

Maureen and Mike

# Mansfield Library

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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: OH 396-084**  
**Interviewee: Sidney Armstrong**  
**Interviewer: Bob Brown**  
**Date of Interview: May 21, 2021**  
**Project: Bob Brown Oral History Project**

BB: Okay. Well this is Bob Brown, and I'm interviewing Sidney Armstrong for the Mansfield Library Archives. And today's date I believe is May 21, 2021.

SA: Right.

BB: Okay. Well Sid—welcome here. We've had an opportunity to visit a few minutes before the interview—before we turned on the recorder. So I know we're gonna have a very good interview, and I'll begin by asking what I ask many of the people that I interview to begin with. Where were you born and when were you born? And tell me a little bit about your family and your childhood.

SA: I was born right here in Helena and my family on each side all Irish all the time. The Cooney family and that was my mother's maiden name and my mother's family—the Cooney family came to the United States as Irish immigrants. Two of them who were young met in Iowa. And Mariah Cooney and Thomas Cooney—they came in a covered wagon with a six-month-old baby and got here to Virginia City June 28, 1865.

BB: Does that make you related in any way to Mike Cooney?

SA: Not in the United States. We think our families may have been connected in the old country, and they'd been friends. But not a direct connection, no.

BB: Okay. For listeners of this interview later on I'll just mention that Frank Cooney was from Butte, and he was an Irish Montanan and became governor of Montana and that's a good story in itself. And then his grandson, I think, who Sidney Armstrong and I both know served as lieutenant governor of Montana, and that was the—so you may be related to them. That Cooney connection may go back to Ireland.

SA: But it's a distant one. And Mike Cooney was the youngest legislator ever elected when he was elected. Excuse me.

BB: So anyway but you were born here in Helena. For some reason I thought you were brought up in Butte.

SA: Everybody thinks I'm a Butte girl because that's the O'Malley side of the family.

BB: Okay. That was your maiden name?

SA: And maybe it's because I'm loud and rather [laughter] and rather self-possessed. In any event they then came over to the Helena area. The grandmother, Mariah Cooney, who came in that covered wagon lived to be over 90 and is quoted in a newspaper story as saying, "Well they came out over this area, and Mr. Cooney found some very nice nuggets in New York Gulch"—what we call York Gulch now. They bought land on the banks of the Missouri and had a small ranch. They raised the ordinary things. They also raised horses—quarter horses for the calvary when they were out here. Their youngest son was my grandfather, Dr. Sidney A. Cooney, for whom I'm named, and he was a longtime very well-regarded Helena physician. And he served on the Board of Health under about eight or nine governors. So that was my mother's family and more about them, but we can't take the whole time on my family.

My father's family—it's sort of the other side of America or Montana pioneers. My grandfather's family were also Irish immigrants. They settled on a small farm outside of St. Louis, but they made him go to mass every day and he got tired of walking that far. He ran away when he was 13 or 14, went to Chicago and worked for a cigar maker, and then found his way to Leadville, Colorado where he was a miner and where he and the other young miners used to read Shakespeare to each other every night. I thought that was something very unusual until a recent *Montana Historical Society Magazine* says it was quite common in the ranch house and the bunk house. Everybody had the Bible and Shakespeare. And anyway—in any event eventually my grandfather made his way to Butte, Montana and was a miner there and a political figure and a writer also.

BB: His name was O'Malley?

SA: M.G. Malcolm but called George which was his middle name.

BB: O'Malley?

SA: O'Malley.

BB: Yeah.

SA: Yes. And he was WWW [IWW]. He ran as a socialist for governor in 1904.

BB: WWW [IWW] is International Workers of the World.

SA: Right, right, right.

BB: And so they were considered labor radicals during his time, right?

SA: Yep. And interestingly enough, Bob, and I'll stop going on about this—I didn't know at all about this until I was working for Jim Murry at the Montana AFL-CIO. And it occurred to my—

me and my father had said something about, "You know, your grandfather in labor and so on." So he wrote me a lengthy letter of this wonderful, wonderful history. And in fact we have from Big Bill Haywood who was in—

BB: Yeah.

SA: Okay. We've got a black thorn walking stick he gave to my grandfather.

BB: Big Bill Haywood was a United Mine Workers—

SA: And World Workers of the World—both.

BB: Yeah, okay. In Idaho I think, wasn't he a mine worker—

SA: I can't remember, but I think you're right.

BB: Major union leader in the early part of the 1900s.

SA: Exactly. Eventually my grandfather then became a writer. He wrote a column in the Butte newspaper called "Echoes of the Past," and it was an historical column each Sunday. My father grew up in Butte. Have you read his book—*Mile High, Mile Deep*?

BB: Yeah.

SA: Well it was my father.

BB: I hadn't put that together. [laughs]

SA: Yeah. Which really is the story about growing up in Butte in the '20s and so on. He went to the University of Montana, met my mother who'd been in all Catholic girls school till she was doing graduate work. So they married, and my mother came to Helena to have me in the hospital.

BB: When were you born?

SA: 1937—a long time ago. [laughter] In any event they moved here and he worked for the newspaper here.

BB: Okay. And when did he retire about?

SA: Well but you see there's much more in between because he left during the war. He tried to enlist. He had a wonky knee or something, and he couldn't. So he ended up being an Associated Press war correspondent on the *SSX Shangri-La* which was—my memory for names is just

ridiculous. Tell me who I'm thinking of? John McCain—it was Admiral McCain's flag ship, and they became very good friends.

BB: Really?

SA: And in fact when Senator McCain was writing the book *Faith of Our Fathers*, his assistant called and talked with Daddy several times and mentioned his name in the book several times which I thought was very nice.

BB: Oh, that's wonderful.

SA: I mean he could just say an AP reporter said this and that. So he came home and was transferred to Denver and was transferred to New York. And my parents got divorced. He went to Europe where he was then a foreign correspondent and bureau chief in Germany, Russia, and France for the next 30 years or so.

BB: Did he retire here in Montana? I'm trying to think if I knew him?

SA: No.

BB: I probably wouldn't have.

SA: No, because what they did and he married the most wonderful woman. I had a wonderful and a wonderful stepmother, and my mother thought she was wonderful. Someone said, "How could you like your husband's second wife?" She said, "Why wouldn't I? She's so good to my girls." And, you know, she had nothing to do with the original thing. And she was American—graduated from the University of Kansas, 1948 with a degree in aeronautical engineering.

BB: Wow.

SA: Eventually became a writer because they kept having her since she was a woman make latrine signs and so on. She was a civilian employee of the Army. So they met and married but then they took early retirement and built a house in Ireland and loved living there. Oh my father wrote most of the book in Paris. He'd go into the office at 6 a.m. and write from there. Eventually for some health issues they moved to Sun City—

BB: I see.

SA: —where she had a couple of retired relatives. They lived there for a time.

BB: You might have already answered this question in your commentary about your dad, but I'll ask it again. I often do in my interviews. You dedicated much if not most of your life to public service, and it was related to politics too. You have an avid interest obviously in politics and that

may just have come from your family. I don't know, but do you—was there a—and I don't know how close you were to your father when you grew up either because he traveled a lot apparently. But was there a person in your life that was particularly inspirational to you in terms of your interest in politics and public service? Maybe a school teacher or a friend or a—

SA: It was really sitting around our dining room table.

BB: Okay, okay.

SA: It really was, and I just, you know, remember over the years bits and pieces of it. And it wasn't a heated political discussion every evening mind you, and I'm speaking of now of my grandfather because then we moved into my grandfather's house when my grandmother died.

BB: Here in Helena?

SA: Here in Helena, right. The one thing that I remember was that they were so angry when Leif Erickson who was from Helena and was running for Congress [Senate], and they kept accusing him of being a Communist. I think it was "Red Skies Over Montana" or something like that. I can remember several conversations when my grandfather and my mother were so angry about that. And for some reason what sticks in my mind is my mother said, "Commie, I'm a Communist." She said, "Haven't they read the *Troubled Heir*?" And if you remember that's Irwin Shaw's book about red baiting and all the kinds of nonsense, and it's about a radio station where the biggest anti-Communist actual—or biggest anti-Communist actually is a Communist and betrays all these other people. Yeah. So, you know, the funny things that stick in your mind.

BB: So you would remember Burton K. Wheeler?

