

Governor McNair Oral History Project
South Carolina Department of Archives and History

Interview

with

Robert E. McNair

Interviewer:

Cole Blease Graham

Date:

November 9, 1982

CBG: This is Tape 11, Side 1, an interview with Governor Robert E. McNair as a part of the McNair Oral History Project of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History. Today's date is November 9, 1982. Governor, what were press relations like in this period before your election to the full term? Did you use press conferences?

REM: Well, I suppose you start off [with the press] like you do politically. You start off with sort of a honeymoon arrangement where you have a good relationship to begin with, and then you try to maintain that. It gets more difficult as time goes. In that interim period, we were really in a delicate situation because we were trying to, as we've said earlier, finish Mr. [Donald] Russell's term, sort of carry on what he had started, and at the same time deal with the very delicate problems that had begun to arise. The voting rights legislation came along, and we had the beginnings of the real integration in the public schools. We'd been talking about it up until then, and we had done some spot-type integration, but we were getting into freedom of choice, and that was the beginning of that period. We had all the normal problems, you know, that Alabama, Mississippi, and others had brewing around the state, and we were trying to keep the support of the public while at the same time trying to move into some of these things and deal with them, of course, with the knowledge of what had happened in Alabama and Mississippi, where they'd just had a total resistance. So it was a very difficult thing to condition the public, and the media, we felt, was the best tool we had to do it.

Recall at that time, too, we had the dairy crisis in the state where we were trying to save the dairy industry. We were going through the beginnings of the Dairy Commission reorganization, restructuring, and had to fix the price of milk to stop the dairy wars. My friend, Frank Outlaw, with Bi-Lo, you recall, had started the dairy war in this state by using milk as a loss leader and dairy products as a loss leader. The press and all were opposed, as all of us were philosophically, to those kinds of things, but what I really did was try to use the quality people around me, such as [J. Robert] Bob Hickman, for instance, who could maintain good day-to-day communications with the working press. What I felt was that we had to establish some credibility and some openness with the editors and the publishers of the papers because we had to have policymakers help. So I did something that was a little new in getting the editors and publishers of the daily papers in for full briefing sessions, in to lunch, or whenever we had some major crisis that I felt we had to deal with and I couldn't deal with it through the working press because there was no way I could put the kind of restrictions on them . . .

CBG: Yes.

REM: . . . that you could on the editors and publishers of the paper.

So we would get them in and just lay it out on the table and give them the benefit of everything and seek their, you know, really their counsel as well as their help. And I found that to be very valuable. We all used to laugh about it and say politically an editorial wasn't worth a doggone. The headline writer of the news story is what counted because that's what the public read, but when it came to policy and major issues and crisis, that editorial was very important because it reached the decision-making people in the state.

We used that, I thought, quite well. I was tremendously impressed with their attitude. I was impressed with what was apparently their willingness to do what I was doing, to take their editorial hat off and share with you, you know, the problems you were confronted with and give you the benefit of their thinking on it and then utilize all of that as simply background material for editorials. Sometimes they were not favorable, but at the same time, when they weren't favorable, they were generally written with a background that they at least were fair.

CBG: Yes. Did you get all of the editors together at one time, or did you have different groups?

REM: We tried to get them all together periodically to talk about these things and to talk generally about where South Carolina ought to be going and to get them in tune with what we were trying to accomplish. Quite often I limited it to the major dailies, Greenville, Columbia, Charleston, Greenwood, Florence, Anderson, Spartanburg. I think they were the major dailies. We would have those fellows in because there we could have a little more dialogue and give-and-take. You had some very progressive-thinking people who were a big influence in their own areas, like Ed Chafin and those up in Greenwood with that press. The Rock Hill group. Jim Rogers, of course, emerged over in Florence as one of my close friends and advisers because he was such a strong, deep-thinking, forward-looking fellow who would get right involved with you, not just in writing an editorial. He'd get right involved in the issue with you, in trying to help you to accomplish something if he felt that it was in line with his thinking.

CBG: Did different policy positions emerge among the editors? In other words, was there debate between them?

