

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

## Interview

*with*

Robert E. McNair

***Interviewer:***

Cole Blease Graham

***Date:***

July 23, 1982

**CBG:** This is Tape 7, 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 July 23, 1982. Governor, we were talking about assembling a staff and more specifically about how your new administration was going to relate to the press. What were your major steps in that area?

**REM:** I suppose, having been in the legislature through four previous administrations and having had the opportunity to observe how they had operated, the kind of staff they had, and the relationship they had with the staff, and the staff with the legislative leadership, I felt very strongly that we really needed a good strong staff, one that was both respected by those who they were going to be working with as well as knowledgeable and helpful, not just in the normal staff relationship but really in formulating policy-making decisions and in implementing those decisions. I set out to assemble what I thought was a strong staff, one that could help provide leadership. We got a lot of advice. Everybody kept saying, "Don't get a weak staff. You need good people."

I had felt that we were coming into a time when we really had to communicate and when we had to have a good relationship with the media, at least an ability to communicate with the public through the media. So we needed somebody who had their respect and confidence. As I've mentioned before, Speaker [Solomon] Blatt, who was pushing me pretty hard himself along with others to get a good strong staff had mentioned "somebody like Bob Hickman," who was news director with WIS-TV. We didn't think he would be available. The salary schedule was relatively low in the Governor's Office, and I think it was a pure coincidence that [J. Robert] Bob Hickman called me about the first or second evening that I was in office wanting to come see me after his eleven o'clock news. As I have said, I thought he wanted some special interview when he really wanted to express an interest in coming to work with us. Of course, that was exciting to me personally, and we were able to work it out with him taking a substantial reduction in pay.

He filled a real role. Bob was a good person to work with. He had the TV background, which meant that he wrote well, and he had an ability to express himself with words rather than paragraphs or pages. (chuckles) And that suited my style. In addition, he had the real respect and confidence of people in the media itself from the editorial level right on down to the working reporters. He had worked with all of them and had gotten quite a reputation and an image in the state. He had a good relationship with the legislative leaders and the governmental people. He was a real addition to the staff, a strong addition, and he worked quite well with all of us.

**CBG:** Was it your idea to have a big, specialized staff? Was having one person relating to the press an innovation for governors?

**REM:** No, everybody had always had a press secretary and the press secretary, you know, depended on what the particular governor wanted to use him for. Some were speech writers. Some were more than that and really worked directly in program development and in liaison with the legislature and government and everybody else. Others had different kinds of ideas about it.

What I thought we needed was that in particular to pull together people who could perform in broad general areas. I wanted somebody at a good high level who could work with the department heads, who they would feel comfortable working with. After a few meetings with me, they could then go work with this person. So we looked for an executive staff assistant of that caliber and that level.

We were coming into federal funds. They were just beginning to flow. There was substantial money available for program planning. There was a lot of money to develop state planning. There was a lot of money for creative development projects, like demonstration projects. I felt that we had reached a point where we had to begin to zero in on that and not only get our share but to work with the federal government. So we began to take advantage of it and turn it to our benefit rather than, as we'd previously done by reason of state policy, say, "we don't want it." You know, ours had been that we didn't want federal aid, and we ran away from it. We felt that there wasn't any need to do that any longer. It was the same money; it came from the same source, so we'd get it. We opted to look for somebody who would be a federal relations person, and that's where [Robert L.] Bob Alexander, who'd been on Senator Olin Johnston's staff, came in. He had primarily done that at that level. He was Senator Johnston's staff person who worked with the main federal departments and agencies, so he knew them, but he had also been the person on the staff who had worked with people from South Carolina. So he was really an ideal person to fall right into that and didn't have to learn the ropes.

**CBG:** Was he able to win the confidence [of] department heads?

**REM:** In a very brief period of time. Bob became the person most of them wanted to see because he was the entrée to the federal revenues. So he was really a valuable person. There were so many problems with school districts and in compliance. Bob played a vital role there because he had good relationships with the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. He knew people from Wilbur Cohen, who was the secretary, right on down to the staff-level people. So he, having that relationship, could go with credibility and take superintendents up there to sit down with the appropriate people and help resolve their problems in an amicable atmosphere rather than always ending up in court in an adversarial relationship.