SA: I remember—

BB: That was probably one of your early memories because Leif Erickson took him on in the Democratic primary—

SA: That's right. That's right.

BB: —and that's probably where he was called a Communist during the general election.

SA: Probably. I can't—that part I don't remember.

BB: Well, that's him.

SA: I remember Burton K. Wheeler's book was always on our bookshelf.

BB: Oh, I see.

SA: Yeah, so there was a keen interest but not—you know, I was involved with younger people's things at the time.

BB: Yeah. You went to the University in Missoula—University of Montana?

SA: Right. But before that I went to the International School of Geneva.

BB: Oh, really?

SA: Well that was my father and stepmother—decided to give both my sister and me a year in Europe and initially my father thought to send me high in the Alps to some sort of, you know, Swiss finishing school. And my wonderful stepmother said, "She's been going to coed school since kindergarten. You don't want to stick her up there with nothing but girls." She picked out the International School for me which was one of the most wonderful experiences of my life.

BB: Really? Wonderful opportunity?

SA: Oh, it was so good. It was founded right after the First World War when America didn't join the United Nations, and these were a few Americans there at the time one of whom was—you know Claudia Clifford?

BB: Yes.

SA: One of them was her father.

BB: Yeah, gosh. I haven't seen her in years.

SA: Yep. But one of them was her father, and he helped start it. And the idea was that if the youth of all nations could get to know each other and be friends we could help prevent wars. So I went there. I lived with a Swiss family and five other girls and that's a story in itself. But that certainly also opened up my mind and my interest in other peoples—

BB: When would that have been? In the 1950s?

SA: 1954 to 1955.

BB: Okay. Then you came home and finished college at the University of Missoula?

SA: That wasn't college. That was my last year in high school.

BB: I gotcha.

SA: Yeah. So then I came home and went to the University.

BB: Yeah, okay. How did it happen that you—because the primary purpose of this interview is your wonderful knowledge and background in the administration of Governor Tom Judge.

SA: Yes, let's get to that. [laughs]

BB: And so how did you come to meet Tom Judge?

SA: Well I knew who he was. His family had kind of moved to the neighborhood I think while I was in late grade school. And then when I got to high school—he's a couple of years ahead of me and so I knew him. He was well—and it was a not that big a—Helena High School wasn't all that big. And of course I knew him, and he was fun and he was nice. He played basketball and football—not as a big star, but I remember him most vividly in terms of high school when he and his two best pals—Clint Grimes and Paul Jasmine—were in "Arsenic and Old Lace," And he played Teddy Roosevelt—[laughter] anyway he was just grand. And then the next year I was a junior, and I was about to go to Switzerland the following year. I started dating one of his best friends, Paul Jasmine. And pretty soon we just had a great group of good friends.

BB: Is he a brother of Ed Jasmine?

SA: Yes.

BB: Yeah, okay.

SA: A younger brother—exactly right.

BB: I know the family, yeah. You bet.

SA: And he has ended up, you know, being a splendid artist and photographer in someone. But in any event that was how I first got to know Tom Judge, and I married him [Paul Jasmine] in college. We had our first baby spring vacation junior year. None of this, God knows, was planned. The second baby six weeks after we graduated and then we moved to Helena. My former husband was a geologist, and it was just when they really didn't need geologists. So he went to work for the highway department drawing maps from aerial photographs. But anyhow, Tom called me one day. He'd gone to Notre Dame and then he'd worked for a company in St. Louis and so forth. And he came home and decided to run for the Legislature, and he called me one day and told me. I said, "Well that just sounded great," and he said, "Would you be the secretary of my Tom Judge for Legislature campaign and committee?" I said, "Oh, I would love to, Tom, but I can't type," and he started to laugh just as you have. And he said, "No it isn't that kind of secretary." He said, "I would just love to have your name on my material. You know, you've been a good friend. You know everybody in town," and he said, "Would you do some volunteer work?" I said, "Well of course. I'd be glad to." But then we moved to California for a



brief year for what looked like a good opportunity for my former husband—turned out not to be. But we thought we'd have to stay there because there didn't seem to be anything here. We came back—it must have been 1962 we came back—can't remember exactly. And he went out to visit his old pals at the highway department, and they said, "There's a new job for a state geologist." He applied. We never even went back to pack up our things. My sister went and supervised the moving company.

BB: [laughs] Well that's good. That's a wonderful story. So you're back here in Helena, and your husband has a job; and you reconnected with Tom Judge and you're involved in his campaign for the state house of representatives in 1962.

SA: So then my friend Sue Bennett called me, and I didn't know her well but she was one of the big girls in the neighborhood that we all looked up to. She went to Hawthorn and Helena High School and so on. She called and said, "There's a meeting of Democratic Women's Club tonight. I think you'd enjoy joining and getting to know some of these women." I had been so lonesome in the suburb we lived in in California. I knew no one. We went nowhere. Husband had to take the car to work every day, etcetera. I think if she'd asked me to join a group to teach knitting even if I didn't know how to I would have joined. I joined the Democratic Women's Club, and that was where—with that and Tom's first campaign—that's where I really got active, Bob.

BB: And then you were of course involved in Tom Judge's campaigns for the Legislature again—for the state Senate and so on. What do you suppose motivated him to run for lieutenant governor?

SA: I think he saw it as a path to governor.

BB: Okay. So he was obviously ambitious.

SA: He was, and I don't think when he really started out that first time that he necessarily was projecting it that far. But he became so involved and so interested, and you remember what an—we probably were two years old. But it was such an exciting time in Montana. The new constitution for which he campaigned and everything that was going on and the people involved in this whole new—we're moving Montana forward in this progressive way.

BB: And so he ran not as a team because the constitution didn't require that then—

SA: Precisely.

BB: [unintelligible] lieutenant governor when Forrest Anderson ran for governor.

SA: Precisely.

BB: Do you know anything about that relationship?

SA: I think it was not a close relationship, but they did work pretty well together. And that's about all I really—oh I do remember [laughs] this was when the minute the governor walked out of the state the lieutenant governor took over.

BB: Yeah, Yeah.

SA: Okay? Well the first time Forrest left, Tom was going to be governor. And so the woman who'd been his secretary in the campaign and somewhere else—can't remember what all—he invited us to come up and see him. And Jean Handel—we all know dear Jean—Jean Handel of course continued as Forrest's executive secretary. So we came prancing in the office, and we had champagne and—oh, yeah. And we went in to see Tom, and we took pictures and Walter Marshall came in.

BB: The ever-present Walter Marshall.

SA: Exactly. But he called whatever station that Chet Huntley worked for. Okay? He called Chet. He said, "Tom, I think Chet Huntley would like to talk—would you let me see if I can't get him on the phone." Oh by god he got him on the phone, Bob, and Chet Huntley told Tom about starting Big Sky. So we thought, "Well we were kind of in early on that."

BB: Yeah, right. And of course Chet Huntley had roots in Montana—

SA: Oh lord, yes.

BB: —national NBC news broadcaster—

SA: We loved him. He was one of our guys. So let me circle back briefly though to lieutenant governor campaign because it sort of I feel is such a flavor of Montana at the time. We didn't have a whole bunch of money and most people didn't really know young Tom Judge who'd been a legislator. However the two biggest connections that helped him the most—he was very active in Jaycees. The Junior Chamber of Commerce which I never hear about anymore.

BB: I don't even know if it exists anyway.

SA: I don't think it probably does, but the Jaycees they were also younger and at least progressive and we want to make some changes. And Blanche Judge's relationships through her dance studio.

BB: Okay. Now Blanche Judge was Tom Judge's mother?

SA: Was Tom's mother and his father had died. He'd fallen off a roof when I think Tom was going to Notre Dame. And that was when Blanche [laughs] really got busy and opened the

dance and exercise studio and worked very hard—was very dynamic. Very beautiful. Very outgoing. And so she would call—she'd say, "We don't have anybody in hmm—Malta. I think I met a woman there at a dance conference last year. Let me see." So she calls somebody and be so gracious and lovely. This would be somebody who'd never been involved in politics, Bob. "Would you help my son? He's run"—well pretty soon we had all kinds of people scattered throughout the state who'd never been involved in politics before, and we campaigned all over the state. We sang on street corners and in union halls, and we had a sound truck that came with us. And that was in the days of "Laugh-In" when Sammy Davis, Jr. did that part with, "Here come the judge. Here come the judge." Right?

