

**CENTER FOR FLORIDA HISTORY
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INTERVIEW WITH: **D. BURKE KIBLER**

INTERVIEWER: **JAMES M. DENHAM**

PLACE: **LAKELAND, FLORIDA**

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M= JAMES M. DENHAM ("Mike")
B= D. BURKE KIBLER

Transcribed by Adrienne T. Southerland

M: This is April 13th I am in Burke Kibler's Law Office.

M: Mr. Kibler, last time we had just gotten through Lawton Chiles' election in the Senate in the 1970 and this is a continuation of that discussion. Can you summarize in your own words, these years as far as what you were doing at this time, your own law practice? This would have been 1970-1988. What were you doing here at the firm at that time? What were some of the most important things that were going on during the senatorial years for Lawton Chiles?

B: Well, it was a busy time for the law firm. We were in the Growth Mode. I remember one of the sayings were. . . . firm then and we would be 80 by '80 which meant we would be 80 lawyers which would have been the largest law firm in the state of Florida by 1980. In 1970, we were probably 40 lawyers I guess in that range, maybe 35. I joined the Chesterfield firm in 1964, January of '64 and I think I was the 12th lawyer and that comprised the firm that was then Holland, Smith and Kibler and we had grown in the late '60s, '68 I guess and we had joined with a firm in Tampa. It was Knight, Jones, Whitaker and Germany and from that name came the name Holland and Knight and they were probably 10-12 lawyers, maybe 12 and we, by that time were maybe 25 lawyers, so I guess we were under 40, but not much under 40 and we were growing moderately, so by 1970, we were probably 40-45 lawyers and we used to say we would be 80 by '80. Actually we were 80 well before 1980. Our growth was relatively rapid during that period of time, but I was involved in the firm administration to some extent, but more heavily into the practice of law. I had a lot of clients who were significant and were growing, a couple of phosphate companies, some individuals that I represented that grew in their companies. Linder Industrial Machinery. Scott Linder was a long time personal friend and his company grew and I worked with him. Wellman Lord was another one; Jim Wellman was a close friend. The firm represented Wellman Lord before I joined it, but I represented Jim individually and did more work there and there were a number of clients that took a great deal of my time and I at that time, had administrative responsibilities in the firm. I served for the most part on the firm's Executive Committee that we had then. I hired nearly all of the lawyers and later I became involved as we got bigger and organized in one way or another was chairman of the Executive Committee from time to time. I was later chairman of the Directors Group that ran the firm up until recently, but

during the period of the '70s, it was an interesting time. A lot was happening. I was serving on the Board of Regents from 1967 to 1976 and that was of course, the body that was really the consolidated governing board for all the state universities, the state university system then. It has been much in the public eye of late. Governor Bush saw fit to recommend Legislature abolish it and bought out Amendment Number 11 that was supposed to provide another board of governors that would serve where the Board of Regents formerly did which there is a lot of political concern. I don't think we have time to go into that. It was a busy time and an active influence in the law practice and other business involvements that I was involved in as well as some of the other type ventures.

M: One of the things that Holland and Knight is well known for and respected for is his pro-bono work. Can you reflect a little bit on that? I would imagine that by the 1970s, that was an issue that was discussed and maybe expanded a little bit.

B: Well, the firm has always had a keen interest in being more than just a law firm that made money for the partners, but that put something back into the community generally and we have had lawyers that were involved in organized bar. The firm is the only one that I know that has produced two presidents of the American Bar Association and probably, I don't know, at least two presidents of the Florida Bar, but we became more involved later with an organized pro-bono program, but we always encouraged it and felt that every lawyer ought to help represent people who could not afford lawyers and we became, as I say, had more planning for that in more recent time. During the time that Bill McBride was the managing partner, this was sort of a passion of his and we developed some programs such as, well we called opening doors for children in which we directed a lot of our pro bono activities into helping children and we had a number of different programs that were designed to help children in need. Started one in Tampa called Brains and Basketball. We had a lot of kids that were interested in athletics, but weren't very good students and some of the lawyers there who were good athletes and played basketball in college and high school, they would give basketball instructions as a trade off with the kids if they would be tutored in their studies and it had some remarkable results. They were not doing very well otherwise, so they became pretty good students. A lot of those things were sort of put together in this program we call opening doors for children and Bill McBride deserves the credit for it. He made it one of the themes of his period as a managing partner of the firm, which was 8 1/2 to 9 years.

M: When it comes to pro-bono work, would you say that it would be driven by the individual lawyers themselves or would it be a systematic initiative directed by the Board or say by the managing partner?

B: Well, most of the lawyers who want to do pro-bono type work, particularly younger lawyers coming on and as the firm gets bigger, it has to have the vehicle to allow them to do it and not neglect their client work which is what the firm is about. We hold ourselves out as lawyers for hire and we have to - as overhead grows, you've got a lot of overhead to pay for, so we try and create this vehicle where the lawyers can have available to them, they know they can devote a certain amount of their time, and it will be organized and they'll get help in doing it, but the firms that encourage it will get more results. Many firms or some firms I should say, don't encourage it as much as we did. But we certainly have firms in the country that are more generous in the amount of time given to pro-bono work and we are among the top group in the nation.

M: Now, I think we can switch back to the aftermath of the election of Lawton Chiles. Did his family move to Washington or did they keep their house here in Lakeland? How does that work?

B: As I recall, when Lawton was elected, he had a townhouse, I don't know if it was bought initially, but ultimately they bought a place there and they lived in several different places, but they kept their house in Lakeland for a period of time, but by that time, I believe they had a place at Holmes Beach. One of the boys actually built some condos there called Gulf Place I think and Lawton and Rhea had one of the initial ones that was built and they spent an increasingly amount of time - after the election they really didn't come back to Lakeland to any significant period of time. I don't know when it was they sold their home on Lake Hollingsworth, but I would guess it was 1971, 1972 and then their Florida residence really became in fact, Holmes Beach, though Lawton would always have Polk County as his headquarters and he would give that sort of his Florida address, in Lakeland, because he had a sister who lived here. His mother was still alive and lived there.

