

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

Interview

with

Robert E. McNair

Interviewer:

Cole Blease Graham

Date:

July 1, 1982

CBG: This is Tape 5, Side 1, an interview with Governor Robert E. McNair as part of the McNair Oral History Project of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History. Today's date is July 1, 1982. Governor McNair, how did the decision to run for lieutenant governor come to pass?

REM: Well, in 1958 I toyed with the idea as we've mentioned earlier. In meetings with some friends from Allendale County and others, we concluded that it wasn't the time to run and that I should not entertain the idea further at that time. However, because of the mention of my name in 1958, it continued to be in the forefront of those who were thinking about it and considering it. In the four-year interval, I took advantage of a lot of speaking invitations and spoke to just about every organization in the state--automobile dealers, law enforcement people, education groups, and people like that, and I think I spoke at a luncheon meeting of every civic club in South Carolina. So from there, it began to build. People had begun to encourage me to run. The press was very kind, and I think I got some good breaks in the General Assembly by being involved in major issues that gave me some publicity and name recognition.

CBG: Could you identify some of those issues and maybe some of the major themes of your speeches?

REM: Well, mostly it was around the need for an aggressive economic development program in South Carolina--more capital investment, more jobs, better education--all of those things work together--and a recognition that we really had to do something broader in education than we were doing, that we couldn't continue just to go along the same way we had in the past, that we had to do something with early childhood, we had to do something about the dropout rate. My recollection is that we had a substantial number of those who entered the first grade drop out. Only a third of those who entered first grade came out of the twelfth grade. We had such a large segment of the public who were basically illiterate because they had been the dropouts. So the adult education program needed help. I began to talk about things like that and talk about economic development. Coming from an agricultural area, I talked about and focused attention on agriculture. So those were the main thrusts in the legislature.

Of course, I'd had an opportunity as chairman of the Judiciary Committee to work with many groups, many statewide organizations, and most of the legislation dealing with control of crime and reform of the so-called moonshine liquor law. We had the great crusade on getting rid of that in South Carolina. We created a special division in SLED [State Law Enforcement Division] under then Governor [George Bell] Timmerman [Jr.]. The legislation came through the Judiciary Committee; so that gave me an opportunity to work directly with law enforcement and to get a lot of support from them. We had earlier the right-to-work law which at that time, and still is, very popular in South Carolina, and I chaired the committee that took the lead, the House Labor, Commerce, and Industry Committee, in the passage of the right-to-work bill. It gave

me a reason for having support from the business community. At the same time, I managed to stay friendly with the working people and with the limited amount of organized labor that we had.

So I think I came into it with a pretty broad base. I also worked very hard with the membership of the General Assembly and found that I had extremely strong support from the membership with rare exception. The House members were not only for me but actively promoting me back home and having me at functions, introducing me, and, in the early stages, endorsing my candidacy. So that was very helpful. That's before we got to the day of television and money having such an influence in politics. This was where personal contact--people wanted to see you--and I gave them an opportunity to see me. I had Mr. Hugh Agnew, who was the very well-known head of the farm bureau in the state and very politically involved give strong support. John Cauthen, who was head of the Textile Manufacturers Associates, gave strong support. John Floyd, who was head of the State Chamber of Commerce -- strong support. Buck Edwards, who was "Mr. Telephone" in South Carolina, strong support. Mr. Blatt, strong support. Bankers and agriculture, extremely strong support from agriculture. All of that put together with the small business people working then with the State Chamber of Commerce and with the various organized groups gave me a broad base of support so that led me into it. I think all of us recognized that I had many, many obstacles, not just name recognition, which is always a shock to anybody who gets into politics that thinks he's been in the public eye, but coming from one of the three smallest counties in the state, no big voter base. I worked real hard in Charleston and Richland and Greenville and Spartanburg--areas like that--Florence, Anderson--targeted some of those larger areas--and spent a lot of extra time there to try to get recognition and get support from those areas.

CBG: With all of this support, how did you, in your mind, envision a campaign for lieutenant governor?

REM: Well, in my mind, at that time, we all looked at the campaign as being one that was a physical endurance contest as well as trying to have as much support as you could get from people who had credibility in their own communities. That was the key to the lieutenant governor's race. Most of the time, nobody running for lieutenant governor was even known in most of the state. If somebody who was respected in the community was strongly for you, you really did well because that's the way people would normally make up their minds.

CBG: Yes.

REM: You know. "What about these people running for lieutenant governor?" Television was just coming in. We were just starting to use it, but we used television for name recognition, spots. Put your picture on and your name on, and that was it. You didn't use it extensively. There was very minimal funds put on television. Most of it was devoted toward one five- or fifteen-minute speech the night before the election. That was the tradition back then. You used your money for newspaper ads and billboards, if you could get them or for campaign materials that you handed out at the crossroads, the mill gates, and up and down the main street in the towns.