**CBG:** Did you sit down with Mr. Alexander and formulate a general plan for this federal funds flow?

**REM:** Yes, we did. We had to early, and we were one of the first five states, I think, in the country to set up what we called a State Planning and Grants Division within the governor's office, relatively small, where we coordinated all federal funds that were coming into the state, and we helped with the grant applications. Most small communities, you know, small towns and small counties, didn't have professional staffs, so we geared our assistance to them. This was the kind of thing we wanted to do. Beyond that, though, we talked about what we wanted to accomplish, and that's where Bob Alexander fit in because he could talk about what was available at that level, and we'd talk about what we needed at this level and try to blend the two together.

There were decisions that we needed to take advantage of all the manpower development monies that were available. That started with basic literacy education right on through the various occupational training programs that were flowing out of Washington. We tried to coordinate all of that, and we were able to because we'd set up early and had gotten a sign-off under an executive order that President [Lyndon B.] Johnson had issued where the states could gear themselves up and would get approval to sign off on sort of coordinating at the state level a lot of things that were flowing through.

So we began to target the areas of primary concern to us, and, of course, it all zeroed around, as we called it then, resource development. We put major emphasis on that, recognizing early that that's what South Carolina had to do. As long we could flow federal funds into that program, we were benefiting from it. We thought that, even though there wasn't a lot at that time coming, we could see the potential for what I called fragmented waste, you know, just a fragmentation of it and a waste of all of the monies, whereas if we could coordinate it and pull it together in a concentrated planned program, we could effectively use the funds.

**CBG:** Was there much sensitivity on the part of the legislature to this new money?

**REM:** We'd sort of grown out of that. There was some reluctance certainly. We'd passed legislative resolutions against federal aid to education for good reasons back at the time we did it. We didn't want it when in fact we'd been accepting it through the vocational [chuckles] training program, you know, and various things like that as long as we could all remember. The reason for that was at that time that federal funds were coming with strings attached, telling you how to run your program and all of that. And nobody wanted the government interfering with how we ran our school program. That was a problem, but most of it was zeroed around integration, you know, to start with, the beginnings of freedom of choice on into the full, geographical, territorial arrangement, and the full integration. As we moved into that and as we moved through that, the further we got, the more people said they realized we needed those funds to implement the kinds of programs we had to carry on.

**CBG:** Would you say that the dominant characteristic of Mr. Alexander's style was that he was persuasive?

**REM:** In the most quiet sort of way. If you sat around and saw him, your first impression of him was, "What in the world is that fellow doing where he is." He was very quiet. He was one who would catch you completely off balance because he appeared not to be listening to what was going on nor paying a whole lot of attention, but he was very effective, yes. I think he gained a lot of confidence because of that. He wasn't an out-front person, he didn't want credit, and he was there to help them, and was, as I say, particularly persuasive. Bob had that ability to get in close to people and to become their friend. I can recall when he took the chief, black, female, compliance lawyer from HEW fishing down on the Santee Lakes. You know, that meant a great deal, to develop that kind of relationship. They had their differences, and it would end up in court quite often. His attitude was, "Let's sit down and talk about it," and he was pretty persuasive in trying to resolve those. He was terrific at getting funds, and that made him particularly friendly and well-received by the agencies and departments. As a result of his work, we went on into that and saw, as I mentioned, a great need to help the small towns and the small governmental entities. Richland County, the city of Columbia, Spartanburg, Greenville, really didn't need a whole lot of help. They just needed to be coordinated into the program because they had professional staffs. Under Bob's leadership we formed this--we called it the Planning and Grants Division and brought in [William] Bill McInnis, who is now with the Budget and Control Board staff, as the state planning officer. He was recognized as one of the top people in the country then and I think still is. But then everybody was trying to get into that. We discovered, as I say, that we needed the help. So that's where we created--I think it's Woody Brooks's division now.