M: So, did Charles Canady just stay at that office for the entire 18 years?

B: You know, I don't quite remember when the decision was made that Charles who of course was his administrative assistant; the Lakeland office became his main office. My recollection is that it was sometime in the middle of that first term when they experimented around and Charles was in Washington initially and then he kept coming to Florida and they worked out, as I recall, that was perhaps the first of the senatorial offices that had their administrative assistant in the state they were elected from as opposed to Washington, but Charles would go up there frequently, but basically this was his office and somewhere during that first term, they made that arrangement.

M: Do you remember going to Washington to visit Lawton, either on official business or for recreational trips or any of those kinds of things?

B: Yea, I had a lot of involvement in Washington during that period of time and I would, client matters, and normally when I would go to Washington, I would call Lawton and we would at least have dinner together. I know one of his favorite places was, it was a French restaurant where all the waiters wore roller skates, I think it was and it was -- he thoroughly enjoyed that. The food was surprisingly good and it was always attention attracting when your waiter came running by on skates, come to a stop and never seem to spill drinks or anything else. We would frequently see each other when I was there and of course when he would come back to Florida we would visit.

M: What were some of the things that he did that you can remember, what were some of the things he did in Washington, that he really enjoyed about Washington, places he would enjoy visiting or some of the things he liked about Washington? Do you remember him telling you about that?

B: Well, Lawton had a sense of history. He enjoyed the museums. I don't know that I ever went to a museum with him. I know we would talk about the Smithsonian and others and Lawton always was an outdoorsmen. He loved hunting and when he was in the Senate, he would find places to go turkey hunting particularly and the Senate didn't gather too early in the mornings and Lawton would oft times, particularly in his later years in Senate, would get up early and go somewhere, usually into Virginia, sometimes

Maryland, and people that he knew would take him or sometimes he would go by himself, turkey hunting and during the turkey/gobbler season, he would oft times do that and he would always -- prided himself on a gobbler that he called up. The killing of the gobbler didn't matter to him nearly as much as the fact that he would get the gobbler to come up so that he could see him and I think sometime he deliberately would not shoot him because he did not want to clean the turkey. He wanted another chance

M: Can you tell us who Lawton would have enjoyed hunting with during those years and if you would like to reflect on some of the earlier hunting partners that he would have had maybe, back in earlier years.

B: Well, Wilbur Boyd was always one of his favorite hunting partners. I hunted with him a good bit with him in the Senate years. I think that Sam Nunn was someone that he enjoyed hunting with. He mentioned Fritz Hollings. I'm not sure that he hunted actually with Fritz Hollings, but you could just go through just the list of those in the Senate and most of them, Lawton was on a very friendly basis with, be that they were Republican or Democrat and I became aware that when they used to call the U.S. Senate the most exclusive club in the United States, there was a lot of basis for it because they did like each other. They treated each other well even though they would have violent disagreements. Those that would have very differing views, you would find that Lawton, Orrin Hatch on the one hand and Teddy Kennedy on the other, Lawton would have good personal relationship with even though he may not have really agreed very much with what either thought, though I would say that with Orrin Hatch he would agree with a lot more than Teddy Kennedy.

M: We have already mentioned a few of those on off tape as far as his closest friends and people he enjoyed, Pete Domenici was one, would there be some others that you may have told me about while we were not on tape?

B: Lloyd Bentsen was one and Lloyd Bentsen would come to Florida and hunt with him from time to time and in the ones that -- when he hunted up in Washington, he was turkey hunting, of course he would go perhaps -- he just liked to hunt, he would go, take a lot of trips, to Alaska, Canada, and go out west and hunt with a number of varying people. I never went on any of those particular trips with him. The only hunting I did with Lawton was in Florida and usually on the ranch my family had and still do, but Lawton would tell me about the trips and Wilbur Boyd and Lawton would travel a good bit together and take trips, but he was -- I started to say, on turkey hunting you don't have groups. You may start off as a group, but you separate usually because a turkey is a very wary creature and Lawton would go many times by himself. He did this same thing when he was Governor. He would go off in the morning. He would have someone drive him there, but he would usually hunt alone in those instances and he enjoyed getting out and doing that and that was just a pattern of his life.

M: Did you have a chance to meet any of his senatorial colleagues? On a one on one basis or at a dinner party or something like that?

B: Yes, those I mentioned previously, all of them Sam Nunn, Pete Domenici, Lloyd Bentsen, Fritz Hollings. There were others that I hadn't really thought of those, but in Washington from time to time - sometimes we had lunch in the Senate dining room and he would have sometimes members of the senate there and oft times, they would come down to Florida on occasions. Jim Cox who was a native of Lakeland. He died several

years ago, was a close friend of Lawton and he at one time was IMC, then International Mineral and Chemical Company, but one of the largest of the phosphate producers in Florida, he was there, Vice President in charge of their Florida operation for a period of time and they all and some of the other companies did had hunting facilities and they would invite Lawton as a guest and they brought down, I remember, Sam Nunn and Lloyd Bentsen came down and Sam Nunn came down and hunted a couple of times on my property with Lawton and Wilbur Boyd.

M: Did he ever mention to you, his thoughts on or his opinions of Jimmy Carter? Jimmy Carter was elected in 1976. Did he know Carter before the election or -- of course that would have been running for reelection I guess that year.

B: Lawton was a good Democrat and he certainly was supportive of Carter in his election after -- I don't think Lawton knew Carter particularly well prior to his involvement in national politics. He of course knew him when he was Governor of Georgia, but he, I believe was as surprised as anybody that Carter emerged on the national scene and that happened pretty quickly and it was pretty surprising. I remember one of the stories we tell, when Carter was the Governor of Georgia, he had that typical Georgia drawl and then suddenly when he embarked on his political ambitions, the drawl was gone and he later indicated that he had speech lessons and he reworked his manner of delivery and elocution I guess you would say.

M: That reminds me of what one of my aunts or uncles said about Lyndon Johnson before Lyndon Johnson was -- Lyndon Johnson was the first President that didn't have an accent according to one of my relatives, I can't remember. Of course he did have an accent to everybody else, but not them. That might have been true of Jimmy Carter I suppose.