REM: There would be some discussion, you know, naturally among them when you'd get into certain areas. The liquor question naturally was one that was very divisive. But as far as their own personal thinking, generally they would be together. They would differ, maybe, depending on the different regions that they came from. We had the liquor question, for instance, in Charleston with no doubt about how Tom Waring and folks from down there felt about it. [Hubert] Hendricks from up in Spartanburg and those would give you some good advice because you know they were aware of the difference in the attitude up there and could

be very helpful. I found them to be very helpful. They were a group that contributed a great deal to how we did some things more than what we did, but how we did it, how we approached it, and how we presented it. And of course, we did deal, as we said, with the working press, too, but with them it was more dealing with the specific issues or specific legislation and trying to give them background so they would know and, I felt, could write better stories and certainly avoid going off like they do today, half-cocked and totally wrong as far as even the facts are concerned.

CBG: Do editors and publishers have a sense of, maybe, disjunction from the working press, that sometimes their own employees, perhaps, don't express their views? Did that come up at all?

REM: Very definitely. They have the same problems that we had in government and that everybody has. I think it was a lack of communications or that they approach things differently. One of the things I had was a very delicate thing with the editors and publishers. I recognized that. They don't want to be used. So it was a clear understanding that this is solely for them to get all this background information. It was always, "I want your help, but if I can't get it, I still want you to know what we're trying to do, and I hope you won't go out and try to submarine it. If you will just try to avoid that." I'd give them some delicate insights and some of the real confidential information as illustrations of why we couldn't always just speak freely to the working press every time they wanted a story, every time they wanted to know what has happened. I'd have to tell them why it was so delicate and sensitive that we couldn't talk about it right now.

CBG: Is there something that comes to mind that you could give as an example of that, that would not be sensitive today?

REM: I suppose some of the Orangeburg things, as we get into it, may have been illustrations of the delicateness of some events, my meetings and openness and frank discussions with Dr. [Benner C.] Turner and what was going to happen, you know, and also of the way of handling the three suspended students, and the maneuvering and the fact that we had to get in a posture where they got back in school the right way so that it defused that situation down there . . .

CBG: Yes.

REM: . . . and that was by getting it back to the NAACP, back in their hands, where they were in control, where they could go to court, where they could go before Judge Hemphill and get an order readmitting them, and we just bow and we don't appeal it, nothing ever happens, and things get back to normal down there.

CBG: That's the kind of thing you really can't talk about until it comes about, and . . .

REM: No.

CBG: . . . the working press can get the misperception that you're being secretive or evasive . . .

REM: That's right.

CBG: . . . or recalcitrant.

REM: Reverend [I. DeQuincey] Newman and those on television the night before just blasted me with everything you could think of; and the working press wanted me to respond to that. I couldn't respond to it because I knew what they were doing. It was part of a strategy. We'd had meetings; we'd discussed things like that because at that time it was a face-saving thing a lot of times. It was always trying to get them where they were in control of the situation, where they'd get it away from some of the more radical groups that had emerged and had gotten control. Quite often we would talk about the specifics of something like that, so they [the editors] could understand what we were trying to accomplish.

CBG: Another area, too, might be something like an economic development plan that, if talked about, could heighten land speculation perhaps.

REM: Well, some of the major industrial developments we would discuss with them, some of the things we were doing and having to do, and they understood then why it was so sensitive. Just now I have been contrasting the Philip Morris publicity with Richland County as opposed to [Carolina] Eastman coming over there where it was so secretive and so well handled, and the press understood. They'd push you, "please tell us when we can write something," and we'd hold them and said, "If you do anything now, it could blow this whole thing," and they would work with you. Now it's everybody trying to make a story out of it, trying to make a controversy out of it even at the sake of knowing that that's going to cause you to possibly lose industry or to create such a turmoil over something very critical that it blows up in your face. It was delicate then, and I have to go back and say that with rare exceptions--and there were rare exceptions as you would expect--the media was very responsible in this state. I think when I left I gave them an awful lot of credit for helping us create a climate to get us through that period of the sixties, the editors and publishers particularly.

CBG: Which is a delicate balance between, I guess, the duty of the fourth estate to criticize the government in a positive way . . .

REM: Yes.

CBG: . . . and yet at the same time be supportive.

REM: It was. I think Wayne Seal said it quite well, maybe a little more bluntly that I wanted him to say it, when he was interviewed as he left. He said it really never was that comfortable relationship with the press because I probably didn't like that part of it as much as I should have. They always felt that I wasn't fair to myself or to the administration, naturally being a part of it, that I didn't take advantage of taking credit or letting people know as much. It was always, "I'd rather them find out later." I'd rather let the thing work and let them find out.