**CBG:** Local government.

**REM:** The Local Government Division within that with somebody on the governor's staff working right at the level that the mayor of any small town in South Carolina could relate to, communicate with, could call and get help. That to me was really one of the most worthwhile parts of all of it because we were able to bring them into the program and let them benefit because they needed it the most.

**CBG:** Perhaps balancing Alexander's persuasiveness was another character on your staff, General [L.G.] Merritt. [chuckles]

**REM:** Well, you know, you go back to building that staff, and I suppose maybe the pressure caused me to look for the right people quickly. I had to have them because I didn't have the normal months to get ready. I

had just a few hours and a few days and then a few weeks to assemble a staff. As I mentioned, I think, I had no legal assistant, except for Grady Patterson, who was then an assistant attorney general. I borrowed him to come in and spend a few hours a day reading acts and approving them from a constitutional standpoint, whether I ought to approve them or not approve them, and to perform the minimal legal assistant duties. Henry Lake, who had served with me in the legislature for a number of years and was working in the legislative council, was an assistant over there, was one who had been around. He was the kind of legal assistant I was looking for. He had been a highway patrolman. He had been in the legislature. He had that relationship with law enforcement, which was so essential at that time. He'd been in the legislature a long time and knew everybody. He was a friend of Senator [L. Marion] Gressette's and Senator [Edgar] Brown's and Speaker Blatt's and all, so as soon as the session was over, I was able to bring Henry in, and he became the full-time legal assistant. Later he became director of the Legislative Council and is now retired. So he came.

As for General Merritt, we were into developing a legislative program, and we had studies made. We had what we thought was a major program that we wanted to get through the legislature. We were overhauling some things. We were into what we called the quantum leap forward with a major tax program and a major program in education, the creation of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism, the forming of the Department of Mental Retardation, and the consolidation of some programs and agencies. From that standpoint, it was pretty massive, and you had to have people that could help you get that through the General Assembly. Regardless of my relationship with them, I'd become governor, and I was across the street. We'll get into that. I was quite anxious to get back over in the State House because you might as well be in another city as be across what was then Senate Street. You weren't going to get legislators to walk across the street to another building to see you, and by custom and practice and tradition [chuckles] you didn't come over and walk around in the halls of the legislature to talk with them. That just wasn't the way it was done; it wasn't an acceptable practice.

So General Merritt was retiring from the Legislative Council which he'd been director of for a long time, and we were quite fortunate to work out an arrangement for him to serve as sort of a legislative assistant on the staff. Of course, having been there all those years, having the respect and confidence of people and being a retired Marine general, he had that kind of image and relationship that people who would talk with him knew they were talking with me, for instance. He was just invaluable, really in implementing a program. All the staff was. Katherine Wolfe, who was my first one--Katherine had that. She'd been there with Senator [Ernest] Hollings as lieutenant governor, with me as lieutenant governor. Senator Brown looked on Bob Alexander and [James E.] Jim Konduros as "those boys on the staff," and he'd say, "When you want to talk to me, don't send one of those boys, send Katherine Wolfe." [laughter] She was respected. She was one of those women who had an unusual ability not only as an administrator to run a tight ship and really was

the top sergeant on the staff, but she could communicate directly with those kinds of people, and they felt comfortable with her.

That was the staff generally. As I said, Woody Brooks did a terrific job of giving those local government people a voice. They didn't feel left out anymore. You know, the municipal association, county government was formed, the small towns association was formed, and that gave them an organization through which he and others could work. All of that took place, I think, primarily as a result of his work pulling people together.

**CBG:** Have you thought whether or not you might have been able to put together such a staff had you come straight in from a campaign perhaps with debts to pay off?