M: Did he ever mention his opinions of Ronald Reagan? Did he ever express any comments, frustrations or admirations or anything like that, that you can remember?

B: Lawton as I say again, was a Democrat. He recognized that most of his, or many of his close friends and supporters were very strong Reagan supporters and that was of course not what good Democrats would want to encourage, but he admired Reagan and he would say things like, he was as likable person as you could know and he is somewhat that you just enjoyed being around. Now he disagreed with Reagan on many of his policies, but he agreed with others. Lawton was not the typical Democrat and he was certainly was not a typical liberal Democrat -- excuse me, he was a typical liberal Democrat, but he was conservative in many ways. It is too pat to say he was a fiscal conservative and social liberal which is often used to describe people with Lawton's belief because Lawton was more complex than that, but he always believed that you couldn't be a strong nation without being fiscally solvent and he believed that it was important to balance the budget and that sort of things and there are many social programs that he believed should take precedence over a lot of things, that you just had to take care of children and this carried through in when he was Governor of Florida. That is why being Governor was more satisfying to him than being Senator in many ways because he felt he could get some things done as Governor. He said you never really felt you could do anything as Senator, there was just too much there happening there you couldn't change.

M: We can go into that in more depth a little bit later. Did Chiles have a relationship with Governor Graham? Did they exchange views? What was their relationship like?

K: They had a good relationship. When Lawton was in the State Senate and was a very influential member of the state senate and Bob Graham was a newly elected member of the House of Representative and State Legislature and they both had a lot of common interests, agriculture for one. Lawton was always close to the land and Bob Graham was also, coming from the dairy interest in south Florida and education was a very binding interest of theirs and they were both very prominent Democrats. When Bob Graham was first elected, I think Lawton had indicated to me, I was just appointed I think, to the Board of Regents, and he was saying there was someone I ought to get to know and I remember Bob Graham came up to me once there before I had a chance to meet him and I think Lawton had said something to him about that he ought to look me up because I was interested in education and Bob pointed out that this was probably his number one interest as far as political life, education. And that kind of bounded them together. They had a good personal relationship as well and I think Rhea and Adele were good friends.

M: Can you remember any of Chiles' election campaigns, his reelection campaigns? He would have run three times. Can you remember the '76 campaign particularly or the one that came after '80, '84 I guess?

K: I remember raising money for Lawton was always somewhat of a chore because he wouldn't take very much. The first time he took everything he could get when he was running before he was elected, but he still didn't get very much. That's why he went on the walk, I think he had indicated earlier. He just didn't have enough money coming into finance a conventional campaign and so the walk I think, Rhea was probably the one who thought of it and he started and did it, but in the next election cycle he decided he was not going to be bound to anyone who gave him any money, so he limited his campaign contributions to \$10.00 and of course that was when I reminded him, I said, Lawton you have to get a lot of people to give you money, you have to kind of bundle it and all and he said, well that may be, it will be harder and no one that just gave \$10.00 can say that they have any claim on me. I said, but those people who get people to give you the \$10.00 will say that they've got a claim on you. They didn't really say that. It was tough, cause I wrote people all over the country and others did too to bring the money in. I can't remember the numbers, I don't have very good recall for figures like that, but he probably raised less money for an incumbent, first term incumbent, than anyone particularly in a large state, certainly that election cycle I think he was way under and yet he raised a significant amount, but it was hard, hard work and the next time he did agree that he would go to \$100.00 and it was still a little bit easier, but still tough.

M: What do you think he would have liked best about being a senator? If he was sitting here today, what would he say he enjoyed the most about being a United States senator?

K: I don't really know. I think he certainly would, depending on what level I guess he was thinking, he certainly, being part of the stream of history was probably was more meaningful to him. To know that you were one of those that had made history and had the opportunity to influence public policy in the country and be part of historic happenings. All of this had a great meaning to Lawton and the relationships, the friendships that he developed here, were probably the things that gave him more

pleasure, tied in with the ability to help and do things. Lawton was a very effective senator in getting people to agree on things. He was not a powerful speaker. He was not someone who got a great deal of publicity throughout the country, but he was thought of as being stable and sound and someone that you could trust. So, Lawton became, well into his first term, before he got too far into his first term; these relationships I mentioned, he was one that was able to on difficult matters, bring the differing groups together. He had a great ability there and he was always interested in the fiscal aspects of things and he was a finalist to be Budget Committee Chairman and he did achieve that. I may have mentioned earlier that that was his, in some ways, his biggest disappointment when he discovered that he was unable to do that which he hoped could be done and I think that may have contributed to disappointment, that he just couldn't get it moving and when he decided, he was completing his third term and he just up and decided that he was not going to run for reelection. He announced that he would and everybody expected him to and were getting things in order and it wouldn't have been difficult. He didn't really have any meaningful opposition, in my judgment. I think he was somewhat frustrated and he was going through some difficulties then. Lawton had some depression and it was well publicized in the paper that he took Prozac at one time.

M: Do you think that was brought on by the frustration of the Senate or was there a family background of depression?

K: I don't know if any family background.

M: They say that thing goes in families.

K: I think it may, I don't know that it was.

M: Were there any domestic things maybe at home that might have caused that?

K: Not really. Lawton and Rhea always had a close relationship. There would be times there when Rhea would get upset with him, but he was always very devoted to Rhea and so there was never an ongoing problem there. Lawton did have some times when he really felt deep depression and he sought one time, went to some, I can't remember the name of the place, it was out west, that he thought he could get some help with the depression and after he stayed there, I think 24 hours, he called and said, I'm leaving this place. He said there's nothing but crazy people here. And so he left and came back.

M: Did you get a sense that when he was in the Senate Budget Chair, was he trying to reform the process or just trying to change the way the system worked because the Budget was in many cases, as I understand it, everything was already set. There was very little movement either way. There was very little that could be changed in the Budget.