BB: [laughs] Yeah.

SA: Well people started saying that.

BB: Because of Tom Judge.

SA: Yes. Exactly. So the sound truck, "Here come Tom Judge. Here come the Judge for lieutenant governor," etcetera, etcetera. So it was a great campaign. It was a—

BB: He campaigned hard and smart.

SA: Oh, yes. And it was all very, very personal. Very personal.

BB: And he was personable with people.

SA: He was very personable with people. And of course Carol that I do want to talk almost a little more than Tom because so many people remember Tom and have given you information. But she was incredibly good.

BB: Carol his wife.

SA: Oh, yes. And of course she was the younger sister of Larry's wife, Shari, who was my best friend and college roommate.

BB: Yeah, Larry Pettit.

SA: Yes.

BB: And Tom Judge married sisters.

SA: Right, right.

BB: Carol and Shari Anderson, I think. Yeah.

SA: Right. That's exactly right.

BB: But Judge's wife was Carol.

SA: Was Carol. The younger one. And her parents then who used to come to parties at the governor's mansion as we called it in those—I guess they still do—said, "We had no idea Democrats had so much fun." [laughter] But again, it was very down-home. Very people to people and so forth and so on. And so that primary election was very good. The only thing that wasn't so good was his grandfather was kind of a whacko.

BB: Whose was?

SA: Tom's—his mother's mother, Mr. Guillot.

BB: His mother's father.

SA: Yes. Came out and said he'd given Tom a loan that hadn't been repaid. And so the newspaper headline was, "Here Come the Grandpa?" It wasn't funny—believe me, but we did get through that. We did get through that. So that was the primary and then again—and he loved that because of course he presided over the Senate. I mean he loved—many people who have known him in both roles more intimately than I say he really was a better legislator than he was a governor. And they thought he was a good governor, but they felt that's where his real talent was.

BB: Yeah. Because he was so good at facilitating between people—

SA: Precisely.

BB: —and that sort of thing.

SA: And liked him.

BB: And liked him.

SA: Yeah, yeah. Exactly.

BB: So he served as lieutenant governor for four years. And of course you knew him during that period of time—

SA: Oh, yes.

BB: —closely. And then he decided to run for governor. Did that come as a surprise to you?

SA: No, not really.

BB: And Governor Anderson had health problems so it was pretty clear he wasn't gonna run again.

SA: Well I was gonna say—that was—I don't think he would have run against Forrest.

BB: Sure, yeah.

SA: But I mean it had opened up an opportunity.

BB: Do you know if Forrest supported Tom in the primary for governor?

SA: I don't remember. Did you ask Larry that?

BB: Yeah, and he didn't—

SA: He didn't remember either? I think he—to be the only thing I really remember is I think he kept kind of a hands off of a Democratic primary which was appropriate obviously.

BB: If he did it wasn't obvious and openly.

SA: No, no.

BB: How about the—his primary opponent was a guy by the name of Dick Dzivi.

SA: Dick Dzivi.

BB: D-z—

SA: i-v-i

BB: Yeah. What about him? What about that race?

SA: People said he was kind of a crook. I have no idea of any truth to that. He campaigned, but he didn't do it the way we were. And I don't think they ever debated. You had mentioned you wanted to know about that. I have no recollection that they ever debated.

BB: He had a reputation as a kind of a tough guy.

SA: Yeah, yeah. Exactly.

BB: He grew up in Kalispell—my hometown—I think.

SA: Oh, I didn't know that because he was in Great Falls when he ran against us.

BB: And he was elected to the state Senate from Great Falls, and he became a Senate majority leader as I remember. I was a—just a young legislator during that period. In fact I'm not sure I was in the Legislature, but I was there soon enough afterwards that I remember Dick Dzivi had a reputation that, you know, you better not cross him.

SA: Precisely, precisely. But we didn't have any trouble with him.

BB: The primary went okay?

SA: Yeah.

BB: Yeah. And Tom Judge won it by a pretty substantial margin?

SA: Yes. As I recall. As I recall.

BB: And then his opponent in the general election was Big Ed Smith?

SA: Right, right.

BB: Tell me about that.

SA: Well we conducted a fairly similar campaign except there was more money, more media, all those kinds of things. But the thing that always kind of tickled me was that Tom began to wear sort of western cut and style suits. And Big Ed Smith started to dress in sort of navy blue button-down collars. [laughter]

BB: Because Big Ed was a rough-hewn—

SA: Was a rancher. You bet.

BB: —Montana rancher and farmer.

SA: And who was this pretty boy?

BB: And Tom Judge was the refined, cultivated, and so Tom realized he needed to be a little more like Ed. And Ed realized he needed to be little more like Tom.

SA: And vice versa. And vice versa. [laughter]

BB: That's interesting.

SA: But that first campaign—it set the stage. That's how we campaigned, and Carol was a tremendous campaigner. Just tremendous. And she and I also went out on kind of more short-term kinds of things.

BB: Was Blanche in the picture then when he ran for governor?

SA: Oh my word. We could do a novel about that whole arrangement. And Larry I'm sure touched on it.

BB: He did.

SA: Or fell down and screamed about it. Blanche had been Tom's campaign manager each campaign, but there wasn't a whole lot—well I shouldn't say that. She did an awful lot of getting people involved.

BB: Calling old connections and building a network.

SA: And excited and encouraged and building a network. And having them all come and here we all are, and we love you and so on. She had no particular knowledge of any kind of campaign strategy. Didn't know a lot about a lot of issues. And she—I don't mean by that to say she was ignorant or ill-informed. She was not, but her experience had never been with a statewide high-level campaign. And especially major donors weren't terribly interested in having this sort of blonde bombshell as the campaign manager.

BB: So Blanche Judge was an attractive blonde woman?

SA: Oh, very attractive.

BB: Okay.

SA: Very, very attractive. Beautiful, beautiful. She really was with a very vibrant and outgoing personality and more energy than six people put together which Tom was too. And so it had all gone very well until the governor's campaign. And then I think a lot of people advised him, "You know, you really can't let your mother run this major campaign." So through a series of things Tom asked Larry Pettit.

BB: And Larry by then was his brother-in-law?

SA: Yes, yes.

BB: Yeah, okay. And Larry was a very cerebral—

SA: Oh, yes.

BB: —brilliant—

SA: Brilliant!

BB: —political science Ph.D. I think. And, yeah.

SA: Oh, yes.

BB: And had worked back in Washington, D.C. for Senator Metcalf and Senator Murray.

SA: Precisely.

BB: And so he was a—if you could find a competent, smart guy to help run your campaign with some important background experience you couldn't do much better than Larry Pettit.

SA: Especially when he was a guy that came from a modest background in Lewistown and went to the University of Montana. It wasn't importing some big hotshot from out of state. So he had the brilliance, but he also had that grassroots knowledge and understanding.

BB: But that's gonna create trouble with Tom's mother.

SA: Ooh! Oh! [laughter] I never want to live through anything like that again, and Larry will tell a story and maybe he told it to you that when he came into the office Blanche was quite gracious. She was so good. "So good to see you, Larry. I'd like you to work on some education issues for Tom." And yes, he sort of said, "I believe I'm gonna manage the campaign." It was a terrible blowup. It was really a terrible blowup. And Blanche left and screamed and yelled and, you know, told all their friends how terrible Tom was. And, yeah, it was pretty tough, but we did get through the primary as you know. But then an interesting thing occurred which I think few other people may think to mention. Tom had won the primary. But one of the ways he had won it was somebody told him, "If you want to win Cascade County, you got to get Jack So and So," and I can't think of his last name, bless him. May come to you. "You got to get so and so. He is" —

BB: Jack Devine?

SA: No, no. I'd remember that. In any event I may remember it, I may not, and may have to call you. In any event Jack was very active in the Catholic Church's Cursillo Movement which was a retreat unlike any other kind because it was full of joy and music and, you know, otherwise they were silent. I hated them worse than anything. Anyway Jack said, "Well Lieutenant Governor, I will manage your campaign in Cascade County. I will win it for you if you promise to go to the



first Cursillo that is held after you win.” Well of course Tom was, you know, promise him anything. “Sure that sounds fine. I’m a Catholic, yeah. Fine.” So won the election and I think the Democratic Conference or Convention was the next week—maybe two weeks later. It was at the same time as the next Cursillo to be held in Great Falls, and Tom said, “Well I can’t go, Jack. I’m head of the party.” Jack said, “A promise is a promise, Governor.” So he and Kent Kleinkopf—his, you know, by that time great friend who’d done the driving and been his, you know, steadfast ally and so on—

BB: To Governor Judge?