**REM:** I don't know. You know, I really don't. I was so set in my mind, from before I ever ran, to when I was running, to when I was there that you couldn't function without a strong staff. My feeling always was that I like to have people on the staff who knew more about what they were responsible for than I did. If they didn't, then they weren't really that useful to me. I didn't like just the normal kinds of staff, errand boy staff, and I like people who were strong and knowledgeable and who were respected and who people felt comfortable with. Cyril Busbee, the state superintendent of education--it only took a short time for him to feel very comfortable with Jim Konduros, who had the responsibility in that area and at that level.

I think Jim, who's one of our senior partners, was just an invaluable fellow. He had had a Washington background, having worked with Olin Johnston. He left, went with IBM and was out in IBM's Washington office. So he had had the business experience in Washington as well as the political experience and came with the Appalachian program. It was formed, and he was responsible for getting it started. That meant coordinating short- and long-range planning and all of that, and that was the ideal program. It was a guinea pig for planning and program development and all of this kind of thing. So he got my attention pretty quickly, and then we were able to bring him on down to take that whole concept statewide, not just in that little region of South Carolina. Jim became a very valuable addition because, as his role then got into coordinating at the state level--and he and Alexander being friends--and Bob was primarily at the federal level--it gave us a real good, coordinated program of people who had worked together before.

Wayne Corley, who was just a young fellow going to school, had worked as a page in the Lieutenant Governor's Office and had gone through college and law school, working there, sort of that young fellow who everybody knew. They could send me a message through him. He had a relationship with the young legislators, the young people out in the practice of law and all of that. Wayne was very bright. He was, I think, the first person from South Carolina to go out and be elected president of the National Student Bar Association. He went to a national ABA convention and came back as the president of the student bar, the

whole national group. He stayed on the staff later, as we wound down, as legal assistant. He again had developed that relationship with law enforcement and with the Attorney General's office and others that brought us into a good working relationship.

**CBG:** In moving back across into the State House and with the resources that you'd assembled to operate as governor, did you see this as setting your own style and perhaps, let's say, putting a renewed emphasis on the importance of the governor?

**REM:** It was my own style, but I hoped we were establishing that, and I hoped that it was going to--if it worked, people were going to recognize it, both the legislature and others. We had a real battle of getting staff salaries up. Staff salaries were, you know, down at the normal secretarial level, for even staff assistants and people like that. I felt we had to bring those up so that you could attract and keep the kind of qualified people that you wanted in setting up, you know, something like the Planning and Grants Division, the local government assistant, the agricultural assistant. We brought one on the staff because agriculture was the basis of our economy at that time and had absolutely no voice. I mean nobody really talked about it. I can remember hearing the president of the Farm Bureau blast away because he'd listened to a governor's state of the state address, and he hadn't mentioned the word agriculture. [chuckles] So I brought in Tony Anthony as agricultural assistant. Tony had had a background with the State Development Board, which is what we wanted, because we were trying to find agricultural-related industry and business to provide a market. I felt that what we were woefully weak on in the state was not research because we had Clemson and we had the extension Service, but it was marketing. We just didn't have any marketing program. Our farmers grew more fresh peaches than any other place in the country, but we were totally at the whim of the market. We didn't have anybody working on it.

**CBG:** Yes.

**REM:** The same thing with livestock. We didn't have a single livestock specialist on anybody's staff in South Carolina at that time, and nobody talked about livestock marketing. I suppose my farming background [chuckles] was coming out. We had the grain elevator, but that really wasn't activated, you know. We weren't taking advantage of it to get into the export market. So we brought on an agricultural assistant. My feeling was that you didn't need to assemble new departments. You needed to coordinate what you had and make it function. That's why I don't like the Division of Administration. Even at that time governors formed divisions of administration. We avoided it. Mine was to have a staff person and to have interagency councils, that staff person pulling together all the agriculturally-related agencies, for instance, and pooling all

of those resources and coordinating their efforts. I felt we could accomplish more than by forming that other layer of government which, in my judgment, the Division of Administration does.