K: Well I guess that was the center of the frustration, but it was so big and so monolithic that you couldn't change it and things ought to be changed. You ought to be able to set priorities. He studied it, had been on the committee and had seniority and was something he cared about and he was unable to do what he thought was meaningful. He vented that frustration on a number of occasions in talking with me.

M: Now by his second term, he was pretty much, I would imagine understood, people of Florida could be for certain things and against certain things; what kind of reputation, I guess who would have been his greatest supporters as far as, what kind of policies did he favor and who would have been his opponent? Would you be able to --

K: Well, Florida was going through a transition during Lawton's career, where it went from through being a one party state, the Democratic party being bifurcated or, where you had the primary determining whether you would have a conservative relative lead or a liberal relative lead elected and usually in Florida, the conservative Democratic was the one that prevailed. And as it went through, you saw that many of the conservative Democrats started to become Republicans. This was precipitated in the '60s by the election of Claude Kirk and Claude was another subject altogether. Lawton was a lifelong Democrat. He never had any thoughts, as far as I know, of switching parties, but he had many positions that were, basically ones that the Republicans held and, but, I think it became a concern to him that toward the end of his career, I don't think it ever happened when he was Governor, but when he was Senator, but when he was Governor, I think the last election he was elected, he did not carry Polk County.

M: '94?

K: Yes and that bothered Lawton a lot, but Lawton was always moderate. He was never extreme. He was very much, in a sense of Reubin Askew and Bob Graham and well, LeRoy Collins is perhaps not the best one to compare, because Leroy was, by the standards then, became a radical in the fight for civil rights, but he wasn't alone in the matter and LeRoy as time has proven, was just ahead of everybody else then and I think most people when they thought about it, knew that had to come, but LeRoy was willing to get out and do things that probably cost him his political career, civil rights march, that sort of thing. He probably didn't help the movement per se and in looking back he would have been better not to have done those things because he perhaps and probably would have been elected to the Senate if it hadn't been for that. Lawton was always in the middle. I mean, he generally didn't seek that just to be in the middle, it was because those where represented as the way he thought things should be done and it was important with his beliefs.

M: So, when was the first time you heard he was considering not running again? Did he tell you himself or did you just kind of hear it through the grapevine?

K: The Senate?

M: Yes.

K: He called me one night; I can't remember where he was. I guess he was in Washington and told me that he had been thinking about it and had made his decision. He said he hadn't told anybody, I don't know if I was the first one he called, but he was calling people that evening. He called and said that he and Rhea had talked about it and he decided he was going to get out. I tried to persuade him initially and then he went through explaining to me why he just didn't want to do it anymore. It was clear that it was not an impromptu or quick reaction sort of decision. It was something that had been concerning him and I think that was partly a part of his depression and his frustrations and all. He just burned out. It was surprising to me, you might want to get to this later, he became energized again and wanted to get back into elective politics because I think

he very definitely, he was putting politics aside and he certainly wanted to do a lot of things. He became involved in the Center for Public Policy whatever and he was involved in some business interests. Lawton just was someone that didn't just want to hibernate. He wanted to do things, but at the time he didn't have an interest in elective office anymore.

M: So, he went back to Holmes Beach?

K: No not really. After this, they had a place in Tallahassee. They always had a place in Holmes Beach. They had this place in Tallahassee. It was delightful. I remember Rhea, she was a great one all her life to buy houses and remodel and redesign them and when she got it fixed just like she wanted it, she almost got bored and wanted to go get another one and do that too. She had a history of doing it and did it quite well. But they had a delightful place in downtown Tallahassee. It was, I can't remember, it was somewhere between, you go north before you get to the hospital there --

M: Like 5th or 6th Street, one of those streets?

K: It may have been, I could look it up, but I always felt like I could get there. Every time I tried to find it I would have difficulty and I would have to call and I would miss it by a block or two. That was their primary residence.

M: So, they moved there. Was there any notion --

K: I don't think, I think his son Bud was with him there then. I talked to Lawton a good bit about coming and being a part of our law firm and he seriously considered it and I thought he was going to do it one time and then he decided that he wanted to get back into the active practice of law, but we thought at the time, we had a Tallahassee, so we thought that would be natural. He wanted to live in Tallahassee. At that time he never thought of going to Holmes Beach other than that was the place they would go --

M: Did they have a house in Tallahassee before he left the Senate?

K: I think that it was a year that they didn't get the house there until he made his decision. I can't be certain of that. I don't recall. It was about the time, cause it would have been I guess he originally, that would have been about '78 wouldn't it?

M: He was elected in '70 and then '76 ran again --

K: 18 years, three terms. '88. It was in '88 and then he ran for Governor in 1990? Okay, for about a two-year period, I think it was that he did not have the house before. I can't be certain of that. We can check that, but I don't remember. I don't remember him having a house there while he was still in the Senate.

M: How did you first learn or how did you first learn that he was going to run for Governor?

K: He again called me and told me, but there were a lot of rumors about it and a lot of announcements like, Buddy McKay clearly was responsible for Lawton deciding to do that and Lawton was a little frustrated with the Republican, the continuation of Republican governorship in Florida and I remember Bill Nelson was the leading

candidate in the Democratic primary, I can't remember who the others were and *Florida Trend* had written an article calling him an empty suit. No, no, Bill Nelson. I think that was on the cover.

M: That's right. That's what Walter Manley called him too. I remember Walter and I talking about Bill Nelson.

K: Bill and Lawton, I think a number of prominent Democrats in the state were concerned and they felt that Bill Nelson was not going to be able to beat Bob Martinez and Buddy, and I am sure others, thought of Lawton, but Buddy had pretty well indicated he was out of politics, but Buddy kept going back to him. Buddy and Lawton had been friends, they had been in the legislature together and Buddy had been ambitious. He ran of course for Lawton's Senate seat.

M: That's right.