CBG: Did television make that time available free the night before the election or was that bought? Do you remember?

REM: At one point, that was made available.

CBG: It was public service.

REM: It was public service. The candidates were invited and you drew for your slot, whether you were first or last; so that time was made available.

CBG: What about radio?

REM: Radio played a more important role because there were so many radio stations all over the state, particularly in the smaller counties. You used radio ads. You also used endorsements. If you could get a prominent one, two, or three people in the local community to endorse you on the radio, that did an awful lot of good. It was a lot easier to use the radio because your friends would pay for that. It was a lot easier to use newspaper ads and the weeklies because they would pay for it. You had your material made up and sent it to a friend or friends in the various counties, and they would either pay for it or either raise the money to pay for that so your campaign expense was confined to your own materials and advertising and gasoline and travel, hotels, motels, and minimum television.

CBG: Did you put together a group of advisers to help you make the decision to run?

REM: Yes, we did. Actually, the first time I gave serious thought to it [1958], we met down in Mr. [Solomon] Blatt's office in Barnwell. He assembled some of the group I've just talked about, including several of my good friends from Allendale, a banker and a couple of the large farmers and others that had

been pushing me to give consideration to get into it, along with some of the political leaders from the House that had also been strong supporters, and we made the decision not to run. The second time [1962] we went through the same exercise and pretty well decided to go forward. We'd made the decision earlier to take a hard look at it. So it was more a matter of "Yes, let's continue. Let's go forward." Unfortunately, we didn't do what we should have done and many others, I think, have failed to do, is to put together a fund-raising campaign. You know, back then, you ran for lieutenant governor on ten to twenty-five thousand dollars, and I had almost gotten in there without opposition, and at one point there was a strong feeling that I might escape without opposition in the primary, and back then, that was the election. However, I got caught really in a vacillating position because of the uncertainty of the governor's race that year.

CBG: Can you tell us what was going on in the governor's race?

REM: What was happening was Burnet Maybank [,Jr.] from Charleston, whose father was one of the best-known and strongest political leaders in the state's history and had been a United States senator, had been elected lieutenant governor overwhelmingly [in 1958] and was heading into the Governor's Office with everybody assuming that's where he would go. In the course of his time as lieutenant governor, it became obvious that Burnett was going to have trouble getting elected governor. There were questions about his leadership ability, and even the members of the General Assembly that we all worked with showed some real concern and demonstrated that concern and began to talk to me. The business leadership, some of the people I mentioned earlier, were greatly concerned about the leadership of the state during the next four years and strongly persuaded me not to commit myself to the lieutenant governor's race unalterably, to stay open and flexible because it may well have developed that I should go ahead and take the chance and run for governor.

CBG: It would have been a big step in those days.

REM: In those days, it would have been a very big step and one that people didn't normally take. I was apprehensive about it; thus I continued my own focus on the lieutenant governor's race but . . .

CBG: You couldn't really say no.

REM: . . . with that urging, you couldn't really withstand it, you were flattered, so you began to look at that. Mr. Russell, Judge [Donald] Russell, was then president of the University [of South Carolina]. We had encouraged him that this was the time to really run for governor. He had run against [Ernest] Fritz Hollings [in 1958] and lost. Most of us, young fellows then, the Young Turks of that time, supported Fritz Hollings.

We recognized Mr. Russell's ability and what he could offer the state. So we all encouraged him to get into it. He couldn't make up his mind, and, thus, we were all caught in one of those positions where nobody would say what he was going to do. That caused some of Burnet Maybank's close friends, notably [Thomas] Allen Legare, then a state senator who had been a strong supporter of mine all the way through, to get offended with me. He and a few others then got very upset with me because I was toying with the idea of running against Burnet for governor. So they started looking actively for somebody to run for lieutenant governor to force me to make a decision in the first place. That was the original objective.

CBG: Good political thinking.

REM: There was a little group (this is pretty well-known history) that had a house at Kiawah--John West; Earle Morris; Allen Legare; John Martin, a senator from Fairfield; and Marshall Parker, a senator from Oconee County, who was a very good senator and had gotten a lot of recognition. He moved very quickly in the Senate and was a very forceful senator and had strong support from the business community, also, in the upper part of the state, in particular. He was obviously interested in running for something statewide and didn't want to wait and bide his time, as most of us had done. So he was receptive, and he, with little persuasion, announced for lieutenant governor. Thus I, by holding back, sort of generated opposition and then had to announce later on, giving him some head start. We got into a very strong race; probably one of the toughest races for lieutenant governor I suppose has been run in this state between two well-respected, well-liked people. A lot of folks said, "You know, it doesn't really matter which one gets there. The state will have a good person." We got into that. Allen Legare and John West led his campaign, which took away some of my basic support that I had counted on and gave me problems in the Charleston area particularly, where I had expected to have no trouble at all. That was sort of my base, coming originally from Berkeley County.