CBG: During this period, was there any sense of animosity, say, between your office and the working press?

REM: No. I thought it was an extremely good relationship. I thought it was one of respect.

CBG: Yes.

REM: Which is what you want, and they weren't always satisfied. I had Hugh Gibson, who wouldn't talk to the news secretary. It just was a thing with him. He just wasn't going to have any communication. He'd talk with Katherine Wolfe. He wanted access to me, and, therefore, he felt comfortable talking to Katherine.

CBG: A more direct source.

REM: He just wouldn't talk to Wayne Seal and those. Others had different approaches and different ways.

CBG: Was it your administration that devised the press room downstairs as the focal point for news releases?

REM: Yes. We ran into that as soon as we got there. Jim Covington really was the engineer on the press room. The conference room really was the press room, with everything right there where they'd have access to us and have a place to be and all.

CBG: So that press releases had a point to be distributed . . .

REM: Had a point to be distributed. That was the product of Bob Hickman and Tootsie Brantley working with both Covington and with some of the senior news people, and then the conference room really was a press conference room. As you know, it was designed and everything--the lighting system. First time anything like that had ever happened where we really fixed it up for the TV and radio people so we could plug in. At one point we had fairly good radio coverage because they could take it directly from the conference room.

CBG: What about the broadcast media?

REM: That was different. They again were awfully good and supportive. That's where people like Walter Brown in Spartanburg and John Rivers in Charleston and Dick Shafto and people like that at their level were often brought in, along with the publishers and editors, to sit in and hear some of this. Then we used the news directors quite often in briefing sessions. We changed from press secretary to news secretary at their suggestion because we wanted really to identify with all of the needs. The broadcast people were very important to us because that covered the radio, you know, all of the local radio stations around the state. We tried to devise a system to get them in and not exclude them. They were very sensitive, radio. That's when radio and television began to have their differences because television became such an important part that we were inclined to overlook the radio people. They resented that.

CBG: Bob Hickman was probably especially valuable in this area.

REM: Extremely valuable, not just what he was worth to me in being such a bright mind and a good fellow to help you express things in a brief statement, but he was sensitive to all of these things, probably more so than had been in the past.

CBG: Just as for newsprint there's the standard one or two page release, done almost routinely, did you have, say, a weekly conference for television or a weekly recording for radios?

REM: We did some things like that, yes. I really have forgotten all of that, forgotten the details of some of it, but we did. We had a sort of a weekly news thing that went out for radio.

CBG: Yes.

REM: It went out and was available to all the radio stations. All they had to do was call in and pick it up. You know, they could call in and get it. We had it available for them to use, plus we started with a weekly type of news thing for all the weekly papers. They, again, to me were important, and I had felt they'd always been neglected as I had gone around the state. They would tell you, "We really don't have the correspondent down there, and we feel there ought to be some way we can get better access to the Governor's Office to know what's going on." We started that. Bob and Tootsie sort of sent out a weekly newsletter or something of that fashion. We wanted to do it better, but we just didn't get geared up staff-wise. It never got as good as I would have liked to have seen it.

CBG: In general, how do you assess your relationships with press and media down to the point where you really began to run in 1966?

REM: I think they would be good. I had my own--you know, like everybody, you develop one or two in the press who didn't like you, and you didn't like them, and it was obvious. I suppose that's human nature. But by and large I felt I had developed a good relationship with them. Naturally, I was sensitive to some of the "do-nothing" type stories, you know, not aggressive not doing things, but I felt that I had gotten excellent and fair coverage by the media. My relationship was better, sometimes unfortunately, with the editor/publishing level than it was with the daily working press. At that time, you had Hugh Gibson who had a sharp pen and who might like you, respect you, but would tear you out of your frame.

CBG: Painfully honest.

REM: I mean it.

CBG: Yes.

REM: Really, and who was so sensitive to what we're talking about, that delicateness of his relationship, that I felt like every now and then he did it to show his independence [chuckles].

CBG: Didn't he really function as the dean of the reporters, if there is such a thing?

REM: He became that, yes. He sort of emerged into the role that Bill Workman had played in the earlier days, and then Bill Rone had come along, Charlie Wickenberg, and people like that had come along, and then Hugh emerged as sort of the dean of them.

CBG: When they were talking with you, would he call them to order and disperse them?

REM: He would be the principal one although with us we had Al Lanier, who was also sort of the senior, Associated Press, and Kent Krell.