K: It was pretty much of an upset to me when Connie Mack beat him. Of course the interesting thing there is that Connie Mack announced that he was going to run and then of course Lawton dropped out and Reubin Askew got in and then Reubin dropped out and so Connie was there and Buddy came along and Buddy didn't have the state wide reputation and stature of Lawton of course. Of course nobody would have beaten Lawton and Reubin probably would not have been beaten. And of course it was very, very close. They had a recount and our firm represented Connie in the recount. There was always sort of a controversy in the firm because -- any added Democrats thought maybe not, but we always take position there. We're not a political firm, we're hired guns and we were hired to do that and we did a good job. After that he still had a lot of interest in elective politics and Buddy always wanted to be either Governor or a senator and Buddy would have made a very good governor and a good senator. Buddy was one of the better congressmen that I ever dealt with. He was a wonderful congressman. Buddy is a good friend, but many political things I don't necessarily agree on, but I like him. Buddy, I give full credit for persuading Lawton that one Bob Martinez would be reelected if someone i.e. Lawton didn't get in the race because Bill Nelson would not do it and that he would enjoy being governor and Buddy, I think persuaded, at least got Lawton to analyze and think about the difference between being governor and being senator and I think, though I am not sure of this, but I think Bob Graham, I had already talked to him, but I think Bob Graham pointed out to Lawton that it was very satisfying being Governor. He could get things accomplished, he could do things and Lawton made the determination, apparently and like most things, Lawton did it himself. Lawton would talk to a lot of people, but as I have observed before and people who knew Lawton well would always tell you I think, Lawton never really told you ahead of time what he was going to do. He listened and he would talk about it and he usually would not give you any indication of what it was going to be and then when he decided it would do it. There were no rumors about him dropping out of the senate race that I knew of, but there were rumors at the paper before I think he had made his mind up because there was kind of a campaign going on to get him to do this and he gave it, as I recall, Buddy was responsible and I think that Lawton probably told Buddy that, if I do this, you got to be Lieutenant Governor and he was and Buddy was a very effective Lieutenant Governor and made Lawton's period of being Governor, a lot easier in ways and a lot more pleasant for him because Buddy was very good at handling details and complex matters. He would go through, and he had a lot of patience and a lot of talent.

M: It would have been quite a thing, then, for him, I would imagine, for him to pull together, to pull together a campaign staff, and did he use any of the people that he had had for the senate? Do you remember if Charlie Canady was brought back into that staff to campaign for the governor's race? You remember some of the prominent people in that?

B: Well, in the early stages, I think Charlie was. He, uh..

M: He did stay with him all throughout the senate, is that correct?

B: Oh, yeah, yeah, he was..

M: So all 18 years he was..

B: All 18 years..

M: Okay.

B: I think Char..Charlie was there.

M: Okay.

B: And then in the beginning stages of the, of the gubernatorial campaign, Charlie was involved, but I think Charlie was retained, well, toward, really I guess toward the last several years he was in the senate, I think the relationship changed a little bit and though this is, uh, probably oughta', sorta' be off the record, but Charlie and Rhea didn't get along real well. And so, and there was a period there, but Charlie and Lawton always remained close, and good friends, and Charlie was always very loyal to him, to Lawton, and it was just kind of a personality thing. These things happen, you know.

M: So, was that a, was that maybe something that might have happened later on? Or was it always kind of..

B: No, no, I think..

M: ..kind of a coolness there?

B: I think it just, it just wore on. I don't, Rhea was always very, I mean, you know, she, she has a, she was a political animal, and Rhea really was so concerned about Lawton's career and doing what was best for Lawton and that, and I think there'd be sometime kind of policy disagreements..

M: Okay.

B: ..and that maybe Charlie was not giving him the sort of advice that maybe Rhea would have given him. I sense this. I don't really know the specifics, but I just, since I know Rhea well enough and Rhea, and Rhea was so, I mean, you know, some wives wouldn't, political wives, all of 'em are involved in the political scene, but, uh, they don't have the same sort of intensity, I mean anyone that I know well enough, like Adele Graham. Adele is a wonderful political wife. She meets people. She does all these things. But Adele doesn't have the same approach, the same sort of feeling about that

which is going on in the public arena that Rhea does, and Rhea is a...but they, they're different people. They both, but, I don't know how to describe it, but I sense that and this is, as I say, sometime, but Charlie was a very important part of Lawton's political success and career. And when I, and when, in the gubernatorial campaign, he was, he was involved but he wasn't really, he didn't have the dominant role that he had had previously, the, I'm trying to think of some of the ones who really, I need to go back and review some of the people that were heavily involved in the gubernatorial campaign. That was, that was a big, you know, many thought that was a big upset, when Lawton came back and defeated an incumbent governor. Though as I recall, the margin was not that close. I don't have the books and I don't remember those things, but it was, uh..

M: Did he attempt to, um, to pull together any of his Polk County base, or did he have much of a base in Polk County, rather than..

B: Oh yeah..

M: ..even though he didn't live here anymore?

B: Oh yeah. He always kept a contact here, like for instance, uh, Dean Saunders, who was, had been on his staff in his last year in the senate, as I remember, and then Dean became, was active in the campaign. Dean, about that time, became, well was elected to the legislature. It seems like Dean worked for Lawton for, while he was governor for maybe the first term and it was about the time that, then Dean ran for the legislature. Dean was one of his staff people up there, but Dean was one of the carry-overs from the senate, as I recall, to the gubernatorial office. And uh..

M: Okay. Um, were you involved in the campaign, in the, in the governor's campaign...

B: Oh I was..

M: ..to the same degree that you were before?

B: I was involved, well, you know, I've always been involved to some extent in Lawton's campaign. I've never been one that became, that, I was always, you know, had a full-time occupation, was practicing law and doing a lot of other responsibilities, but I've always had time to do whatever I could do to help, raise money, make calls, do things, talk with him, that sort of thing, but I never was, you know 9-to-5 in the headquarters, that, that, but you know, in doing these things, they'd always have meetings, they'd have campaign get-togethers and stuff, and I would always participate in those. We'd have meetings. They had a, I think it was a, the big, um, I want to say Tommy Thomas had had a big, in Tallahassee, auto dealership, it was his showroom and garage and everything, his distributorship, and they, and it had been vacated and it was a big, big place, and they, that was his campaign headquarters for the first gubernatorial campaign, state headquarters there.