CBG: Was there much of a sense that the Senate wanted to elect one of its own as lieutenant governor?

REM: It turned out in that race that that was not so. I ended up with a strong majority of the Senate. It happened that Parker moved too fast and tried to catapult himself too quickly, and the natural resentment began to build. John Martin, for instance, who was one of the Kiawah group, actually withdrew and sold his interest and has always been one of my stalwart supporters. The Senate leadership supported me, and I think generally I had a substantial majority of the Senate's support and overwhelming House support. However, Parker was able to put together a strong organization and did one of the first real sort of professional jobs. He was well-financed. Mr. [Roger] Milliken and Charlie Daniel, for instance, from up there, the business

leadership of the state, contributed and were able to raise what was then considered substantial monies for him so that he had the state plastered with billboards. I couldn't -- literally couldn't -- get a billboard and had trouble getting slots on television because they had pretty well absorbed what was then available. Today you can buy it all. Then they sort of limited the time that was available for this. He also had Crawford Cooke, now recognized as a pro, in his first real political venture, masterminding the campaign and Crawford was very tough. They played, I said, under the table and above the table.

CBG: Hard ball politics.

REM: Hard ball politics, hard-nosed stuff with you, and organized extremely well. So we found ourselves in a dog fight when we hadn't anticipated it.

CBG: How did that impact on your board of advisers?

REM: I think they (chuckle) were honest in assuming part of the responsibility for my being in that position. They were part of the reason for my vacillating and, therefore, they felt just like I did, that we had to really get out there and work hard. We compensated by working hard and organizing, and, fortunately, I had built up a cadre of friends in just about every county in the state. Parker had grown up in North Carolina, had attended the University of North Carolina, and had married an Oconee County girl. So he didn't have that support from college days, law school days, scattered around South Carolina. He had to get his support from his friends, Allen Legare and John West. They were the ones that had to get somebody in the counties to help him because those people didn't know him. He was a dairy distributor through his wife's family, which gave him some identity with agriculture. I remember, in the middle of the campaign, I found I was in a tougher fight than I thought I was, and I had gotten tired of reading about the dairy farmer from Oconee County. I did some research, and I found out that Marshall Parker didn't own an acre of land, didn't own a cow, and, in fact, was professing to be what he wasn't.

CBG: Just another middleman.

REM: He was another middleman and living off the farmer, and I turned that around on him and got him for professing to be what he wasn't, which worked to my advantage in the end. It was a tough campaign, as those who were here during that time remember. It probably was good for me. I think it put me in much stronger position for the future, and people certainly looked on me as being a stronger potential candidate for governor next time because I had gone through that very, very tough campaign for lieutenant governor.

CBG: How did your advisers and you set about to finance your campaign?

REM: We set out to raise \$25,000 initially for the campaign for lieutenant governor. When we saw where we were, we increased it to fifty, and that was our financial needs, we thought, for the campaign. That was one where we ended up with, I think, something like a \$25,000 deficit. That was frightening at that time. We let it be known or the press found out about it, and it made the headlines, that I had a \$25,000 deficit. The way it made headlines was two of my banker friends, my own home-town banker, Charlie LaFitte, and a banker from an adjoining county, Jake Horne from over in Denmark, wrote letters saying I had a deficit and asking everybody to send them a hundred dollars. That was almost a crime. A couple of newspaper people who had actively supported Parker, Bill Mahoney of the *Columbia Record* and Ted Shelton of the *Charlotte Observer* just took it on as being a terrible thing, and I found myself with headlines about my deficit, headlines about my fundraising, and a problem almost at the instant I was trying to enjoy the victory. But, you know, people responded. I can say this. I had good business support, but I got very little financing from the business community. Most of mine came from friends around the state in small contributions. I have that list, and I was looking it over the other day at the twenty-five, fifty, and a hundred dollar contributors. When somebody sent you a hundred dollars, that was more than equivalent to a thousand dollars today, really, but it was interesting to see where the ten, twenty-five, fifty, and a hundred dollars would come from.

CBG: Whatever happened to the deficit? Did that get whittled away?

REM: It was whittled away and eliminated almost immediately.

CBG: So really it was just more of a puff reaction to . . .

REM: More of a puff reaction to . . .

CBG: . . . to the press.