That wasn't only true there. That was true with education, where we took all of the educationally-related funds from all sources and put them together and had a interagency council that coordinated the flow of those funds. They came up with the plan they would recommend about what monies would flow where. Most of those funds came at that time either from President Johnson or from the Congress with the governor having the power to designate the state agency that would either be the recipient or the coordinating state agency. Well, if you designated one agency as the coordinating state agency, and in most instances they became the recipient, and they didn't like to share it. So we would designate them, but with the understanding and the agreement that the coordinating council would formulate the plan for those funds. It was right effective, and I still think, you know, it's a good way to work. What happens with divisions of administration is they'll become another layer of government, and they become competitors with existing departments and agencies, and you soon find them trying to keep all the funds [chuckles] and administer, and that's what you have here.

**CBG:** Yes.

**REM:** Under the law enforcement assistance program, we pulled together--which is the same group that still functions to administer the criminal justice training center--representatives from every group, including the head of the department of social studies at the University [of South Carolina]. I felt they needed that input.

**CBG:** Yes.

**REM:** They needed some more, other than just the people who were out there carrying the guns and enforcing the law.

***END OF SIDE ONE ; BEGIN SIDE TWO***

**CBG:** This is Tape 7, Side 2, an interview with Governor Robert E. McNair as a part of the McNair Oral History Project of the Department of Archives and History. Today's date is July 23, 1982. Governor, in establishing a now renewed executive, we've talked about the resource of staff and the strength of improved communications in involvement of people. Was this enough to carry you through, or was there formal authority which you sought as well for the Governor's Office?

**REM:** Well, there wasn't much formal authority. I really think what we began to do, again, by reason of having been there and seeing how the system worked or didn't work on occasions and watching it change with the personality of the person in the governor's office and his approach, the way he communicated the way he wanted to operate, was to conclude that the governor could do a lot more than the public had been led to believe, that he really had a lot more authority than the public had been led to believe that he had. He was chairman of the Budget and Control Board, and with federal funds flowing in, giving you an opportunity to have input, if not control, into where those funds went and how they were used, the governor became more influential in the budgeting process. I always felt that in developing the budget, if you really worked at it, if you spent a lot of time on it, if you involved yourself personally in it and developed a real budget and took it to the legislature and battled for it, that that in itself would give you a lot more influence than if you went through the perfunctory motions of a budget and sent it up and let them chew it up.

We began to look not so much at what we could find in the constitution and in the law that the governor could do but what little we found that limited him or said he couldn't do thus and so. You looked at the constitution, and he was the chief magistrate. You know, in my judgment, that made him the chief law enforcement officer in the state. He was also the chief executive. Well, my interpretation of the chief executive is pretty liberal. So we began to function as a chief executive and formed the interagency councils where we met regularly with the department heads and then soon found that we had a problem because we needed to involve the boards and commissions. We'd bring the department head and his chairman and meet with them as a whole with all of them to talk broadly about what we wanted to accomplish, but then in interagency groups to talk about what we needed to do within the areas that they were involved in.

**CBG:** In this system of councils, was the interagency council composed of all state agencies, or did you break it down by function?

**REM:** Well, we had one of all, and we met, oh, several times a year with all of them.

**CBG:** As a whole group.

**REM:** In fact, we met with all agency and department heads when we put the budget together. We'd talk about what we were trying to do and how we were going to approach it. In effect, we would let them know what we were trying to accomplish so that they would feel at least, if not a part of it that, they were informed in what we really wanted to do and why we wanted to do it. Then we formed the Health and Welfare Council, Law Enforcement, the group related to transportation where we had Highways, the Aeronautics

Commission, and the Ports Authority, and we'd meet periodically with them. With some you really didn't accomplish anything of a noticeable nature, but you got them talking to each other. For instance, I was deeply concerned that we were beginning to spend a lot of money in the port in Charleston, but we weren't spending any money on access to the port of Charleston. If we needed to improve the access, it was considered a Charleston County problem, and they had to approve it through their farm-to-market money. I didn't think it ought to be that way. The port of Charleston was a state facility serving the state, and the state ought to provide access. We ought to get in there and open it up and make it easy to get in and out of there. The grain was beginning to flow through. We were just beginning to get into what we called the piggy back at that time and now the containerization of things. Charleston is the main containerization port, primarily because we went after that business and because we did have good highways and good railroads and good port access. So I think from getting Aeronautics and the Ports Authority and the Highway Department meeting together, we at least could talk about those kinds of things and maybe help them to see that one had to help the other a little bit.