M: Do you remember going campaigning, or on any of the trips with him when he went around campaigning? Do you remember going to any of the campaigning events?

B: Well, I did some of that during his early senate campaigns, but in the gubernatorial campaigns, I would, I would attend the planning meetings and things of that sort, you know, but I didn't go to the, I don't recall making any, you know, campaign appearances,

speeches, that sort of thing. I did some of that in the early senate time, but not during the, uh..

M: Do you remember any, any of the issues that came up other than just personalities during the campaign? Do you remember any of the issues?

B: Uh, in the first campaign against Martinez?

M: Umhmm.

B: Um, well, of course, there was the issue, it was sort of a ("peripheral?") in the sense that it wasn't a burning issue but the services tax that had been, and the lack of a good tax base from Florida was an issue, and one of the things that perhaps, in fact, I think Bob Martinez maybe thought had something to do with his failure to be re-elected, was the services tax. He got the worst of both ends on it. Bob Martinez was courageous enough to go ahead and do it, and then he got persuaded, and I thought he got bad advice, I still think Mac Stipanovich talked him out of it, that he just, you know, supported the repeat of it, when it would have been, he would have been re-elected probably if he had just said, "Okay, well maybe we shouldn't have the media included in it". And once he'd done that, and he was told this, and he agreed, that the media would get off his back, and that was what was terrifying all the members of his party and everybody had been jumping on him because they kept saying that, you know, they were going to run the picture of everybody that was elected that supported him on, that voted for the tax, you know, on the TV. screen and on the front page of the newspaper and all that. But, but this, the offshoot of that, you know, you don't, there was a lot to be critical of when somebody had the tax base and then they came away from it and changed their minds and it was a flip-flop thing that Bob Martinez was accused of. And that, that was, in a sense, a campaign issue, but it was really, that Lawton was, you know, a little bit of the campaign, the typical Democratic campaign that, you know, that Bob Martinez was basically too friendly with industry and that Lawton was more the man of the people, that sort of thing came out, and Lawton was, uh..but I don't remember the burning issues other than the Democrat/Republican thing.

M: Umhmm. Umhmm. Okay. Um. Can you remember anything that came up in that first term that, that um, that is specifically memorable, or any kind of interaction you would've had with the administration? Did he ask for advice on anything in that first term that you might have discussed with him?

B: Well, there was always, I, was uh, general counsel for the Florida Phosphate Council and Trade Association representing industry, and we had constant issues before the legislature, and you always wanted the governor to be friendly to, uh, to us, of course at that time we really basically, uh, th Republicans hadn't totally taken over then, and uh, and I would go up, and I spent, you know, I was in Tallahassee a good bit with the legislature mostly, but I would usually, well not usually but oft times I would stay out at the mansion and I remember a couple of times when we had, uh, this was maybe in the second term, I guess, but they had a big, a big battle of Oramulsion which was..

M: That's right.

B: ..and uh, and that, and, uh, we were representing CSX Railroad and they were, they were a big, big item because of the amount of, if they went to Oramulsion, they'd bring it

in by, by barge, not barge but, uh, with tanker and then barge it in and, uh, it would replace, to some great degree, they felt, of coal shipments. And, of course, the biggest item, freight item for the railroads is coal coming into the power plants and Oramulsion was, and it was a big thing. And we, uh, and it had gotten into all kinds of different aspects of it, as to how bad it was and what it would do and the environmental hazards, and then offloading it and just, like, uh, having oil wells bill, but it was, but whether it was worse than oil or better. There were a lot of technical issues involved. And the governor's office became heavily involved in it and I did spend a lot of time talking to Lawton to be certain that he, uh, I never really, Lawton was too close a friend to try to lobby on things, per se, but he was always very helpful to me in being sure the staff people that he was relying on for the technical aspects of it would be sufficiently courteous and I would have good access. And I did have, I mean, that was, that was what, all he ever really wanted. But I, but those were things that were not good government, that was a matter that I was, you know, uh, representing a client in a governmental process and Lawton was very helpful to me. And he would always be helpful in matters like that. But one of the things in the relationship that I had with him, he just knew without me saying or without it being stated, that I would never ask him to do anything that even had any kind of aspect of impropriety to it. I wouldn't have even approached it, I just wouldn't, I mean, I wouldn't, he was, I just wouldn't do that, ever, particularly to a close friend and he was one of my closest. But it was, but the issues, uh..

M: Now, now your clients were in favor of using Oramulsion or they were against it?

B: No, no. I represented the railroad. The railroad didn't want it.

M: Okay. The railroad didn't want it.

B: Because they wouldn't, they wanted to carry coal. Oramulsion didn't come by rail cars..

M: I see.

B: ..from the coal fields. It came from Venezuela..

M: So that would've cut a lot of their traffic..

B: ..it came from Venezuela by ship and it would come into Tampa harbor and then they would have to, they would put it on either rail cars for the short distance to the various power plants, but they would bring it in to Tampa or to Miami, wherever, to Jacksonville, the large power plants are.

M: ..so that would've cut their traffic?

B: That would give..

M: Yeah. Substantially.

B: Yeah.

M: Okay. Um. So, I, obviously, when I got into this project full dose, I'll be looking internally into his, all of the things that he was doing in the senate as well as the governor, but I'm just asking you some of your memories now, of course. Um. As, as the first term began to come to an end and Florida became more and more republican, and the Bush power, from the national level and of course the, you know, the pressure on the State of Florida as well, and Jeb Bush's advent, I guess, I guess people, what was the feeling among Lawton's supporters about, about the challenge from Jeb Bush in 1994?

B: Well, they were, it was..

M: Worried?

B: Well, yeah. Yeah. I mean, Jeb was very attractive and he really had been working really, ever since Martinez was beaten, when he, I guess when he was Secretary of Commerce or something like that under Martinez, and though Jeb went down to Miami and worked with oh, it was Cuban I know, a really fine man, uh, in business, but he, but he really was full-time preparing himself to run for governor, and he had all the access to..

M: Even in the late eighties..

B: ..yeah, yeah.