CBG: I guess a reporter with a wire service would have a certain degree of status among working reporters for the simply reason of coverage.

REM: Yes, because of the coverage and, see, that's where your others are so dependent on them, the ones that subscribed to the service. A lot of times I think you would have a tendency to get something out to the AP and UPI, and that was about it because, if you just wanted a news release, they got it to everybody, verbatim and in the form you wanted.

CBG: Did you have any sense of expanding name-recognition as a pre-campaign strategy in getting this information out, or was it really more motivated to get people involved.

REM: I think that leading toward 1966 I didn't have a name-recognition problem. I had come on the scene so strongly and been so involved that I was really resisting the television cameras rather than looking for opportunities. We were trying to stay away rather than get on the news in a lot of those instances.

CBG: There's such a thing as overexposure, too.

REM: There were so many politically delicate issues developing at that time, too, that you tried very hard to avoid them if you could or to tightrope-walk them and not get yourself caught taking too strong a position one way or the other. That's where I got caught with the press sometimes. I wouldn't always take that strong pro or con position that they wanted me to take to get a good story because I knew I had to deal with those people out there in the public.

CBG: When did you make the decision to run for the full term?

REM: Well, I don't think it was any real decision. Frankly, it was made when I became governor. There wasn't any decision to be made. There wasn't any hesitancy about the fact that you were going to go into the campaign for the full term. The biggest problem we had was how to handle it. With all that we had going on, how could we be governor and be a candidate, again because of the politically sensitive issues that we dealt with. We knew we were in for the last--or hoped we were in for the last real civil rights-type issue campaign where it was a matter of black and white. The blacks were participating for the first time in numbers, and we were dealing--had dealt and were still dealing--with the liquor question and dealing with the integration question. Fortunately, the demonstrations and all were just beginning. They hadn't emerged to the point to where that was a big and difficult thing to deal with.

CBG: Were there any serious challengers inside the Democratic Party?

REM: No, there wasn't any at all. There wasn't anybody who was serious. Lester Bates's name had been mentioned, as you recall, and Senator [L. Marion] Gressette's name was mentioned constantly during that time but none of them even seriously, to my knowledge, entertained the idea at that particular time. Lester, you know, was going to pass over that because of our relationship and look to the next time around and later decided not even to do that. There was no serious hint, and I think that was the first time in the century that somebody was nominated without opposition.

CBG: Yes.

REM: Up until then, the primary had been the real election.

CBG: So you really didn't begin to campaign then until after the primary.

REM: I was so fortunate. That was another thing that everybody was conscious of. A campaign would have created such divisiveness until it could have been bad for the state and bad for me, particularly in the party. By not having any hint of opposition, I was able to just go right on through being governor until time for the general election. My recollection is that I resisted getting involved in the campaign longer than most people wanted me to because there were so many things going on. I had so much to handle that I just didn't feel like I could afford to get into it.

CBG: Labor Day gets to be an awfully late date.

REM: Labor Day is awfully late. I recall setting it up to take the last thirty days, the month of October.

CBG: That's even later.

REM: I had just set it aside and worked toward that. Other than the budget hearings, which were always in October--I would sit in on those, and then the rest of that time was pretty much devoted to the campaign.

CBG: Did you put together a big campaign staff?

REM: No. Katherine Wolfe took a leave of absence and went over to run the campaign, and we ran it mostly with a minimum staff and mostly volunteers and cut it back as we got into it. Once we felt more comfortable we began to scale it down rather than built it up.

CBG: Yes.

REM: We scaled down the television. We scaled down the advertising.

CBG: How did you go about making this assessment of your opposition?

REM: Well, this was the first time that I had ever been exposed to political polling. Because of the sensitivity of the issues and all, we felt we needed it. So we utilized Ollie Quayle and he came in and did one and took a look at the school integration question and the liquor question and all of these other things as well. I was concerned about the issues more than I was the personalities of that campaign. I'd honestly never felt that I had serious opposition. I felt, as proved out, that he would get a substantial vote, but it would be strictly on the integration issue and nothing else. That was the only issue that could have been there because he had never been involved in anything other than that. He had not been involved in the industrial development program and things of that nature and had been sort of identified with the last-ditch resistance to integration.

