the truth can pull its boots on in the morning. It took off, and there we were. So, I was charged with, my own acceptance, defending the National Endowment for the Arts and amending it to be sure that it could not fund pornography. The fight, then, was all right, should a, should the Congress or a director of the arts, a commissioner, a commissar, should the Congress or that person decided what was pornography and what should be funded or not? Or, should the courts decide it? And I thought, under the Constitution, the courts should decide it, not one person or any group of members of Congress. The court should decide what's a violation of freedom of speech, and that was what the fight was about, who should decide that. I won, we left it with the courts.

And by the way, I won so overwhelmingly against all the odds, and against Jesse Helms, who got re-elected, he was running for re-election. He got re-elected, this thing re-elected him, this fight. It really did. He was running—he not only had an opponent who was serious for almost the first time, but the opponent was a liberal, and not only that, but was a black man, right, named Dent.

BB: Harvey Gantt.

PW: Gantt. Harvey Gantt. And Jesse won. And I won, too. I was up that year, too. And that we won so overwhelmingly in both the House and the Senate, despite Jesse, that we, I think, we made the National Endowment for the Arts under the new rules that I had put in, amendments to the bill, we made it—we made the arts bulletproof. And people were no longer embarrassed or frightened to stand up for the and freedom of expression. One of the great things of my time in Congress was that I got to defend, in a very real, public way, the freedom of speech in the Constitution of the United States, and I did it against one of the most powerful senators in the history of the United States. So, I'm quite pleased that the Congress sided with me.

BB: Tremendous victory. And Helms did it, it sounds, primarily because it worked well for him in his re-election campaign.

PW: That's my view of it. I'm sure that Jesse and his people would say, "No, this was a legitimate policy issue." But if Mapplethorpe wasn't paid for the photographs, what was legitimate about the issue?

BB: Sure. Did you suffer at all, do you think, when you ran for re-election the next time?

PW: Well, interestingly enough to me, my opponent in the next election was Ron Marlenee, and Montana went from two seats down to one. And after the election, and Marlenee [and I] were friends, we remained friends to this day. The first time I met him, we felt friendly toward each other, and we were friendly throughout our time. And we appreciated what each other accomplished in the Congress. Marlenee opposed me on it pretty vocally, and voted against the arts. And I asked him after the election, "Were there any surprises for you, Ron?" We had a very affable time after the election. I said, "Were there any surprises for you, Ron?"

And he said, "Yes. I didn't know the arts were that popular in Eastern Montana." He said, "The only real hell I caught from my supporters was my opposition to your bill."

BB: How interesting.

PW: Isn't it?

BB: Yes, it is.

PW: You see, what that was about, is that Eastern Montana benefited pretty significantly from, by—with the National Endowment for the Arts, and they knew it. You know, the National Endowment for the Arts helped Eastern Montana with Shakespeare in the Park. I mean out there, these traveling shows, and people out there knew it. And some of the museum and gallery owners make sure they knew it. You know, gee, Pat's for this next exhibit coming in here, and Ron's trying to stop it, in effect, right? Because these things really hit—the things that were produced by the nat—or, funded by the National Endowment for the Arts actually hit the

ground, and would move through these cities as benefits. Plus, people out there, and I'm going to say much to my surprise all around Montana, including my own town of Butte, they like the arts, and they really like the defense of freedom of speech. So they rallied to me. It was very interesting.

BB: And you had the courage to take on the fight when it wasn't clear, you know, to a lot of people, I mean, Ron Marlenee wasn't the only guy in Montana that thought that was probably a winning issue for him. I'm sure that's the case.

PW: Yes, he sure did, yes. And so did—you know, there were some Democrats that were against me, too, because they thought it was pornography, and it was being funded; they never quite got the word. But mostly I benefited from it.

BB: Well, I don't know, I remember this, I'll just bring it up. I don't know who labeled you this way, I—

PW: Porno Pat, I know where you're going (laughs)

BB: Porno Pat, yes. I didn't remember it was the Marlenee campaign.

PW: (laughs) Yeah. And I would be greeted—it was ok if my family wasn't there, but I would, you know, come home and the kids there, but I'd be greeted in both Washington and Montana with signs that said, "Welcome, Porno Pat," or, "Porno Pat, you're not welcome here." Yes. So, it was a, you know, at times it was it was difficult. But hey, everybody's got the right to do whatever the hell they want with regard to these issues.

BB: But you feel especially good about something when you stand up for something that's important to you, you know—

PW: Even though it was un—I thought it was unpopular at the time.

BB: Even though it appeared to be really dangerous and risky. But your position got validated in the end, so—

PW: It did.

BB: That's a neat thing. American native, Native American recognition.

PW: Well, I'm kind of an underdog guy, and I also believe in America keeping its word, especially when it signs on the dotted line. So, a lot of Native Americans, not just in Montana but around the country need help. I mean, there are times when the Northern Cheyenne unemployment rate isn't, you know, four or five percent like a lot of white people enjoy. The unemployment rate goes to close to 70 percent sometimes on these reservations. Now, we can

argue about whose fault that is, and all the rest of it, but it's there. And people living in those kind of conditions, it seems to me, need a little help. And they don't want giveaways, by the way, they resent them. But they accept a little help if there's a real purpose in it, and the money's going to really go somewhere for the good.