M: As late as that.

B: Yeah. He, this was my sense of it, and he would come to speaking appearances in Lakeland. I can recall, this was before he was a candidate, one of the Tiger barbecues they have, and Jeb was out there at the very beginning shaking hands with everybody, and he was, he was good. I mean, I knew him 'cause I, when he was in Tallahassee as Secretary of Commerce in the Martinez administration, and uh, I remember him waving and speaking and all, I guess, but he was, uh, he was actively running the pre-campaign in my judgment and so, it was no surprise that he was as formidable a candidate as he was, but what was surprising to me is that he was as affective as he was then, but it was a fresh face and he, uh, you know, and Lawton was getting older and Lawton had had some, you know, he'd had bypass surgery back when he was still in the Senate when he had the bypass surgery.

M: Umhmm. I should have asked you about that, I guess.

B: Yeah, and he uh..

M: Do you remember when that was?

B: Yeah, it was, uh, I think uh, he had it done here in Lakeland, at Lakeland General. I couldn't understand why he didn't have it done probably in Washington, but he checked and uh, he said he'd just like to have it here. The doctor, Dr. Kevin Browne, it seems, that he got there, and he was a fine, fine cardiac surgeon, and but I was surprised 'cause I remember going out to see Lawton the day after the surgery and I didn't know whether I'd uh, he could have company, I just hadn't been close to anybody that'd had

open heart surgery before, and I went up to the room and he was sitting in a chair. This was, this was, you know, less than 24 hours after surgery.

M: Gosh. Wow.

B: And we chatted and all and then he, uh, and he was down within a few weeks after that, down hunting. But he, uh, he made a fine recovery, but, but, he had uh, had, genetic, I guess, his sister had cardiovascular problems, and Lawton, though he took good care of himself. But you know, that uh, he was..

M: Did he ever smoke?

B: To my knowledge, he never did. He never smoked when I was around him. He could smoke a cigar sometime, but he, he never was a smoker. And uh, but he just, I thought, he just, and he never really had, that I know of, he never had a problem. He never had pain at all after his surgery, but he was careful and got checked and everything when he, uh, but he..

M: Now, in the 1994 election, I guess we could get back to that a little bit. Very close. Extremely close.

B: Yeah, yeah, it was, uh, it was really, uh, it was surprising, and it would, you know, in those Miami appearances, uh, that when you know, he could..

M: Well that debate in Orlando, right?

B: I thought that debate was in Miami.

M: No that was in Orlando.

B: It was in Orlando?

M: Yeah. In Orlando.

B: When he was, with..

M: Right, right. I forgot to bring it. I was in, uh, did I tell you that I was interviewed on NPR after that event? The cracker remark [about the "He Coon walks..."], and I did about, I guess about 15 minutes trying to translate what he was talking about. I should have brought that and played it for you sometime.

B: Yeah. I can still remember it though, watching. I would..

M: Laughter (cannot hear)

B: ..the, the startled look on Jeb's face.

M: Yes. Yes.

B: But, and then of course there was the accusation..

M: And that was only about a year, uh, a week before the election.

B: ..yes, before the election.

M: Very close.

B: And then the, they had, uh, telephone banks down in Fort Lauderdale and some, and there was very questionable about, and Lawton would, did not know that they were doing this, making the calls. I forget, can't remember exactly what they were saying about Jeb at the time, but it was..

M: Trying to scare 'em about Social Security or something.

B: I guess that, but it would, it was clearly, it was beyond the pale and then, as soon as he knew about it, it was stopped. But it was, you know, it was an argument that, uh, that could well have been the, because it was such a close election, but that was done on the, and I was close enough to Lawton and the campaign and all to know that he, he was, he was very disturbed when he found out they had done that, and he stopped it as soon as he discovered it, but probably is the..

M: How, was his health, in your opinion, was his health in 1994 okay?

B: Yeah. I think it was okay..

M: Because I remember even at that time..

B: ..it was an issue, they brought it up..

M: ..there were issues about it.

B: ..and they brought up the Prozac..

M: The Prozac, yeah.

B: ..they brought up that, and that really wasn't an issue then. And he had, he divulged all his, I think, medical records pretty exclusively, and they had, and it became his, and it so often seems to happen that when somebody is forthcoming and lays it all out, that basically it becomes kind of a non-issue. And so I don't think the health factor was a big issue, though it was certainly one that was talked about a bit.

M: Umhmm. Umhmm. Um, in the second term, I'm trying to remember the chronology here. Um, was the tobacco, were the tobacco suits pending at that time in 1994, or did that come after the, after the election?

B: I think, my recollection is they came after, the tobacco suits, I don't think, were part of the campaign discussion, but there may have been some of that ongoing. Lawton had sort of planned that, he hated smoking so and he just felt he, that directly is what the tobacco industry was doing in targeting children, younger generation, to smoke and that made..

M: Is..with that being a, with that initiative have been unveiled then after the re-election in a big way, maybe?

B: It was clearly unveiled in a big way, but I don't think, but I don't think it was part of the campaign, if what you're asking..

M: Okay. Right, right. Now was Jack Levine involved in that second term, or was he involved in the first term? When did Jack Levine become an advisor to Lawton Chiles as far as the children's agenda go in your memory?

B: Well Jack was, I think he became involved in the first term. Jack was always, had been the children's advocate, I mean, I don't know the, I, I, but Lawton and Jack became, he relied on him more and more because Jack Levine is just an outstanding person. You can't know Jack and not like him, and nobody does. So I don't distinguish it between one term and the other. I think it was just that, as Lawton's term in office became, he was there longer, Jack was more prominent.

M: Umhmm. Okay. Would you say that Jack would be, would be one that kind of got Lawton thinking about those issues? Or was Lawton already thinking about those issues?

B: Well, I think he was thinking about issues. I think Jack is one that probably, a lot of the, the program, to take the sales of the tobacco monies and develop the campaigns and involving the children and all of that, I think a lot of that input came from Jack. He was very, and I also, came from American Cancer and others that were involved, but Jack was one that he was, that Lawton listened to a lot about that.