REM: To the press. I shudder to think what would have happened had I lost. I would still be working in Allendale trying to pay it off. That was a real tough campaign. It was also the first campaign where there was noticeable black participation. Now that was before the Voting Rights Act [of 1965], before the registration, massive registration, but I was very pleased that I got almost a solid support. Matthew Perry very openly supported me. I had known him as lawyers, and the black leadership, at that time, were active. I

suppose I got most of the black vote at that time and ended up with most of the so-called labor vote. It was interesting to be able to put together the small black vote, the small labor vote with a substantial vote from agriculture and business. Even though Parker had the support of the two best-known industrialists or business leaders, I think I got the support of most of the rest of them, the Jim Chapmans, who now heads Inman Mills, the Bill Closes, who was a young buck coming along with Springs, all were strong supporters of mine, support I'd built up over the years.

CBG: Do you have a general idea as to what the budget was of your campaign? In other words, was most of the money spent on producing materials or . . .

REM: Most of the money was spent, really, on fingernail files and matches that we gave out.

CBG: And pencils?

REM: Pencils that we gave out and things of that nature.

CBG: Which people don't think about today much, do they, as a campaign tool?

REM: No, not any more, but most of the money was spent on that.

CBG: What's the purpose of that kind . . . ?

REM: We didn't spend much on billboards because they weren't available to us, but we were able to get people to put them up. We started that plywood billboard. We just went, and somebody gave me a bunch of plywood, and we had somebody fix us up some signs to put on a sheet of plywood. We put up plywood all over South Carolina, and it attracted a lot of attention. I think I got more name recognition because of my plywood billboards than I would have gotten had we had the huge ones. I don't remember what the breakdown was on the budget, but there was very little allocated for things other than the basics. We had to pay people to develop things for us, but most of our newspaper ads were developed in-house. The staff worked on it. Katherine Wolfe, you know, who later became my administrative assistant, was really the campaign manager for lieutenant governor.

CBG: Did you have a big commitment to office space or anything like that?

REM: No. There was a space next to the Wade Hampton Hotel, the drugstore on Gervais Street, that one of my good friends made available to me, and we used that. The headquarter's staff was very small.

CBG: What were the McNair girls?

REM: That was something we started, again, for two reasons. We realized that it was impossible for me to see everybody, and it started because Josephine got active early with two or three of her friends going places with banners on, passing out cards and speaking to them. It was so well received and was so effective until she conceived the idea of organizing what we called the "McNair girls," all from Allendale with some of our children's friends who were then in school, particularly the high school group, and the young mothers that were my wife's age in Allendale. They organized and all of them got white blouses, navy blue skirts, with the banners with "McNair for Lieutenant Governor"--the red, white, and blue--and they literally organized a campaign to blanket South Carolina. They would leave home on Monday mornings and come back on Fridays, those who could. Younger ones would work on the weekends and afternoons in the immediate area, and they covered South Carolina. They went into every small town, went up and down every street, went to every shopping center, and covered that, and I believe, really, that that gave me more name recognition than anything else at that time.

CBG: Yes.

REM: It caught on, and it got publicity to the point that every time they were going into a place, the press would meet them and, it was widely covered and publicized that they were there and they had been there.

CBG: And they would hand out literature?

REM: Literature, fingernail files, and things, and what was so effective about it was that they were all from Allendale and they all knew me.

CBG: Yes.

REM: Then, too, we had the old stump speakings. You remember, we went to every courthouse stump speaking.

CBG: Yes.

REM: Well, they covered those, and there was a good illustration of their effectiveness in Florence. Marshall Parker hired, like he'd hired the key club, fundraisers, and they'd do it as a fundraiser. They would put on banners, or they'd put on a hat and hand out literature for him. Laverne Prosser, I believe, who writes for the *Charleston News and Courier* in the Pee Dee area, focused on it. He'd go up--he was a great one for picking at people--he'd go up and say, "Why are you out here? Tell me something about your candidate." And in Florence they didn't know who he was. Some of them had never met him, and so he'd go over to one of ours and say, "Tell me something about him." They'd say, "Oh, yes, he lives right next door." "I live across town." "I go to school with his daughter," or "I'm in Sunday school with him," and it made a terrific impression.

END OF SIDE ONE; SIDE TWO

CBG: This is Tape 5, Side 2, an interview with Governor Robert E. McNair as part of the McNair Oral History Project of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History. Today's date is July 1, 1982. Speaking now of the campaign, we've talked a little bit about Mr. Parker and his credibility as a tough campaigner. How did the campaign go? Did it turn out to be the tough fight that you were anticipating?