END OF SIDE ONE; BEGIN SIDE TWO

CBG: This is Tape 11, Side 2, an interview with Governor Robert E. McNair as part of the McNair Oral History Project. Today's date is November 9, 1982. Governor, do you think that there was such a thing as a rise of Republicanism in South Carolina during this period?

REM: Yes. We'd had it to some extent when Mr. [James F.] Byrnes decided that he couldn't support the Democratic nominees any longer and led the big movement for [Dwight] Eisenhower. That gave a big impetus to the beginnings of an opposition party although he was, you know, a Democrat, a South Carolina Democrat. That's when we started declaring our identity, you know. We were South Carolina Democrats. Then when Senator [J. Strom] Thurmond switched parties; that was the birth, the real birth, of the Republican Party [in South Carolina]. The fact that Strom Thurmond was an independent kept the party from really becoming instantly established. As you recall, he would never endorse or support anyone else. He never let the Republican Party build around him. He kept that independence because he leaned heavily on the same people we did, the county courthouse crowd, and he avoided being the South Carolina Republican, a Mr. Republican, as some others did. So, it really emerged along that way, and then it grew up in this state as a resistance to integration.

CBG: Was there a vacuum into which that type of political preference could grow?

REM: I think so. We had had, as everybody knows, just tough, strong, factionalism.

CBG: Yes.

REM: Politics, regional differences, the upper state, the lower state and all. I think that emerged as an issue that they could rally around. I never understood it. That's the period when conservatism and liberalism began to take on different meanings. Up until then conservatives were fiscally conservative people, and liberals were free spenders. Therefore, we were all conservatives in the South. Franklin Roosevelt and on through battled the conservative South, but conservative on fiscal policies as it was identified.

Conservatism began to take on new meanings then. It became how you felt about civil rights, you know, the blacks. The integration question emerges as, in my judgment, the more dominant factor in determining whether somebody was a conservative or liberal, and we had to coin the phrase "moderate." So then, we became the moderate Southerners. It didn't have a thing to do with fiscal matters other than as it related to programs to do something for the less fortunate people. I still think the conservative-liberal identification was almost exclusively built around the civil rights movement at that time.

CBG: Did you filter all of these changes through an advisory group or a group of friends who would help you talk about this during this campaign?

REM: I think it sort of emerged more than as part of a strategy. I think it was sort of the times, the circumstances, and all the factors, what we'd seen happen elsewhere; and I suppose a personal feeling of what you had to do and what you ought to do. We had to begin to face some of these things and get on with it. It was awfully good to be able to go out to the football stadium and have everybody stand and cheer and wave the flag for you when you said we were still going to fight until the last, but we knew we couldn't win. Mr. [Donald] Russell and others had begun to take us in that direction, and it was comfortable direction to go in, not always easy politically, but I think it was sort of an emerging position on things more than it was a sit down and strategize.

CBG: From the other perspective, did you sense a loss of any political friends during that period?

REM: Oh, yes, during that time. Yes, I was very aware of the fact that I was losing what had been a base support of mine, and that was a lot of support in some of the rural counties and areas. But I have to admit it that, even with all of that, I still found, you know, a strong close tie and a feeling of friendliness. People wouldn't agree with you, but there wasn't bitterness in general out there. It did develop in some areas, in pockets of rural areas.

CBG: How did all of this contribute to, I guess you would say, the choice of a running mate, or does the South Carolina governor really not choose a running mate?

REM: No, the South Carolina governor doesn't choose and normally had no input into that at all and didn't want any. We were always so independent. We talked about the governor and the lieutenant governor running as a ticket, but we've never gotten around to that and never really entered into it. If I had to acknowledge today the truth, my preference was Rex Carter and had been Rex Carter, going back to our experience over the Speaker's race and coming on along. He had started moving with the blessings of all of us, and we just assumed Rex was going to follow right along and run for lieutenant governor. He got busy building his law practice, Speaker Pro Tem, lazy--which we've said to him, and he acknowledges that he got lazy--and let John West, who was aggressive and hustling and hardworking, just get out and outwork him. Then Rex didn't like a tussle. Like most of us, he didn't like controversy and didn't want to get into one of those things. He just decided not to run and almost left us sitting there with no choice. John, of course, was articulate and bright and good. There wasn't anything wrong with him, just the fact that all of us had sort of come along with a preference for Rex.

CBG: But again, these are not the kinds of things that are conscious choices.