**CBG:** Was there any special relationship with the Highway Department? This has historically, I think, been a challenge to governors.

**REM:** It was a real challenge. I had, again, legislative involvement and experience as chairman of the Judiciary Committee. It made me very conscious of lots of the problems that we experienced. I suppose I was one of the few governors that ever asked for and was granted an invitation to meet with the Highway Commission. At that time, highway patrol cars weren't air-conditioned. We had a captain as the head of the highway patrol. So you had a morale problem, you know. Everybody in the neighboring states--the patrolmen--had air-conditioned cars, and ours didn't. We had a captain, so there was little room for promotion. So the Highway Department, I thought, needed to think more about planning. We could plan our highways, and we could determine growth, and we could open up areas by planning. We needed to avoid some of the problems we developed with the highway system by thinking ahead, planning ahead, and determining a little bit more what impact this would have as opposed to that and things of that nature. I found [Silas] Si Pearman most receptive. He'd come in there following Claude McMillan, who'd been a very strong, domineering personality. Si, following him, was a very cooperative, easy-to-get-along-with fellow. So we worked closely together in trying to have them cooperate more with what was going on in the state. I felt we were able to benefit from it substantially.

**CBG:** Did you begin to confront problems, say, for example, between the medical university and . . .

**REM:** Oh, gosh.

**CBG:** . . . other areas around the state, too?

**REM:** Well, yes. You know, we'd sort of, I suppose, gone through all of this period of just beginning to come out of it. Industrial development had come in what we had thought was a substantial way, beginning in the fifties with Mr. [James] Byrnes and then with Senator Hollings, who was most aggressive and devoted most of his time to industrial development. We had reached a point where we had to begin to look at what we were trying to do and pull it all together and look at economic development, not industrial development, and look at the relationship of one thing to another. That meant you got into a whole bunch of things that you hadn't really thought a whole lot of before. We used consultants extensively. We brought in consultants and we used them because we had the federal funds available to pay for it and I think that again was where we were lucky to be in the beginning stages.

The Medical University in Charleston had been there. It was the Charleston medical college. Everybody recognized it as being the Charleston medical college run by the Charleston Medical Society for the benefit of the Charleston doctors and funded by the state. And it was really getting in trouble. It had a seven-man board composed of all doctors, all probably in their seventies and not wanting anybody to meddle with it. Well, we were just in the early stages of the frustration of people in other parts of the state. I couldn't understand why people from here and everywhere else would send their patients to Duke or to Emory and not to Charleston, and I soon found out. They didn't feel like they had any input into it to any great extent, and that was unfortunately so. Also we were looking at medical education, the shortage of doctors. We had to do something about that. Well, a quick study of the Medical University showed us what the problems were. It was a Charleston medical school run by the Charleston Medical Society for their benefit, and they were on the verge of losing accreditation. Of the hundred accredited medical schools, we were one hundred and one at that time. [chuckles] I didn't know it, and we got into that. The president of the Medical University was, again, somebody who was dedicated to it, devoted to it, but it was his, and nobody should meddle with it or interfere with it, and he didn't welcome suggestions and certainly didn't want any advice from anybody. So we really were caught up in having to go through that and in finding it in the shape it was in, I suppose it was a good time because that's when we revamped the board and made it a statewide board. Not more than half, I think, could be professional, and the other half had to be non-professional, so we got some businessmen on the board. We got into almost building a whole new medical center down there by getting the support of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. A Dr. Galligher, who headed that section, came down and literally devoted his time, with his own people helping us, to writing up a plan for the Medical University and writing the application for funds that they were going

to approve--because we didn't have the capability of doing it--with the help of Bill Lyles. A lot of people never recognized his role in many critical areas in this state. Bill Lyles was a planner with his architectural firm, and Dr. Galligher and his people literally saved the Medical University's accreditation and moved it, we thought, into the mainstream.