M: Umhmm. Now, uh, as his term is coming to an end, um, did you have any sense that he was having health problems..

B: Nope.

M: ..before the heart attack?

B: No. In fact, the weekend, he died on a Saturday, I think it was probably the first Saturday in December, I'd guess..

M: Very cold weather, I remember.

B: ..it was, it was after Thanksgiving. It was during hunting season. And I had a group down at my ranch and Wilbur Boyd was there and others, Whit Palmer, and uh, uh, uh, I forget the list, but anyway, there were others, Lawton was to have been with us. He was invited and had accepted, but knowing the governors, you always have to, don't know if something intervenes, and he had called and said that, early in the week, that he just couldn't get away, that he had some things scheduled and had a big reception, I think, for the, maybe Florida Highway Patrol or something. It was on a, people that had, you know, been an important part of his term, on a Saturday afternoon, and he said he just couldn't make it. And we all called him and talked with him on Friday night from the ranch there, and we chatted with him and were just chastising him for not having, at least he could have come down, and I said, "After all, Lawton, you could've been flown down and you could've gotten back for the afternoon and you'd have been with us

tonight. We'd be sitting around cooking mullet around the campfire and all". And we fussed at him a little bit and chatted, and he was talking about, well, you know, getting down the next time we can get together, but we, we, because he'd planned on being there. And then we went out hunting the next morning and when we came in from hunting, it was, well I say we went out in the morning, and then we, but it was after, and then we usually would go out in the morning and then come back at noon, and then we went out in the afternoon. And then we came back that afternoon in the evening, uh, Wilbur's son-in-law and daughter were out there, the one, it was, I guess, he had three girls, Brenda, and she's married to an ex-major league baseball player. I'll think of the name for you in a minute, but, and they were there to tell us that Lawton had died. They had discovered him near the middle of the afternoon I guess, you know, he went in to exercise in the morning and they didn't, he didn't like to be bothered, and it was one of those things that has never been satisfactorily explained to me, that here, the folks that were worrying about it, Rhea was, had gone somewhere, I think she was in Tallahassee, but she had other things to do, and I think she kept asking and maybe they finally went and they looked in and saw him on the floor, and he had apparently died when, on the exercise bike or one of the, in his little gym he had there, and uh, he had been dead for 4-5 hours, I think, when they found him. And they came and, but I remember that so vividly, they said that Lawton, he's gone, but we had no inkling of it. You know, it may have been that his last physical showed something. I don't know. I never heard there was anything. But I don't think anything could've been done, apparently, you know, it was one of those instant attacks.

M: Can you, while we're on the subject, can you just kind of go ahead and reflect a little bit about what it was like, the funeral, and some of the things that you remember about the funeral? Did you have a chance to go to the funeral?

B: Oh yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

M: And what was it..

B: It was, it was the only, maybe really, you'd call it a State occasion, a State funeral. It was all of the panoply and the pomp that you have in something of that sort. And it was, it was long but it was wonderfully organized. I think folks in the campaign staff, they did marvelously with it, as big as it was, and they, they, people, you know, we, uh, drove up and my, a couple of my children, we went and I think we drove up that morning and when I started to fly out the night before and decided against it and it was just simpler to drive, and so, I know one of my, I've got four children, and I said, my younger daughter and my younger son, I think, we all, we went together, I believe that's..

M: Right.

B: ..and it was, it was, it was, you know, beautifully done in the sense that you had speakers from all over, all over the country, some did wonderfully well and some, but all of them were close to Lawton or had some part of Lawton's life. I don't believe, I don't keep things very well but I may have the program somewhere. I doubt if I can find it. It would be, I'm sure there are those available and you ought..

M: Oh, sure. Sure.

B: ..you ought to look at that and you can see the schedule of those that were there, but it was a, and then they had, the graveside services were very were very well done. And it was, uh, but it was, you know, as I say the only State funeral I've ever been to..

M: And he was buried in Tallahassee?

B: He was buried in Tallahassee.

M: At the City cemetery?

B: It was, you know, it was..

M: Is it, maybe it was the cemetery between the mansion and uh..

B: No, no. It was a good bit out, the cemetery, but, but what they did, I'm pretty sure this is, Lawton has a piece of some land there where, remember the stories about his cook shack and everything?

M: The big cook shack, yeah, all the cooks..

B: Chemonie was part of that, was the name of the plantation..

M: Chemonie? Yeah.

B: ..was there, and Jim Smith, I think bought into it, and there was, some other couple of plantations, it was right in the heart of it, maybe 160 acres or something like that, it was a real big piece of property, but I think they moved the body and he's buried out there now.

M: Okay.

B: But this, this was one of the older cemeteries. There are three or four. This was out north of Tallahassee, and I cannot think of the name of it.

M: Okay.

B: But it was a big cemetery. An old one.

M: Well, we've gone about an hour and a half today. I'm just trying to think if we really need to do a whole lot more.

B: Well, I'll leave that totally to your judgement. I'll uh..

M: Yeah. I think, um, can we kind of wrap things up and allow you to say, for the moment anyway, unless we, you know, all of a sudden have some compelling reason to come back, can we, can I say, allow you to express anything on tape that you'd like to say about Lawton Chiles? His legacy? Any thoughts that you might have that you'd like to record? It's kind of a hard thing to do, I know.

B: Well, it's probably something I need to think about, but Lawton was, sometimes tough, but..

M: Anything we haven't covered?

B: I'm trying to think. You know, there's so much we haven't covered, but yet, uh, to make it meaningful, those that we've, the omissions, I need to go back and try to review. Lawton was one of my very closest friends. We spent a major part of my adult life being good friends, and he was, uh, a remarkable person. He was unassuming. He loved public life. He had the facility to connect with people and he had a remarkable ability in recalling what people did. He had a marvelous sense of humor. He would, and Lawton was, he was just, uh, such an unusual person, and had some of the qualities that you'd like for all people to have, but he wasn't the, the person that was overwhelming in any way, but he was just a good, great person, and he had this ambition that he wanted to serve, and he did and he did it wonderfully well.

M: Great.