REM: No, not at all, not conscious choices at all. I'd gone to law school and been a friend of John West and all of them all along, and we'd been very warm friends. We'd taken vacations together, and the Marshall Parker campaign divided us when he and a couple of others decided to support Marshall Parker. That caused very strained relationships. It put me in a position that if Rex Carter had wanted to run for lieutenant governor, I had let everybody know I had an obligation to him and intended to carry that out because I felt like I owed him one . . .

CBG: Yes.

REM: When he backed out of a couple of races along for me to come along behind. But John had been very close, very friendly. We all knew his capabilities.

CBG: Other than perhaps style and maybe tradition, with Mr. West coming from the Senate side while Mr. Carter came from the House side, do you think there was a difference in the policy preferences of the two?

REM: I think so. I think they were philosophically different. I think it was more than style. I think John was probably more of an idealist and, as Senator [Edgar] Brown used to say, having known him through the years, had a different style and approach to things than Rex would have had, more aggressive--I don't want to be misunderstood--more liberal probably in his attitude toward things and in his approach, and it had come from his upbringing and his background and his politics in Kershaw County. He had had to battle almost the strongest Ku Klux Klan-type of activity of anybody in the state, and he never won by more than five to ten votes in Kershaw County.

CBG: Some of the backwaters of that county really are remote.

REM: It's unusual in Kershaw County. You know, Camden is what everybody identifies, and then you get out into the other parts of that county, and it's tough.

CBG: Yes.

REM: It's totally different. It's two different types of people really. It's like Horry County, the beach crowd and the rest of the county. When you cross the [intercoastal] waterway, you're in different worlds in every

way. People wouldn't vote for one another across the waterway. John was always looking for the utopia, you know.

CBG: That probably reflects some of his training in political science.

REM: Some of his political science background.

CBG: In winding up the campaign, did you come out ahead financially?

REM: Yes, we did, the first and only time. [chuckles] We did end with a small surplus that was a very comforting feeling. A lot of it was because we cut back so on the campaign and in expenses more than what we originally planned to use and watched it very carefully.

CBG: What about your contributors? Did you have a few large contributors?

REM: No, they were all relatively small. Back then if somebody gave you five hundred dollars, he was a large, large contributor. It was amazing the number of \$50 to \$200 contributors that you had. I think that [W.W.] Hootie Johnson probably was the largest single contributor, and I wouldn't hazard a guess right now--but I've forgot it--of what that was. If anybody gave a \$1,000, you know, that was an abnormal contribution.

CBG: Did you acknowledge these contributors in any specific way?

REM: No, I really never looked at the list and didn't see it until, oh, way, way after it was all over. I have enjoyed recently going back and pulling an old file that I have that shows a list of lieutenant governor contributors.

CBG: Yes.

REM: And a list of those who helped pay off my deficit for lieutenant governor when I got into it. I never honestly--and people don't believe me--I never looked at those lists before I left office. I don't remember ever looking at the list of contributors to the governor's campaign until after I left office. I never got time to go back. The acknowledgements were done by Katherine.

CBG: So after the campaign was over and the votes were counted, do you recall any major impressions about the 1966 campaign?

REM: Oh, I had a few, yes. I do recall some. As I said, I expected Joe Rogers to get a substantial vote because of the issues. I think he got more than I expected him to get because I couldn't conceive of that large a number of predominantly and exclusively white people voting on the issues the way they did. Secondly, I was shocked--and it bothered me for a long time--to have lost Barnwell County, my neighboring county to Allendale. Beyond that, I was generally pleased. There were some others that bothered me. I know I was particularly pleased to have come--and I think I'm right, I can always remember--within forty-two votes of carrying Clarendon County, which was the home county of my opponent.

CBG: Did you talk with him at all after the campaign?

REM: Oh, yes, we still are friends. The other day again, while I was out some and slowed down a little bit, I looked through some of the old scrapbooks and some of the materials, and one of the things that impressed me was that in all my time in politics, the closest I ever came to ending up with an enemy was Marshall Parker, and even that, you know, has subsided over the years. We're very warm and cordial to one another and I still like Joe Rogers. I liked him then. I thought he got himself into something that he felt comfortable in doing, but he got himself into it, and he was sincere about what he was doing, and we were friends afterwards and friends today.

CBG: A tough, fair competitor, would you say?

REM: A tough, fair competitor, yes.

CBG: So based on that, what were some of the main ideas you had looking into starting your new term?