SA: Yes. Well during the campaign—lieutenant governor.

BB: Suffered some from the wrath of the governor’s budget too.

SA: Oh god, yes. Yeah. I didn’t even get into that, but you’re so right. But in any event they both went, and you never—I saw them off from the house and you never saw two such angry faces in your life. So they went off Thursday night—

BB: Who was angry now?

SA: Well Tom and Carol because they had to go to this blankety-blank Cursillo business.

BB: I gotcha. Okay, okay.

SA: Well so they went to this blankety-blank Cursillo business, and they came back the most joyful, happy people you ever met. And Tom immediately had an impromptu party at his mother’s house with people playing guitars, and he had the song sheets from the Cursillo. And we all sang and laughed and—oh my goodness—we had such a grand time. So that didn’t turn out so badly. Also because there was lots of infighting at the convention. He didn’t have to take sides or any—I mean it was really, “Oh thank you, Lord.”

BB: So God was with him.

SA: Jack Whitaker—that’s who it was.

BB: Okay.

SA: Okay, yeah. So exactly. So then we went on about, you know, [laughs] the general election. And obviously won—I’m trying to think—

BB: That’s Big Ed Smith—

SA: Yeah, Big Ed Smith.

BB: —the general election.

SA: But again this was very down-home—down-to-earth. I mean I remember—and this usually included Carol. I mean we'd campaign at Plant Gates in the morning and finish up at bowling alleys at 10 o'clock at night, but it was all that very personal—people to people.

BB: Carol was with him through all of that because he had a reputation as a real hard worker—a real hard campaigner.

SA: Oh, absolutely.

BB: And quite a good campaigner.

SA: Yes, oh yeah. Nothing I mean we'd be, you know, happening—

BB: Friendly and—

SA: —we'd be having dinner at 9 o'clock at night, and he'd say, "I think we can still make it to the bowling alley, and we've got the smelter opening," you know, whatever. And we were like, "Okay. We'll all go." And most of us were volunteers, you know.

BB: He was a natural glad-hander and a—

SA: Exactly.

BB: —good conversationalist.

SA: And enjoyed people. I mean he genuinely enjoyed meeting and talking to them and so forth and so on. So and Carol and I'd get sent out to some of the things and that was fine too. We had a very good time together, and Blanche continued to not be so terrible because she'd been to the Cursillo. Oh, because then Carol and Blanche went to the next Women's Cursillo.

BB: Okay, okay.

SA: Blanche came up to me at the Placer Hotel. It was some sort of Democratic event and apologized to me because she got very mad at me over some things and screamed and yelled and so forth and so on.

BB: So that maybe didn't turn out that bad for everybody.

SA: Well even better than that and I—again I'd love to have some way to get this re-put together. Other people in the administration and in the governor's office began to make

Cursillos too. I did. Evan Barrett did. Four or five other people did. And then after the Cursillo the idea was you didn't just say, "Well that was—gee that was so great," and that you'd meet once a week and usually with the people with whom you'd made the Cursillo itself. Well we couldn't do that. I mean they'd gone in Missoula or Great Falls—somebody else. Evan went in the prison, Bob, just before there was gonna be a riot.

BB: Evan Barrett?

SA: And Duke Crowley begged him not to go. And Evan said, "Well they won't know." And so he made his Cursillo in the prison.

BB: How does this Cursillo thing work? Aren't there Catholic priests involved and things like that?

SA: There's usually one but most of it is lay lead.

BB: So he took his group to the state penitentiary?

SA: He didn't take a group. The Cursillo—planned a Cursillo in the prison for the prisoners—

BB: For the prisoner people and he knew about that so he just joined in with them.

SA: Yes, yes.

BB: I see.

SA: And he was allowed to do that.

BB: Okay.

SA: And he said to Duke, "Nobody will know who I am."

BB: Duke Crowley was a professor at the University of Montana—law professor.

SA: Right. And then he'd worked in the administration for a time, yeah.

BB: Yeah and worked for Forrest Anderson for a while.

SA: Yeah, exactly—lived here in Helena. And Larry—or I mean Evan said—the first time he got there the first night, some big guy walked over to him and said, "I know who you are." But again the whole experience four days was wonderful. The warden used to say, Bob, there were only two things he saw that ever really worked in the prison in terms of changing people was AA [Alcoholics Anonymous] and the Cursillo.

BB: I'll be darned. Huh.

SA: So we had a little group that when we were in town Wednesday lunch—we'd meet in the lower level of St. Mary's Church—bring our lunch and have a little prayer time and share time together. Well that makes quite a difference in the ambiance of an office. Most of us were good friends anyway but this certainly helped solidify it.

BB: An additional bond and—

SA: Oh, precisely, precisely.

BB: And that helped the Tom Judge administration to be a coordinated administration [unintelligible].

SA: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.

BB: And who was the chief of staff? Was it—

SA: Ron started being the—

BB: Ron Richards.

SA: Yeah, yeah. And then Keith Colbo came in, and he was great. I really liked him.

BB: Both of them were highly capable—

SA: Oh, so capable.

BB: —in fact—oh I was thinking Colbo was in the Babcock administration too wasn't he?

SA: I think he was. I think he told me that once. I was very fond of Keith.

BB: And he went on to be a lobbyist later on after the Tom Judge administration. He might have stuck around with Schwinden too for all I know, but I remember him as a very smart, very shrewd, very hard working lobbyist.

SA: And very quiet. Very un-self-promotional.

BB: Yeah.

SA: Yeah. No, I really liked him.

BB: But very effective and you always knew you were talking to somebody who was really sharp and really competent.

SA: Exactly, exactly. That does bring up a funny thing though I'd kind of forgotten. The Masons put out some kind of a newsletter, and that was when there was a lot of, you know, animosity between Catholics and Masons which I think thankfully has dissipated. But they put out a newsletter about how many Catholics Tom had hired in his administration. Well of course he didn't know who was a Catholic and who wasn't. I mean he knew I was. He'd known me for a long time. So he's talking to me about it, and I said, "Well you know quite a few of his"—well he said, "Keith Colbo?" I said, "Well he's a German Catholic, Governor." He said, "Well what about Kathy Schellinger?" I said, "She's a German Catholic—I mean he sort of thought if he didn't have an Irish name you likely weren't a Catholic." And there quite a few of us. But again he never hired us because we were Catholic. So as you can—as you can imagine. As you can imagine. So to me what also kind of sets the stage for not like other administrations.

Tom and Carol had no money by the end of that election. He had his business, right? Well he hadn't been able to do beans with his business, etcetera, etcetera. Carol wasn't working. They had two little children, and they had to move into the governor's mansion. And it was before Christmas as I recall. I think Forrest and Evelyn kindly moved out and had a little meeting with Carol and me telling us to be sure to never answer the door in our jeans—and other nice things. I liked Evelyn a lot too. They didn't have the money to move, but Tom had an old school friend who was a driver for Mayflower. And he was able to borrow the Mayflower truck and the big packing boxes for things. And so we all gathered round one day, and we didn't move much furniture because of course the mansion was furnished. But all their other things and the kid things—we spent an entire day packing them up, getting them over, and unpacking them and putting them away. So that was the start of his administration. That evening Carol and Hazel, Carol's parents, brought over a whole bunch of fried—I think it was probably Kentucky Fried chicken, and salad, and beans, and cake, and so on. And we were eating downstairs in what was kind of like a big recreation room. Right?

BB: In the governor's mansion?

SA: Yup, yup. And we hadn't even got everything put away yet. [laughter] We worked, Bob. But this is something I remember so clearly and which moved me at the time so much. Tom and I are sitting next to each other, you know, in rumpled jeans and greasy fingers and so on. And we talked a little bit—oh my gosh, you know, sort of, "Did you ever think we'd make it here," "Isn't it wonderful." And Tom said, "You know the kind of governor I want to be? I want to be the kind of governor that Lee Metcalf is as a senator."

BB: Really?

SA: "You do what's right whether people are gonna like it or not."

BB: Really?

SA: And I just felt so positive and so good about that.