REM: It really did, and it got tougher as it developed. I, frankly, was surprised. I would admit now, I was shocked at his strength. I didn't expect to find him as strong as he was, and we had to work very, very hard. We had to organize. Fortunately, too, the people working for me had been through campaigns before. Katherine Wolfe had been through them with Fritz Hollings for lieutenant governor and governor. Others that helped me had been through campaigns with other people, so they knew what you had to do. I was not a good organizer. I didn't like that part of it. I was terrible at fundraising and didn't want to be involved in it. I like people, and I rarely went to the headquarters. I would simply get a schedule from them, and then I was out and gone. All of my time was spent out traveling, campaigning, speaking to people, speaking, and doing things like that, and they did most of the organizing, to the point that they had somebody responsible for every county. I didn't like the idea because I said, "I've got too many friends to designate one." "Well, somebody's got to coordinate;" and they did a good job at that. Fortunately, I had the support of members of the legislature, both House and Senate. A lot of the active people in the communities were for me, and we had a good organization, though it was very loose-knit.

CBG: We talk about organizing by county. So often, in looking at southern politics, I guess generally, people talk about courthouse gangs. Is there such a thing, or was there such a thing at this time?

REM: Yes, and very strong. If you had courthouse support in a county, particularly in the smaller counties, you didn't have much to worry about . . .

CBG: Yes.

REM: . . . in races like lieutenant governor, comptroller general, state treasurer, and all. Those were the people that most of the population would look to for advice and if you had the sheriff for you, you were way out front. If you had the county auditor and the treasurer and the other people in the county, you had good strong support in that area. We worked very hard to get the courthouse crowd. I think I had almost unanimous support from the courthouse crowd, again based on my time in the legislature, my working with them on legislative reform and things they needed to do and all. We'd reformed the probate judge law and things of that nature so the probate judges were almost unanimously strong supporters, even in my opponent's own area. I had the courthouse crowd in Pickens County. I think I had most of the courthouse crowd in Oconee County, his own county.

CBG: So this would be another extension, along with legislators, of credible people in a community.

REM: Yes. Mayors were very important back then--mayors and city councilmen. So your municipal association was very, very important back then. The automobile dealers were people that had influence, saw a lot of people, and they could--funeral directors--always a very, very strong influence if they'll get active. They're overlooked because most people don't think about them. My wife's father and mother happened to be in the funeral business, and they wrote letters, and thus I inherited almost solid support from the funeral directors around the state and always valued that very much. We worked at that. We worked at groups, you know, worked at getting support and getting two or three prominent, well-known, liked members of each group, not necessary officers, but members who knew me. If I could get my banker to write all small town bankers, it was a lot more effective than getting the Bankers' Association. If I could get my president of the Farm Bureau to write all the county farm bureau people--and that's what we focused on and we really worked it. We even took major families, like the Lawton family. My law partner, Tom Lawton sat down and wrote every member of that clan in South Carolina, and, surprisingly, at Hartsville, which has a strong Lawton family, I had good support from them that I normally wouldn't have had.

CBG: As the campaign went along now, would you say that you could keep from panicking, or maybe to say it more positively, retain composure by a strategy of hard work and continued personal contact to get some momentum?

REM: We did, and, of course, having strong opposition generated hard work from your friends. They all knew it, and they all worked very hard--a lot harder than they would have--so you didn't have to worry about complacency in that campaign. There were, you know, interesting things. Like I mentioned earlier, with Allen Legare, then Senator Legare, being from Charleston, I had to concentrate there. Originally, I wouldn't have budgeted much time for Charleston because of coming from the lowcountry. Then we had the up-low split to some extent. When I visited Charleston and visited some of my old friends down there that I had known and come along with, sort of the political establishment, the Broad Street crowd that dominated politics in Charleston, I was told that I was in trouble, that they all usually got together, and because of Allen Legare they'd gotten together, and Marshall Parker was on all their tickets. Well, I almost panicked because, being familiar with Charleston County politics, that meant, you know, that ticket had his name on it, and I was going to have a terrible time.

Fortunately, I had a lot of strong personal ties down there, as well as political, so I moved over to them. Mendel Rivers, who was then the congressman, had been a close friend of mine, of my father's, who was active over in Berkeley County, and different people had what they called a committee of twelve in Charleston. That was a force down there, Hugh Lane, Sr., who was then head of C&S Bank; Joe Riley, the father of the current mayor, who was sort of the spokesman and the leader of the Catholic community; Cecil Clay, who was identified with the Broad Street gang--you know, just automatically went with them--but pulled off and went with me because of my friendship with him; and Mendel Rivers. So we ended up putting together the first non-Broad Street crowd that took the Broad Street gang on, and we won about two to one. They put ads in the paper with fifty names of just about everybody that you would want in Charleston to be on ad for you and that let everybody know down there that I had the support, he didn't.