Then there's this other thing I mentioned, the signing on the dotted line. The Indians agreed to give up a lot of land in America. They were driven off of it, and whatnot. They agreed to give it up and to live on reservations, or at least have those as their only home, wherever it is the white guy decided they should live, and draw a line around it and say, "Okay, here's your home." They don't have to stay within the lines anymore. At one time they did. But nonetheless, they traded, and they didn't get the best of the trade. But, they signed. Sometimes the chief only signed his X. I've seen some of the treaty, copies of the treaties. Or, I mean, the original treaties. And then, you know, the other authorities on what we've come to think of as our side signed, and said, "These are their rights." And the most difficulty I had was not in helping American natives because they're sort of the underdog, and my thing about being the underdog. The most difficulty I had was in trying to explain [to] people, why I was for an issue because it upheld their treaty rights. Treaties say this is their water. Right? And so on. And those are the things that, quite frankly, Montanans least understood, was allowing them their rights. So, in a nutshell, that was—you know, that's what drove my career, trying to help Native Americans.

BB: We're near the end. I just want to make this comment. I don't know, but you probably know about this. I'm distantly related to Frank B. Linderman.

PW: You are?

BB: And Linderman was the guy who, remember, was instrumental in getting Rocky Boy reservation. And it's kind of part of the lore in my family, that, you know, that was when Indians had very few advocates. There was a kind of racial stigma attached to it, and also, they didn't have any power to vote, they didn't have any power to do anything. So, he stuck his neck out, he also was a political candidate a couple different times in his career—

PW: Oh, I didn't know that.

BB: Ran for U.S. House, and also ran for the U.S. Senate.

PW: My goodness, I should know that.

BB: But anyway, you know, it's kind of considered that Linderman thought that Indians need an advocate, these landless Indians needed a place, and a reservation and that sort of thing, and he was going to stand up for them, even if many other people didn't.

PW: Wow.

BB: And he was successful, you know, in the Rocky Boy reservation. So, that's kind of neat, but it was a real recognition of the underdog status of these poor, desperate people.

PW: Yes. Goodness gracious. Well, let me say, on the Rocky Boy Reserva—you know, this is wonderful to know about Linderman. I know some of his history. I did not know about his work on that reservation, or much of his work with Indians. And I want to talk to you more about it and at—when we have time, Bob.

BB: That would be great.

PW: But I do want to say, somewhat in jest, that he got the western boundary of the reservation wrong (laughs) And we could talk about what it is, but the lines slanted instead of going straight up. So, instead of a north-south line, he slanted it some, and Rocky Boy are still trying to straighten it out (laughs)

BB: So, how would they have benefitted?

PW: I think there were some ranchers that benefited by not being on the rez.

BB: Sure, okay.

PW: I think that was it. I don't know.

BB: But that—did he benefit the ranchers by his line, or the Indians by his line?

PW: The ranchers.

BB: Okay.

PW: That's according to the Indians, Bob.

BB: Okay, all right.

PW: Who knows what the ranchers would say? We'd have to go back in the research.

BB: Yes, have to go back and look at the research. As you look back, any thoughts or final observations?

PW: All this, I guess. You know, if we'd have done this interview 10 years ago, or maybe if we did ten years in the future, I'd have a different conclusion. But I'm saddened by—my life now by living in a time when people don't believe in government. Can government get overbearing? Sure. Can it have too many regulations? Absolutely. But, in my life, I've—and not because I was

a congressman, and I have any—moved to the front of the line situation going on, but in my life, I've frankly found it easier to deal with big government than I have deal with big, some big corporations. I mean, that red tape is less, and the answers are quicker. But that doesn't mean big government's got it all right. It doesn't. But this is a big country. With lots of problems, including problems around the world, because we are the leader. We have taken responsibility. And we have been the watchmen on the walls of freedom around the world, as Jack Kennedy put it.

So, I'm a believer in government, and greatly saddened by the fact that people's belief in government, from school board, which is the most local of all governments, to the federal government—I'm saddened that people are losing their belief in that. And that they believe that any of us, you or I, Bob, or any of our colleagues, our old friends on both sides of the aisle [are not doing important work for the people]. And I personally believe that you're the living Montana expert on how to get along on both sides of the aisle. I'm saddened that people don't like their policymakers and politicians anymore. They start out disliking them, you know, and it's a sad thing. Not to say some of them haven't earned dislike, but that's not where the dislike comes from. Too many people dislike anyone who is elected to anything, and believe they've instantly become corrupt. It's unfortunate, and it's sad for me, you know, in the—kind of the autumn of my years to see a country that has developed that, and I'm very hopeful that politicians and policyholders today will try to communicate with people in a way that lets them know that in this land, we're pulling together, which is called government. In this land of pulling together, we all need to trust each other, and we all need to act in a way that doesn't discourage the trust by the others.

And I want to say, you've done yeoman's work in these interviews you're doing. It's a wonderful catch for Montana history to have you have done this with all of these people that, like myself and you, who have—somebody's got to interview you now, Bob. But have lived through these times, to have this as an archival piece, all of all of your interviews including this one, is a marvelous thing for history in Montana, and I want to express my personal gratitude to you for taking the time. And I know it's a hell of a lot of time, and the effort, especially with people like me who have to cancel, and then they're late, and so on. But thanks a lot, Bob.

BB: Well, thank you, Pat. And thank you for your service.

PW: You're welcome. Thank you. Thanks, old pal.

[End of Interview]