BB: And also that Metcalf was such a solid role model—

SA: Oh totally. And you know he was a longtime family friend. He used to live with them when he was in the Legislature.

BB: His name was Thomas Lee Judge.

SA: Precisely.

BB: And so Tom Judge was—his middle name was Lee Metcalf, yeah.

SA: Exactly, exactly. But that really moved me. And the very first dinner he held at the governor's mansion were the people who moved him in.

BB: Wow.

SA: Yeah. The old high school buddy that drove a truck for Mayflower and some other folks and friends and, yeah.

BB: Well that tells something about the kind of person—

SA: Precisely.

BB: Yeah, you bet.

SA: Precisely. Exactly.

BB: Did you have a role then—an official role in the administration when he was governor?

SA: Oh, yes. But it took a while. I started out being a half-time social secretary. I worked with Carol, and I was responsible for all the formal things that went on at the—entertaining and so on that went on at the governor's mansion. And there were a lot in those days.

BB: Did you bring in legislators, for example, for dinners and that sort of thing?

SA: Oh, yeah.

BB: Do you remember any key legislators that were [unintelligible]?

SA: You know, I don't. What did Larry say? I mean to ask him because it would trigger my memory but don't worry about it.

BB: He said the Butte delegation—

SA: Yes, that I do remember.

BB: —and Francis Bardanouve [unintelligible]—

SA: I was just gonna say the one I do remember is Francis Bardanouve. Yeah, yeah. But there was lots of entertaining and of course it was right around the inaugural ball. So I was helping with that and the reception before and so forth and so on half-time except I worked full-time for about the first six months. And then so Carol said, "Well now take the summer off. You know, we're not doing it," I did help from time to time. But then something I thought I was going to be doing sort of fell through. And I said, "Carol, I'm gonna need a full-time job. I have children and so forth." I'd just gotten divorced. And so she talked with Tom, and he said, "Yeah, tell her to come on in the office," and you know. I knew the people.

BB: We'll figure out something.

SA: Yeah.

BB: Yeah.

SA: But he forgot to tell Ron Richards that, or Jean Handel. So I can—I was a little upset about the thing that I thought was gonna happen hadn't. It wasn't my happiest time. So I came in one morning in the fall, and Jean said, "Whoops," said, "Hi how are you doing? You got some work from Carol you want us to do," because people typed things at the office for us. I said, "Well no. I'm supposed to come and work here." And she said, "Oh, well I don't think I knew about that. Let me go ask Ron." So she went back and asked Ron and obviously he said pretty much the same thing. She came out and she said, "Well there's an office down the hall. Get you a typewriter and a desk. What is it you're gonna be doing?" And I said, "Well I'll keep on with my work, you know, at the governor's mansion and with Carol. But then Tom thought it would be good maybe if I really paid attention to the people that were his old friends and newer ones." You know, read the newspapers, wrote sympathy letters—okay—all that kind of thing. And they all kind of went, "Um, okay. You know, if that's what the governor wants—well sure." And so there I was trying to type a sympathy letter, and I think I ruined more beautiful stationary than whatever I was getting paid. And Keith Colbo was coming over for the Legislature, and he came over. There was an inner office. Gracious—he said, "I just don't want to disturb you. I'll probably be having to go in and out, and I'll do my best, you know," I mean couldn't have been nicer about it. And then a young woman named Joyce Andres if you remember her at all.

BB: Yeah, I do. I do.

SA: Well she came over—I think she'd just graduated from a year of secretarial school. She was about 19, and she and I just hit it off. And she'd see me, and she'd say, "Um, Sid—I can type that up for you." Well pretty soon she started typing up, and I wrote a pretty good letter. And Tom would be all tickled about, "Oh I really like the letter you wrote about thus and such." So that all helped a whole lot. I began to help Kent with appointments. I began to help in other areas of the office. And of course it was also during the whole thing of deinstitutionalization. And that was a place where Carol just shown.

BB: She had a personal interest in that.

SA: Oh, absolutely.

BB: Let me make sure people might understand what we're talking about here. We had the state administrations [institutions] at Boulder and Warm Springs. I think those for sure and that's where people who had cognitive problems—mental problems or psychological problems—they were at one place or the other. And it was said at the time by critics that Boulder and Warm Springs—those institutions were human warehouses.

SA: Oh that's too kind.

BB: People weren't treated well. They were just sent there sometimes by family members who didn't know what to do with them and just wanted to—

SA: And often a doctor would say—I know this from a relative. Well this all came up during the first Legislature. And what the workers said at those institutions wanted was more money. And they wanted—

BB: Sure. They wanted to keep their jobs.

SA: And they wanted more people hired. I mean there was no way, and I don't care how good they were, and a lot of them were very, very good. But they just had way too much and it was just—so we toured the institutions. Well Carol as a nurse getting her degree had spent three months in a practicum at Warm Springs. I mean she really knew what was going on, and we toured Boulder. And I mean I never saw anything so awful. But again people would come—the workers would come up to us and say, "We hate that it's like this. Please help us. We don't want it to be like this either." So they went—

BB: It was unclean and disorganized and—

SA: Oh, god. And the developmentally disabled would be sitting in a dirty shirt banging their head against the wall. Well it was a, you know, it was truly bedlam in the old sense of the word. Well then they went on strike, and it was the best thing that ever happened. Had to call in the



National Guard, and the National Guard from all over the state saw how terrible it was. And they just raised all kinds of hell and told their legislators, "You've got to do something about this." And we got to make some changes anyway. It was at a time where we were looking more at group homes and deinstitutionalization and so on in any event. So that got started. Carol developed a brochure about Boulder and Warm Springs that we got printed and pictures in it—worked up and gave it to the legislators. Long story short they did raise it, and we did begin to move in the direction of deinstitutionalization. Carol played a very important role in that, and Tom really listened to her as well. He refused to take part of his salary that year if they didn't raise the pay for those workers, and the state said, "No, that's against the law. You can't give that back." That'd be like somebody saying, "I'll work for less than the other fella." So he gave it to Carol and me and what we did was ask at the institutions, "What do people most need for Christmas?" And we would do that. So then moving on with that—

BB: Well that was a good story what you just told me.

SA: Well, good.

BB: Yeah, you bet.

SA: But wait, there's more.

BB: [laughs] Okay.

SA: [laughs] I don't want to keep you all night. So then they started opening group homes and community-based facilities and so on. Well there was a lot of "not in my backyard" as you can imagine, but these houses were very nice. They were clean. The people were people, you know, that could be there, and they would have an opening tea and invite Carol.

BB: The governor's wife?

SA: You bet. The first lady. And keep in mind too, Bob, people looked at Tom and Carol the way they used to look at Jack and Jackie Kennedy. They were sort of these beautiful, wonderful, handsome people who also cared about sort of ordinary people. They were really kind of put on the pedestal. So Carol and I would go to the openings and the teas at these homes and that again was the most beautiful and wonderful and almost miraculous kind of experiences. We would see people we had literally seen six months before in dirty clothes banging their head against the wall. Now talking cute—wanting to show you their bowling ball and so forth and so on. And so then it became much more acceptable. The first lady was there. The first lady invites you to come to this. It made a huge difference—huge difference in people's life.

BB: I know a positive difference in people's lives.

SA: Precisely the point. Precisely the point.

BB: And that's still pretty much the case today. I mean there—I think there are still institutions, but they're not a shadow of what they once were.

SA: No. Not at all. And there was one group home in Great Falls that was almost all elderly people that had spent most of their life there. I talked for quite a while with one—just lovely older woman. Her mother had died when she was young. Her father worked on the railroad. The nuns had her for a time, but she kept running away trying to find her mother and father.

BB: Oh, dear.

SA: So they put her—they didn't know what else to do with her. So they put her there. She wasn't even mentally disabled. So we saw some of that too.

BB: Oh, dear.

SA: Yeah. But again—wonderful. She was so happy. She had a lovely room—showed it to me—yeah. One of the most rewarding parts of my working for the governor were those positive changes in people's lives.

BB: Which he strongly approved of and probably tried to—

SA: Oh, he was the leader of it.

BB: —facilitate and was the leader of.

SA: Absolutely. Absolutely. So what else?

BB: Well that was—that's still—that's going on in his first term.

SA: Yes, yes.

BB: Yeah. And his lieutenant governor was a guy named Bill Christiansen.