It was a bitter campaign in Charleston because it changed politics in Charleston. That's an interesting sidelight. It broke up the Broad Street gang. Those that had dominated got beat badly for the first time and it never got back together. They had previously gotten together and designated who would be their candidates for the Senate, House, and everything, and that was the ticket. Interestingly, after that, Allen Carter, who had never been active in politics in the north area, but who got out and worked harder for me than he ever worked for himself, decided, like others, that it was time for the people to have a voice. They ended up, you recall, two years later, running a separate group and winning against the Broad Street crowd. So it ended up playing a good role in Charleston.

CBG: Were there any issues in the campaign?

REM: The issues were personality, to begin with. As it got down to the bottom line, there were issues about, you know, who could do the best job.

The sales tax is the real issue that everybody likes to talk about because that was so interesting. The municipalities were having problems, as they are now. They wanted a larger share of--more kickbacks--as we called them then. The counties, you know, wanted a larger share of the state funds kicked back to them for county purposes. We had been battling that. We battled it in the legislature when we passed the sales tax and resisted sharing sales tax money. Originally, it was scheduled for education, and we committed it to education, and we didn't deviate. So, with all of that, the push was on to get other sources of revenues.

I think it all started down at a municipal association meeting in Myrtle Beach where we were both to address the municipal association, and I, as I say, had strong support from that group, had built it up over the years. So I went on, I believe, first and made my appearance and came on out, and Marshall Parker went in and I think he let the fact that he didn't have that support and he was trying so hard to get it get to him. It meant so much to him, and he had a little bit of a tendency to get carried away sometimes anyway and go overboard on a position that he wanted to take. I don't know whether not being a lawyer or whether just being sort of an intense-type person, he would do that. So he got a little carried away down there and, according to them, advocated the possibility of a four cents sales tax with them getting half of it and got them real excited.

Normally, something like that would have never surfaced because the press didn't pick it up, apparently didn't cover his speech, or didn't pay any significance to it, and it went unnoticed. Some of my friends called me about it. Fortunately, Jim Covington, who was then with WIS--bless his soul--taped it and, finally, with much persuasion, let me hear it and that, we thought, was a pretty good break in the campaign because Parker had then begun to jump on me personally. He was getting very personal in the campaign and was beginning to say some strong things, and I was ignoring him. I felt I was out front and my policy had always been--even at the local level, and I was trying to do the same thing at the state level--to run my campaign, run my race, never make a reference. I never have, in all my campaigning, called an opponent's name. My attitude was, if his name is going to get recognized, he's going to do it. I'm not going to do it for him, and if he's going to get publicity, he's going to get it. I'm not going to give him, you know, an issue to talk about.

So we followed that. However, this campaign was getting tough, and I--we were somewhere, I don't know where--Anderson or one of those upstate areas close in to where he was where I needed some support and where that, I knew, would and could be a major issue. I think I really baited him a little bit with some things and got him mad, and he got angry, and he just tore into me pretty strong. So then I decided that it

was about time for me to begin to unload on him. So I made some references to the fact that he was saying one thing in one area and another thing in another area. He was saying what he thought the automobile dealers wanted to hear and then what the farmers wanted to hear and that he had gone down to the mayors at Myrtle Beach and advocated or talked about the four-cent sales tax, sharing it with them in order to get their support.

Well, that was like hitting him with buckshot. He got furious. He got up the next time and lambasted me. I was dishonest. I wasn't fit to hold public office. He just lost his cool. It just happened that we were heading in for the auditorium here for the big wrap-up rally where there were going to be lots of people. So I took him on pretty good that night, coming on late, and that's where I finally got him. You know, "Let's look at the record about who's being honest and who's not. Here's this advertisement and billboards all over South Carolina, a dairy farmer, when in fact, according to the records of Oconee County, he not only doesn't own a acre of land, he doesn't own a milk cow and never has owned one."

Well, he still denied making the statement, and we were scheduled for television and the wrap-up, and I finally persuaded them to let me have the tape, and we made a copy of the tape. So that night, on television, I wouldn't pre-record and I had a fight with the television station, but I didn't want to pre-record because I didn't want to let anybody know what I was going to do. Finally they let me go on live and in my live appearance, I just said, "I have never in a campaign talked about an opponent, really hadn't intended to, and don't want to do it in this one, but my opponent had so many harsh things to say, particularly when he attacked my integrity and honesty and said I wasn't fit to hold public office." Since he had chosen to do that, I thought it was better for the people themselves to determine who was right. Rather than my quoting my opponent, I preferred to let them hear my opponent, and I played the tape. And the tape was worse than I thought it was. And that really, everybody says, had a damaging effect on him.

CBG: Did he respond at all?

REM: Well, he couldn't.

CBG: He couldn't?

REM: He couldn't respond to the tape. We stayed rather bitter for a while after that. We've gotten to be fairly warm friends again. At least we're nice to each other, but he was very, very strong about it. I could understand it, but my attitude was he'd sort of forced me to the wall and really gave me really no alternative.