REM: Well, I had a lot of ideas. I really had some strong feelings about South Carolina. Having grown up in the shadows of Charleston, not steeped in history, but aware of the history of this state. I think I said it was time for us to quit commemorating the activities and events of the war we'd lost and start thinking about the one we'd won and the rich history that South Carolina had up to the period of time of the Civil War. We ought to sort of put that aside. I wanted to see us reemerge as a sort of leader--and that meant in a lot of ways--in ways that I thought we ought to take a look at. Agriculture was suffering and changing, and we

needed to recognize that. We knew tobacco was heading for trouble. Cotton was something we couldn't compete with.

CBG: Already in trouble.

REM: Yes, it was already in trouble, and really, we knew we couldn't compete with the Mississippi delta and the Far West. When California got into cotton, we knew we had to find something else. So agriculture was a particular interest to me. Economic development, which I felt was broader than industrial development--and that's when we changed from industrial development to economic growth and development. But education was the basis of all of it. We had to really begin to do something about that. Every time we wanted to assault the problem it was, "We can't afford it." We had to find out whether we could afford it or whether we couldn't afford not to do some of these things. That's where we began to take a hard look at it where I began to pull the school leadership together, that little ad hoc group that had started with me even before the 1966 campaign to sit down and talk about what we needed to do in education.

You recall we brought in outsiders. We picked on outsiders. We plucked their minds. We brought in some consultants to take a look at everything about us. My problem was that, you know, we couldn't just zero in on any one thing. We were so far behind that we had to sort of move the whole state forward. That included the port. We recognized we had a window to the world, that it was just sitting there almost dormant with everybody extolling its virtues but not doing anything. I give John Cauthen and those credit for having started that before I got there, you know, with the port study by Mr. [Roger] Milliken and Mr. [Charles] Daniel and those. He had that going.

We just looked at it all, mainly people development, human resources development, starting with education, basic education, and a recognition that we were just as woefully weak at the graduate level as we were at the preschool level in this state. Go to P.C. [Presbyterian College], which I did, and to Wofford and Newberry and places like that and have those fellows say, "you can't expect us to do what you want us to do if your university doesn't turn out some doctoral people that we can hire and improve the quality of what we're doing."

So my thing was beginning to look at that and to move on all fronts. The dairy industry was in trouble. We had TEC [Technical Education], which was there but needed to really explode. We didn't need it to continue to slowly emerge. We couldn't afford that. We needed TEC to explode. We needed those technical centers all over South Carolina. We needed those programs available so I think we recognized that.

CBG: Did you spend November and December trying to sort all of this out?

REM: Well, really, I think I had been spending that eighteen months to two years doing that. Tourism, you know, was a sleeping giant in this state. One of the things that concerned me, having lived in Allendale and on 301, was that everybody stopped over and spent the night in South Carolina on the way from Washington or New York but on their way to Florida. They just spent the night only or had a meal with us. We felt we had all these resources here. That was the one thing we had, was the beaches and the historic places and all of that. We needed to develop recreation for them. So we had that study done by the California group, and they just put it right out there for us. We were all shocked to find that, with no effort, tourism was then producing and contributing an equal amount to the economy as agriculture was. That told us both were sick.

CBG: Yes.

REM: Rather than both were doing well. So we'd begun to look at those things and try to figure how, you know, how do we do it, how we get at it. I think I had already wrestled with reopening the state parks. Yet, of course, we had to do something with them. People didn't want them. They wanted them as nature trails because they didn't want integration in the parks. We'd looked at the compulsory school attendance. I think we'd weathered that filibuster. That's one of the things that got me in trouble with the Joe Rogerses because we finally got through a small beginning of the compulsory school attendance law again. We'd begun to look at the federal programs. We'd implemented federal food stamp programs statewide. We'd done our study and found that, I think, a third of those who entered the first grade graduated, but worst than that, we found the high repeater rate. You know, we had so many repeaters of the first grade.

How do we get at these kind of things? The cost was just prohibitive. That's where we brought in the people who'd come in and study and began to tell us that we just couldn't afford not to do these things if we were ever going to move. If we could eliminate that first grade repeater, it would more than pay for the preschool education. We began to do this kind of thing, but we put the numbers on it and said, "Look, here's what it's costing us, and here's what it would cost us for the preschool, the beginning of the kindergarten program. If we phased the one in and phased one out, we hopefully can take care of that." The graduate program we began to supplement with a small, meager beginning of supplemental appropriations for graduate level education and let that grow. We reactivated the Higher Education Commission to get at coordinating higher education and to help us study and deal with all of those problems.