SA: Yes.

BB: And I've wondered since the 1972 Constitution required that governors and lieutenant governors run as a team. Well Christiansen and Judge hadn't run as a team. They happened to both be Democrats, but they were elected independently. Well was there some reason or other that Judge didn't ask Christiansen to be his running mate when he ran again in 1976? I thought there was something unusual about that. Maybe I—

SA: Well there was but by this time, by 1976, there was the whole supposedly missing \$96,000 that supposedly had not been reported. And then the rumor was Tom had pocketed it, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. Now keep in mind, Bob, I signed all those formal reports. I had never worked on one of them. Initially it was the woman in his office—his advertising office—and Blanche gave her all the, you know, checks and the people and their occupations. And so somebody would bring it to me, and I would sign it. Never so much as dotted an “i” except on my name, and I remember it took a while to get the governor’s one because we had—was wonderful. I remember Kale Jackson came running over from the Capitol. I was at the governor’s mansion doing something, and he said, “Oh my gosh, we’re already late with this. Will you sign it?” And I said, “Oh look how much we raised. Isn’t this great?” But I was the one should it be proven it had been mismanaged and misreported. For anybody else it was a misdemeanor. For me it was a felony.

BB: Holy smokes.

SA: Oh, yeah.

BB: Wow.

SA: Well I got a lot of jokes about the chocolate cake they were gonna bring me with a file in it—which I didn’t frankly feel so terribly amused by. Woodahl called a grand jury.

BB: The attorney general?

SA: Yeah, the attorney general.

BB: Bob Woodahl?

SA: Well against whom we were running.

BB: Yeah, yeah. He was emerging as the Republican candidate.

SA: Precisely. And his office was just down the hall. I mean we were kind of pals with his people. They were nice people.

BB: Yeah. At that time the governor’s office and the attorney general’s office were in the same relatively small hallway—

SA: Oh, yeah.

BB: —in the Capitol.

SA: Oh, yeah. Absolutely, absolutely. So they impaneled a grand jury. Timer Moses came as our attorney. Because there was some money left over, but it was properly in a savings account under my name. And we did use that again properly—paid Timer who was wonderful.

BB: Prominent trial attorney from Billings.

SA: Oh lord, yes. But a lot of people thought if you got Timer you must be guilty. You know.

BB: [laughs] Yeah, you bet.

SA: But I mean after he spent time with me, and we did become friends too—he realized that I had not—the grand jury didn't even call me because I had nothing to do with the actual preparation or handling or reporting of any of the money. And, you know, at last Tom was exonerated. It was proved he hadn't taken anything. But at the same time he was at Big Sky a lot.

BB: Ski resort.

SA: Yeah. And we'd been down there when they were selling condos and this and that, and Tom bought one. And then he had been—one of the things he did in high school was he was a great leader in skiing which was not a big sport then. He skied up on MacDonald Pass as I recall. But in any event so he would go down there and have a great ski weekend and so on. So then they started writing stories about how he acted up at one of the restaurant bars down at the bottom of the hill of Big Sky, and he threw a potato at somebody and so forth. So I think Bill just—he was still worried about the money. He didn't like, you know, those kinds of stories. So I think more than Tom not picking him [Christiansen]—I think he kind of said, "This isn't my ballgame."

BB: I gotcha. Okay.

SA: Yeah.

BB: So he just kind of thought, "I think I won't continue."

SA: That's my impression and recollection.

BB: Okay.

SA: Did Tom ever sit down and say that to me in so many words? No. But meanwhile and again Carol was becoming more prominent. We went to all the governor's conferences, and I got to go the first lady lunches with her. And most of them were kind of like the governors were—who were mostly three-piece suit, gray hair, shiny shoes. And most of their wives, who were lovely and often did some very good things, but they were sort of bouffant white hairdos and so forth.

But there were some—we would sit with Kitty Dukakis and Dolly Lamb who were also—Dottie Lamb. Who were also younger and doing some really interesting kinds of things.

BB: Dottie Lamb was the governor of the—or the wife of the governor of Colorado.

SA: And Kitty Dukakis was the wife of the governor of Massachusetts.

BB: Massachusetts, yeah.

SA: And those were two of our great favorites. I also liked some of the older—I especially enjoyed Mrs. Lucey from Wisconsin as I recall.

BB: Okay.

SA: Yeah. And in fact his sister was a nun who worked in the Kalispell schools for a time, Bob.

BB: Really?

SA: Yes. I don't recall her name, but there was a big argument over the equal rights amendment. And the first ladies voted it down. The governors had already voted for it.

BB: [laughs] I didn't know that.

SA: And I said and, you know, I mean I called Dottie Lamb Dottie. But I mean of course I said, "Mrs. Lucey," I said, "For heaven sakes. How is it that the first ladies voted it down when the governors were in favor of it?" And she looked at me and she's quite elegant. She said, "Sidney, they're just chicken shit." [laughter] Oh my goodness.

BB: Well that was quite an experience that you had then, you know, in the Judge administration.

SA: Exactly. I got to meet so many interesting people.

BB: Was Schwinden coming to the surface at all during that time? He had a job in Judge's cabinet.

SA: Oh he was in state lands, but Forrest had appointed him. And I think he did a very good job in state lands and then became Tom's lieutenant governor. And we all thought the world of it.

BB: That was my next question. Obviously he'd proven himself as a pretty valuable member of the—

SA: Precisely.

BB: —in the Judge first term in office, and he surfaced positively and with Christiansen out of the picture Judge needed to choose somebody. And I thought this too. In fact I think Bruce mentioned this—or not Bruce but Larry [Pettit] mentioned this in our interview. It wasn't lost on Tom Judge that Ed Smith really had a foot in the agricultural camp.

SA: Precisely. You're exactly right.

BB: Okay. And so Ted Schwinden did too.

SA: Precisely. But he had all that good government experience as well.

BB: Yes so he was a real good combination. He'd served in the Legislature before. The farmers and ranchers considered him one of theirs. He was a very competent bureaucrat. And so he—that's how he emerged as—

SA: And a hell of a good guy.

BB: Yeah. Able to make friends and shake hands and so on.

SA: Exactly.

BB: So Judge chose him to be his running mate.

SA: Yes. Yeah, exactly.

BB: Yeah, okay. And then you were still there during the second administration?

SA: Right and by that time and I'd done, you know, a dozen different things but by that time I began to work primarily on appointments to boards, commissions, and advisory councils. And I'd been working on it a lot because Kent had the grand jury and I mean he was—

BB: Kent Kleinkopf?

SA: Kleinkopf. Because he traveled with the governor. All those kind of things.

BB: Still traveled with the governor?

SA: Yeah, yeah. So I began to work on appointments to boards, commissions, and advisory councils. And oh that was so good and so exciting because once again traditionally it had been older men appointed to all the major boards. Women were appointed to the board of cosmetologists and the board of nurses, and there weren't a lot of Native Americans. And Tom really wanted to see both of those expanded, and I don't think we ever got an exact grip on it

but I think it was about 12 percent women when we started. And by the time we left it was about 35 percent women.

BB: Well that's significant.

SA: Yes. And there were women on every major board as I recall. And some of them were chairs. Yeah, Rita Sheehy.

BB: Yeah.

SA: Exactly and she was so wonderful. So I mean these weren't token I want to say in any sense of the word. They were marvelous, and again we were beginning to have women come in as higher up positions. I started as a secretary because no one knew what else to do with me. And then finally it was Evan and Bruce Nelson and Blake Wordal and so on who said—

BB: Evan Barrett.

SA: Oh, Evan. My god, yes. My friend—he and I started working on Tom's campaigns the first year he was here as a teacher in 1968. And he came to volunteer, and he told the people in his social science or history class or whatever he'd give them extra credit if they'd work on a campaign. They'd volunteer. So they all came and said, "This is ridiculous. You're doing everything we do. Go tell Keith you want a raise and a different title."

BB: Keith?

SA: Colbo.

BB: Okay.

SA: Okay. Well I liked that. I didn't want to. They made me. So I went in and talked with Keith about it, and he said, "Oh, you know. You're just doing a grand job. But you know what holds you back? You don't have a college degree." I said, "Keith, I graduated from college with honors." Well he said, "You couldn't have. You had all those little children then."

BB: What?

SA: I said, "Yeah, but I kept going to school."