CBG: You could write off some of that as just campaign rhetoric. . .

REM: Yes.

CBG: . . . as the heat of the battle sort of thing . . .

REM: Yes, heat of the battle.

CBG: But consistent efforts, I guess, have to be . . .

REM: Have to be responded to.

CBG: Were there other political issues?

REM: That was basically a campaign of personality.

CBG: Yes.

REM: There were very little political issues involved. Both of us tried to avoid the up-state, low-state thing because I had such strong support up in the Greenville-Spartanburg area and in his area, and he felt that he had Charleston and strong support down in that area because of Senator Legare and Senator West.

CBG: Did other political figures--we were talking of Congressman Rivers--like, for example, Senator [Olin] Johnston, play a role?

REM: Senator Johnston did--again, by no concerted effort--get involved indirectly. We seemed to gravitate together. We seemed to have some of the same base support, and he was very kind and very friendly. He did not like Marshall, personally or otherwise, and naturally didn't like where his base support was coming from. At that time, Fritz was running against Senator Johnston, as you recall, and that created problems for all of us--our friendships--and we were all trying to stay out of that, but as the race progressed, I began to pick up the Johnston support and got an awful lot of the Johnston support across the state, in fact, most of it. As you know, he won very, very handily, and I think sort of carried some of us along.

CBG: Yes. How did the primary turn out? Do you remember the relative shares of the vote? Was it a close one?

REM: It was not as close as we had expected it to be. I was expecting to win by, you know, 10 or 15,000 votes, the way we were calculating it. It ended up that I carried, I think, all but nine of the forty-six counties and got strong support statewide. I do not recall the margin, but it was well in excess of what we had anticipated.

CBG: Yes.

REM: I remember walking into the hotel back then. We all stayed at the Wade Hampton or somewhere the last night because we finished up our campaigns and ended up there. Walking in that night, I ran into Bill Johnston, the brother of Senator Johnston, and he stopped and said, "We've just finished going over everything upstairs, and we predict you're going to win by over 25,000 votes." That was probably the best and most encouraging news I had had because they were very good at projecting and predicting. We didn't have the scientific methods we use today, but they got all their reports from around the state, and it turned out that he was more accurate than I was. In fact, I won by a larger margin than that.

CBG: How did the victory strike you? Was it more of a relief or did you have a sense that . . .

REM: Well, I think we had gotten so caught up in that one until it was a relief to complete the campaign. But it was an overwhelming experience to win, and it was the kind that had built up to be the big race.

CBG: Yes.

REM: There probably was more interest in that race than in the governor's race that year, and I'll never forget the . . . we had everybody down at the building down there next to the Wade Hampton Hotel, and they were all out in the streets and everywhere else because everybody was so excited, coming from everywhere, bringing early results or bringing the results in from the small counties. It was over relatively early--I mean the predictions that we had won were given fairly early. We had a telephone system set up where we were getting reports from every county, and most of the time we were ahead of the press back then. Again, they weren't as organized in getting returns from key areas as we were. We knew where we needed to get returns, and as we got those we pretty well knew what was happening. When we saw we were running better than two-to-one in Charleston, for instance, we pretty well knew then that we were in. When I saw that in Anderson, which was next door to him, I was doing extremely well. . .

CBG: That's where that Johnston help came in.

REM: Johnston help came in. I got a good vote in Pickens County though Earle Morris was tacitly for him. The court house, the sheriff and the auditor and people like that, were for me.

CBG: Yes, that's where the hard work paid off.

REM: Greenville, he carried, but not by a large number. Spartanburg and all the others, I carried fairly comfortably.

CBG: When did you assume office?

REM: I assumed office in January of 1963.

CBG: Did you do much during the interim?

REM: Not a whole lot. There wasn't a lot done then. There was no such thing as a transition period.

CBG: Still a part-time job.

REM: It was a part-time job. You presided over the Senate. The salary was an astronomical thousand dollars a year.

CBG: Did you even have an office in those days?

REM: I did not. I had an office in the Senate where, I think, Senator [L. Marion] Gressette's office is now. That was the president of the Senate. There was no lieutenant governor's office. There was no lieutenant governor's staff. The only office and staff was as president of the Senate, and you got a thousand dollars a year salary.

CBG: Did you have a driver or a secretary?

REM: No, no.

CBG: Nothing like that.

REM: There was no driver, no car, no expense account, no expense allowance, other than the same thing the Senate got because that was your function, to come and preside. So you got the same per diem. You got a senator's salary plus a thousand dollars to be lieutenant governor. So your salary for lieutenant governor was a thousand dollars, but you got the same benefits as a senator because of presiding over the Senate, and you had a secretary then for six months.

CBG: Did Governor Russell call you in for a conference?