I suppose the Moody Report became the bible because it dealt with everything, as you recall, from preschool education to health care to transportation. We were building the finest highways in the world. We were noted for having the best highways, but the Highway Department was a world unto itself and didn't communicate or coordinate with anybody else. I felt we needed to begin to take advantage of that highway program to help develop South Carolina, and so we formed the little interagency group where we finally got

the highway and the port and the airport people talking together and finally got the Highway Commission to recognize that we had to get the trucks from the port of Charleston out to those beautiful highways. They couldn't get out. We just had a street in Charleston, and the Highway Department would not utilize state funds to build an access road. They said, "Well, Charleston can use their farm-to-market road funds." Well, a lot of little things like that had to be overcome.

CBG: So essentially what we find is a broad problem field with many opportunities and many challenges.

REM: Unlimited opportunities and challenges and most of them really beginning with a lack of communication. How do you get people talking? How do we utilize what we've got better? How do we put our resources together and really do this thing together rather than me doing mine and you doing yours? "Don't you tread on me." That was the general attitude. Everybody had their own little empire. They not only didn't want to mix them, they didn't want to talk about it. It looked easy, but it was a difficult task of getting that, then getting the resources, but we felt that we had to have the program first, and as you recall, we developed a program and then put the resources there to support that program and went to the General Assembly immediately thereafter with that total growth program where we said what we wanted to do. Here's what it's costing, here's where the money will come from. We just didn't leave it where everybody had an option. The General Assembly wasn't confronted with the normal problem of having an option, taking this, that, or the other. It was a package. It was all together.

You know, the textile manufacturers fell out with me because I wanted a little more from there. The beer people fell out with me because I wanted a little bit from them, but I had them where they couldn't get out because if they got out, I had to get a little more from somebody else.

CBG: Yes.

REM: We got them all in there where none of them were happy, but in the end we got all we wanted because of the fact that we had it where it was a pretty broad brush.

CBG: What was the key to it?

REM: It was the program. I've often said, and I think the interesting thing is, you don't ever hear people talk about the tax increase of that year or during that time. They discussed the programs, the pre-school, and the adult literacy, which was again a crash program because we discovered we had all those numbers of people out there with eighth grade education, more than an eighth grade, but less than a twelfth grade. All

they needed was just an immediate crash intensive program, but they weren't going anywhere to get it. So that's where we had to take it to them and put it in every public school in the state at night. Everybody said, "That's terrible. They won't go. Mommies and daddies won't go to the same place their children go. They would be embarrassed." But we found out they did go and they flocked out there and we turned out thousands of people with a high school equivalency who could then go to work because industry wanted the high school diploma. We convinced them to take the equivalency exam and then we got them to drop it to a ninth grade level or whatever with a lot of working with them. I think those things just began to fall together.

CBG: What we can do in subsequent conversations is perhaps look at these problems by subject area and go into them in some detail based on this general view we now have of what went on.

REM: Yes. We probably did more follow-through and detail implementation than had been done before. We just didn't say we wanted five million dollars for this program. We wanted five million dollars for this program to do this, that, and the other. We followed through and pretty well implemented it the way we had it planned and envisioned to start with. If we had to consolidate in the approach and coordinate funds and put them all together to do this, we did it.

CBG: I suppose a technician would call that managing or budgeting by objective.

REM: That was when we got the federal funds to begin to put in the first--you just touched on some of it, but they called it something else.

CBG: The big one, I think, was Planning Program Budgeting System.

REM: Planning Program Budgeting System. Yes, we were able to do that with a lot of those funds.

CBG: Which is a remarkable achievement, really.

REM: And we had, you know, surprisingly good results from people who had been here. Ken East, bless his soul, who was head of the Adult Education section of the Department of Education, was just sitting there with no money, no program, no nothing, but he became a nationally recognized leader, and we won all kinds of national awards by just giving him money. He went out there and said, "I don't care. I'll put it in the TEC centers." Before they wouldn't do that, and he put the program right in the TEC centers where they would

get the literacy while they got the training and he put it in every school. It just looked like he wanted an opportunity to really get with that kind of thing. There were innumerable instances like that.

END OF TAPE