BB: That's be the easiest thing in the world to check on.

SA: Well, but what he said—and this wasn't his fault. He said, "I've never seen your resumé." Well I'd never given—didn't ask for one. So once we got that all straightened around then, you

know, I began to have a title and salary like the big boys. But it was the big boys who made me do it.

BB: Wow.

SA: Or the younger ones. There was a bill—Senate Bill 80. It was for coalition bargaining instead of collective bargaining, and I don't even remember if I understood the issue that well. But I knew who my pals were for—Jim Murry and Don Judge. And by that time I had a big office at the end of the hall that Keith had had when I was sitting out there trying to type. And they'd always bring their coats in the office.

BB: And Don Judge and Jim Murry were the leaders of the AFL-CIO.

SA: Jim was the leader, and Don was the COPE leader.

BB: Okay. Committee on Political Education.

SA: Right, exactly. So in any event Tom was gonna sign the legislation, and he'd been meeting with Francis I think and with the banker from up around Darby Hamilton,

BB: Bill Groff.

SA: There you go, Bill Groff and so on. He was gonna sign it. Well Bruce and Blake and I were just in arms, and we had a chance to go in and argue with Tom about it. And he ended up not signing it. So they said, "The women and children saved the day." [laughter] Meanwhile Carol had also gone for alcoholism treatment.

BB: Oh, dear.

SA: She felt she was having some issues, and I feel free to say it now because of eventually she did too. And she told me would I call Kay Flynn who was Kay Flynn Hanrahan in those days.

BB: The county attorney's wife?

SA: Right and she was originally old time Montana Butte/Helena family. She'd moved with Tom to Glendive after he lost the attorney general. Okay.

BB: Tom Hanrahan?

SA: Yeah. And she had gone to Heartview because she had the problem and then become a counselor. So Carol said to me one day, "I want to go to Heartview. Will you call Kay and let's—

BB: Heartview?



SA: It's the most wonderful place—

BB: Where is it?

SA: North Dakota.

BB: Okay.

SA: Maybe it's South—I get them mixed up. So I said, “Sure.” So I called Kay and Kay said, “No, she has to call and ask me herself.” So Carol called and asked Kay—Kay drove up from Glendive to pick her up, and Tom was out of town. And so she got to Heartview and was there maybe five weeks—maybe six.

BB: Quite a while.

SA: Yeah. And did come home and was doing well. And that winter which must have been '73 maybe—no it was later than that. Doesn't matter. Anyway she was going back kind of for a refresher. Not that she'd had a slip but just, you know, there's a lot involved there. And her sister said to me, “You know, they think it's very good if a person works closely with someone if they go back for the week and kind of learn what it's all about.” And Carol wanted me to go. I said, “Sure.” Best thing that ever happened. I did not have the problem, but it's just such a good way to live. And I had some emotional issues at that time.

BB: Sure.

SA: So we went and did that and then later she was a great help to many people who had that problem and was an informal counselor to them. And I just admired her so much for that.

BB: She sounds like a wonderful person.

SA: Oh she was just marvelous.

BB: I can't even remember meeting her. I'm sure I did, but I just don't have a clear recollection of that.

SA: I understand, but she was—and gracious, and warm, and genuine, and only thing she had great trouble speaking in public. So there was the A-Team and that was Tom. There was the B-Team which was lieutenant governor or the candidate at that time, and we were the C-Team. But we were really lucky because we got—

BB: And that would be you and Carol?

SA: Yes. Because we got to go out to all the smaller places where it wasn't the baked chicken dinner. It was the ladies had done a big potluck. So we had much better food, and they were always so kind and lovely to us. And again it's the first lady coming to Plains. I mean they were just lovely to us. But so Carol would ask me to, you know, we'd talk about what she wanted to say and I kept that rough typed and then somebody to really type. But she just had and, you know, such a common fear. So then she would have a yellow legal tablet and it would say, "Hello. I'm so very glad to see you." And then a big smiley face. "Thank you for inviting us. I know it will be a wonderful evening." I said, "I'm gonna publish a book, Carol, and it will be the, *Unspoken Speeches of Carol Judge*," which she liked to. We just—we got along so very, very well. We really did.

BB: Now their marriage ended in a divorce, didn't it?

SA: Yes.

BB: Was that while he was still governor?

SA: Yes. It was right before the 1980 campaign.

BB: What happened?

SA: They'd kind of grown apart. She didn't drink. He was kind of too much into it. He'd gotten pretty involved with sort of the big boys and the high flyers and the, you know—

BB: Well—

SA: It was too bad.

BB: —knowing what I think I know it was a mistake on his part.

SA: Oh I think it was indeed. Although I adored his second wife [Suzy Cook]. She was absolutely wonderful.

BB: She was a hotel owner or something?

SA: Yeah.

BB: Resort owner maybe?

SA: Well both. Both.

BB: Okay.

SA: Her mother had died. She came out to—

BB: He didn't remarry until after he was governor?

SA: Oh, he didn't even know—I think he'd been introduced to her. But no—was later. Her sister and brother—or brother-in-law and sister were—lived in Glendive. He was involved in oil someway. She was from the Chicago North Shore.

BB: Her name was Cook—was her maiden name?

SA: No, that wasn't her maiden name. That was her first married name.

BB: I gotcha.

SA: Yeah.

BB: Okay. That's who I think I [unintelligible]?

SA: I can't remember what her maiden name was, but she went to University of Montana with us. I knew her then, but she only went her freshman year and went home and married the high school sweetheart.

BB: I see.

SA: And had several children. She got divorced, and her first resort was Chico.

BB: Okay.

SA: Then she went up—

BB: She purchased the resort in Chico Hot Springs, Montana?

SA: Yes. As I understand it. Now maybe she was simply the general manager. But then she went up outside of Columbia Falls and had a dude ranch.

BB: Okay.

SA: She thought that would be a better place to raise her children. And so she owned that ranch and that was when I think she married Mr. Cook. They got divorced, and she was managing something. Maybe she was the GM for the hotel in Great Falls when she met Tom.

BB: What became of Carol?

SA: She and Shari both went and got a master's degree in nursing. And then I believe she became a counselor. I did not see her that much after the divorce for which I was sorry, but I think it was awkward for her. I was still involved with Tom's affairs—business and governmental affairs and so on.

BB: Well that's a sad story.

SA: Well it is. It is. And while she loved going out and doing all the good things—it was hard for her to live in the governor's mansion.

BB: Why did Schwinden break with Judge and run against him in the primary? Or is that the way to ask the question?

SA: Oh, I think it's fine. It was his third term and most everybody just didn't think that was a good idea.

BB: Yeah, they appeared vulnerable because most governors—no governor—well I guess only one governor had actually been elected three times in Montana history, but it was pretty unusual.

SA: And it was at the time of the divorce. It was time of these stories about, you know, high times at the resort. Not Big Sky the one down at the bottom of the hill, you know, that he was drinking and carrying on and hooting and hollering. And yeah, people were not happy with his behavior and with the divorce because people were so devoted to Carol, and there were lots of stories floating around and so forth and so on. I will also say that after Ted won a lot of people said to me, "Oh, I never thought Ted Schwinden would win. I just wanted to kind of teach Tom a lesson." And I said, "But that isn't how the votes count."

BB: [laughs] Yeah.

SA: But I mean truly a lot of people just thought they were saying to Tom, "You better shape up."

BB: Yeah, yeah. Well I interviewed Tom Judge just months before he died.

SA: Oh, boy. He was not in good shape then.

BB: He wasn't in good shape, and he wasn't—he had some bitterness in addition to some physical problems.

SA: Terrible bitterness!

BB: Yeah, and he made no bones about how he, you know, didn't have a high regard for Ted Schwinden. And his friend and your friend and my friend, Kent Kleinkopf, you know, also commented that he knew that there was a real rupture there. I don't know if it was a friendship to begin with really. But anyway there was [unintelligible]—

SA: I think it was more a pleasant association. I don't think it was a real friendship in that personal sense.

BB: Yeah, I think Judge felt that he'd really been knifed in the back by Schwinden. That was my impression. He may even have said that for all I remember.

SA: Nope. He may have. But also because of the fact that all of us volunteered for Ted. I mean there was a big rupture for a time. And then Emily Melton and I sat down together, and we were very, very good friends. And she said, "Well over here everybody's saying none of the Judge people would halt the campaign."