REM: Not really. There had never been a good working relationship at the governor and lieutenant governor level, a thing that had always bothered me. I thought it was a wasted talent, and I always felt that the lieutenant governor could be particularly helpful to a governor in the General Assembly. He could be helpful in the Senate, not meddling, but still, you know, be supportive of a program. I felt the lieutenant governor had been elected to be lieutenant governor and should, when the governor couldn't, represent the state. That was not the case.

Governors normally designated a personal friend of theirs. When there was another inauguration somewhere where the governor was invited and couldn't go, he would send a good friend and political supporter to represent the state of South Carolina, not the lieutenant governor. So, no, there was not a whole lot of that, not any more than there had been, and, as I say, it bothered me, and it was good for me to have had that experience because it caused me, really, to do things later that I might not have done otherwise.

CBG: Did it turn you more toward keying on significant senators like Senator Brown?

REM: It did. What I did was begin to work--and I think this was sort of a first--with the Senate and with the Senate leadership. You had to be very cautious. The Senate is a very different organization. They do not like meddling from anybody, including the governor, as everybody knows, and they do not like for a lieutenant governor to meddle in their legislative affairs. "Your job is to preside, not tell us how to handle issues. You can help us run the Senate, but you don't even do that. We run it. You preside." But I, because of my friendship with Senator Gressette, Senator [Rembert] Dennis, then the young comer with the Finance Committee, Senator Brown, John Martin and the others, who were then coming over--some of them my crowd--coming over--developed a good working relationship, and mine was to sit down with them and find out how I could be helpful. The best way I could be helpful was to know what they really wanted to accomplish. "What are your priorities? What bills do you really want to get up?" If I didn't know, sitting up

there presiding, you couldn't be helpful to them. So we started something unusual. We started on Tuesday mornings, an hour before the session, meetings of the leadership, and I'd invite all the Senate committee chairmen. We'd meet with them and the leadership to determine what we wanted to accomplish that week. Then I could be helpful. Also, we'd have some ticklish resolutions come up. How do you want to handle them? So we didn't just go blindly with no plans and no organization. It worked pretty well. It worked effectively enough to cause me to follow through in the governor's office, as you know, with the same kind of thing on a weekly basis.

CBG: From the Senate's point of view, what is meddling?

REM: They don't like for you to get involved in support or opposition to a bill. Certainly you have your place, but do not go around lobbying and buttonholing the senators and . . .

CBG: Trying to change votes . . .

REM: Trying to change votes and things of that nature, which I didn't totally agree with and later used the lieutenant governor as a legislative liaison almost to let the senators know the position of the governor or to help work out a compromise over in the senate, particularly, through the lieutenant governor because he was there and had been a member and was respected.

CBG: There is a difference, then between being a liaison and a former member of the Senate, say, as in the case of Lieutenant Governor [John] West, and meddling.

REM: Well, I think it's how you do it, too, that bothered them. I don't think they particularly wanted you to generate legislation. You have more of that now with the lieutenant governor being a quasi-full-time official. Then, you came there with them, you presided, and you went home when they went home. You were just an outside businessman or whatever your profession was. Your living, your income, came from your law practice.

CBG: As you went along as presiding officer, do you recall any real parliamentary knots?

REM: I think I inherited everywhere I went, like I told you with the Labor, Commerce, and Industry Committee, lo and behold, I inherited the right-to-work bill. I went to the House Judiciary Committee, and I inherited everything that everybody had ever thought of, and all the crucial issues were in that committee.

Then I went to the lieutenant governor's office and got caught up in some of the same thing. We had gosh-- numbers of them. I can't recollect some, but it's surprising how many novel issues come up in presiding. You would think with all the time that we've had with legislative bodies operating under the same rules of procedure that there wouldn't be anything that hadn't come up dozens of times before, but you would have it.

One of my worse ones was immediately upon getting there. In my own home county, with me leaving, they had developed a real dog fight for the senate seat between Edwin Myrick, who I had served with for those twelve years with me in the House and him in the Senate, and Dick Williams, who was a businessman, local businessman, and very prominent, very aggressive in industrial development, had helped bring industry to the county, would personally finance a building in order to get it there, decided he wanted to run for the Senate. It ended up with some four or five vote's difference, and they were questionable votes; and every time they would recount, it would get closer or change. It ended up that the State Senate, for the first time in I don't know when had to make the decision. They had to determine. Marshall Parker, because of our problem, took the Dick Williams's position and forced it in the Senate, forced it to a vote, to . . .

CBG: Put some pressure on you . . .

REM: . . . partially to embarrass me and to force me. It got to be a very explosive political thing because the press made it appear that the political machinery was trying to, in effect, steal the election for Myrick.

END OF SIDE TWO