BB: And this was after the primary?

SA: Yeah. And I said, "Okay. Well over there they're saying, 'Well they don't want us to help. Nobody ever asks us.'" Long story short we got everybody together and then we all worked very hard. And I mean I even did some traveling with Ted and Jean and Dorie and then they got rid of us all.

BB: Well that's another story, too. That's commonly known I think more than the—some of the other things that'd you tell me that I wouldn't know otherwise and when I talk to you and Larry and Kent. But it was pretty well-known that after Ted Schwinden was elected governor he in some cases personally fired people who had been on the Tom Judge staff. And it was—apparently he wanted his own team or maybe there was some retribution involved. I don't know, but—

SA: Well here's—what person if you want—and he didn't come to me personally. But first of all he asked some people right after the election to come to Las Vegas with him and—

BB: Ron Richards among them.

SA: Yeah, precisely. So that was a—that part was a bigger mistake, Bob.

BB: Yeah. So he goes down to Las Vegas and has a good time with him and their wives and [unintelligible]—

SA: Precisely.

BB: —then comes back to Helena and cans them all.

SA: You're got it. Exactly. I remember Jean Handel said to me when we were having coffee one morning—she said, "You know if he didn't keep Ron Richards he's not gonna keep you and me." And I said, "Yeah I do know that." And so in fact we were let go and some people—Kent Kleinkopf whom I love—he's one of my favorite people in the world. He's never gotten over that—that bitterness. And I said, "But Kent he ran against us. I mean that was the thrust of his campaign. I'm going to do it differently. You can't keep the old crowd around if that's what you've run on." I understood that.

BB: Yeah, I see that.

SA: Yeah, I understood that. I really did. And, you know, and as I say I campaigned with him, and I had thought I would continue mind you. But I really got it. And so then Jim Murry said, "You're probably gonna need a job. You have four children and not much in the way of any kind of monthly child support." And he said, "Why don't you come down and talk to Candy Brown?" Said, "Sure." So I did and Candy said, "Well now what are you really looking for?" I said, "I have no idea specifically but what I want to do is work with a bunch of people I respect and I like, and we're working for something that's bigger than just making money." And so we talked along those lines a little more and a few days later, Jim called me in and told me he wanted to offer me a job.

BB: At the state AFL-CIO?

SA: Yes. And there were two of them. One was traveling eight states for a worker safety and health program. Well of course I couldn't do that. The other was working on calling in the TAT program—Technical Assistance and Training, and Rusty Harper was the other part of that.

BB: Yeah, I remember him.

SA: Love him so much. And I said, "Oh my gosh? Sure." So I started working there, and it was the middle of a Legislature. And Rusty and I are churning out fact sheets and doing research and news releases, and Jim was so nice. I'd come in and bring him a draft and he'd read it and say, "Good stuff, Sid. It's good stuff, and I think let's add this and that." We did that for about two weeks, and I said, "Jim, I really appreciate, you know, that you're so positive and complimentary, but you always sound surprised." And he said, "I didn't know you could write." I said—

BB: Well he knew you could communicate?

SA: "Jim why did you hire me?" He said, "Because you were my friend, and you needed a job." And he said, "And Evan [Barrett] said you'd do fine." So we became great friends. Yeah.

BB: Jim Murry was a kind of a multi-sided guy, I think.

SA: Oh, yeah. Oh, no question.

BB: I ended up being—

SA: You need to do an interview with me on him someday. [laughs]

BB: —yeah, maybe I should. I don't think—oh I did do one with Jim. You know, these are all on file at the University of Montana Archives.

SA: Yeah, I'd really like to see them.

BB: And I did one with Tom Judge I just mentioned to you, but I did one with Jim Murry too.

SA: Oh, wonderful.

BB: And because of my Republican past I remember he was really wary to begin with, and I said, "Hell, you know that I'm not running for anything anymore. You're retired from the AFL-CIO job. We don't need to tell any secrets"—

SA: No, no. [laughs]

BB: —that we shouldn't or sugarcoat anything, but we both know quite a bit about what happened during that era in politics that future generations or future historians might be interested in."

SA: Exactly, exactly.

BB: So we just need to talk on the historical record," and he did a great job. In fact I ended up staying at his house that night.

SA: So brilliant and so good. Yeah, I loved him.

BB: Yeah, and deceptive. Because he looked like a labor leader. He didn't look like the intellectual that he was. He didn't look like the—

SA: Yeah, and he'd talk about he always had a torn shirt, and I can't remember. When he and Arlene got married there was thus and such, and I finally said, "Well we didn't have this and that." I said to somebody, "I just outpoured Jim Murry." [laughter]

BB: Well boy, Jim—I think Jim expanded his influence and his—frankly his power in politics by being underestimated by people who thought well—

SA: I think there's [unintelligible].

BB: —and earlier in his life he had a drinking problem.

SA: Oh, boy. Yes.

BB: So I think they thought, "Well this guy's a—he looks like a kind of a"—

SA: Big thug, Irish, drunk—yeah.

BB: Yeah, yup. That's right. But he was a whole lot more than that. Then he got over that.

SA: That's right.

BB: In fact I don't think he drank at all later in his life.

SA: Oh no, no, no. And then he'd kid people. "Oh just give me a sniff of that." "No, Jim." And he'd laugh. Circling back though because I do want to say that Tom's marriage to Suzy early on was very, very happy, and she was very good for him. And he had a lot of respect for her business acumen, and she had a ton of money. And I don't mean that influenced him to fall in love with her, but she came from a background that he thought was quite wonderful, etcetera, etcetera. And then she was hired by Dan Brutger of Brutger corporation which has all the Thrifty Scot Motels and so forth and so on.

BB: I see.

SA: Mountain Sky Guest Ranch had fallen into great disrepair, and I don't think it'd been used as a guest ranch for a long time. Suzy was assigned—she was vice-president of development or something—assigned to go down there; bring it up, you know, to speed in every way; and then to manage it. Meanwhile Tom was working for a group in Salt Lake City which eventually they say paid somebody a lot of money to call them "The Rocky Mountain Group" or something exciting. But he was selling investments and stocks, and he would tell me all about it, and I never understood a word, and I was bored to death. But he loved coming down on the weekends to Mountain Sky and then of course he had some wealthy people he could kind, you know—

BB: Cultivate.

SA: Cultivate, exactly.

[sidebar conversation removed by editor]

BB: Well I think—



SA: I think we're done. I mean, my lord.

BB: Yeah, do you have anything you'd like to say in conclusion about your—

SA: Just that I think that was one of the most wonderful opportunities I have ever had in my life. To being part of something that made real differences in people's lives, and it was the attitude and the positive sense and we can do it. But it was also there was a great deal of federal money for good things: head start, childcare, etcetera, etcetera—and there was lots of money in Montana.

BB: Yeah, that was when the coal started to boom.

SA: Exactly. And so this was something where people who wanted to do good things had the means to do them.

BB: Yeah. And the political leadership was there. There were progressives in the Legislature and in the governor's office and so on.

SA: Exactly. And Tom once told us I remember when head start had begun on the Blackfeet Reservation, and he went up to help open it. And he talked about—we were flying in the guard plane back to some conference, and he was telling about some Indian women who came up to talk to him. And they said they were so happy. Their children would be well and happy and educated, and they could finally go get a job and help their families out of poverty. And he just got big tears in his eyes when he told us about that. So there were those good things too. So, yeah. To me it was a great blessing to be part of people who wanted to help change people's lives, and who actually were able to accomplish it.

BB: In a positive way.

SA: In the most positive way, and we've remained lifelong friends I might add.

BB: Yeah, and that's wonderful too. You bet.

SA: Yeah, Evan, Kent, Bruce—yes.

BB: Yeah. Well Sidney Armstrong it's been my pleasure to do this interview with you. I think this is the longest conversation we've ever had.

SA: And it's been so enjoyable for me.

BB: And it's good to be able to share this conversation with people who may want to listen to it and know more about Montana's second progressive era and Governor Tom Judge sometime in the future.

SA: And who may want it to come back.

BB: Yeah, and who would like to see it return again. God knows that's true.

SA: Yes.

BB: Okay, my friend. Thanks for your public service.

SA: Oh, thank you. Thank you for all you've done for our state, and thank you for putting this program together with all of us that have had good experiences.

BB: Thank you.