I tried later to bring the Medical University into the university system and make it a part of the University of South Carolina, feeling that that was a way to accomplish all of the things we needed to accomplish, making it the state institution, leaving it in Charleston, but giving it the benefit of the resources of the university and also giving it an umbrella board that got it away from just being run by the medical society for the benefit of the medical society. We weren't able to do that, but we did get the new board and the new approach. We did expand the facility, you know, down there substantially. They were then taking in about sixty new students a year. The former president of the University of California did a big study on medical education in the South.

**CBG:** Clark Kerr, wasn't it?

**REM:** Clark Kerr, that's right. I had been very friendly with him and had him here to look at ours and to make a speech for us, and what they discovered was that, of course, we needed to take in more and that we could take in more and should take in more, and it would be a lot cheaper to double the size of the freshmen class than to build a new one. We couldn't afford to build a new one, we didn't think, at that time. Also, our primary problem was a lack of facilities for the graduates to do their residency. So we concentrated on, as we called it, area and regional health centers, like Orangeburg, you know, really helping them become a center. Greenville-Spartanburg got very aggressive up there in improving theirs, and Richland, Columbia, Florence, and all, because they were having to go someplace else, and we weren't getting them back. So the statistics showed that, you know, contrary to what everybody thought, we were educating more per capita, but we were educating them for other places. Philadelphia, you know, was a medical center, and everybody coming out of all the medical schools tried to get there or tried to get to Baltimore or tried to get to one of these other recognized medical centers, and when they got there, they stayed. So we didn't get them back. So we got into that.

We got into using the state agencies and departments more. The School of Psychiatry was at the Medical University in Charleston, but the Department of Mental Health had its residency agreement with the University of Georgia. The reason was a disagreement between the head of the school in Charleston and the head of the program up here. They could not get together because the medical school simply took the position, "They're my students until I turn them loose" and out here they said, "They're under us when they're working out here."

**CBG:** Yes.

**REM:** That was literally the problem. We spent months meeting in the governor's office in open, hostile confrontation, with me almost taking the position, "I'm going to recommend and try to cut all the money off for all of you if you don't get together. It's stupid." And that was the kind of stupid thing that you were confronted with. We finally forced Dr. Kleckley and Dr. [William] Hall to sign a written contract. It had to be in writing, and we negotiated and negotiated for months. I use that as an illustration of problems you got into when you got underneath the surface. So the Medical University then expanded substantially. A lot of effort was made in promoting and helping with the promotion of the various areas in the state, gearing themselves up so that they could become regional health centers. That's where we got into the Medical University working with them and really entering into agreements to work with them. They would take so many in the residency programs. I think as a result of that we substantially increased both the output and the retention, and we needed, you know, to increase retention dramatically in South Carolina.

**CBG:** There were some things going on at the federal level in this area too, weren't there, like getting our state designated as a separate regional medical program.

**REM:** That's right.

**CBG:** When we had been lumped, I think, with North Carolina.

**REM:** We'd been lumped with North Carolina, and they, of course, were running off leaving us.

**CBG:** Yes.

**REM:** They got all of the benefits of that, and we had to pull out of that and get designated as a separate region. That not only gave us the opportunity but forced us to do things we needed to do.

**CBG:** Was that another example of Alexander's magic?

**REM:** Yes. You know, if you really get back to it, Bob Alexander has to be given the credit for doing these kinds of things and for putting them together and making them work, and for finding it. He discovered a lot of this.

**CBG:** Yes. If you stop now and think back a little bit, some of your evaluators, I guess, have called the short term in office a bit of a "do-nothing" period.

**REM:** [chuckles]

**CBG:** Do you think that a fair characterization given what we have just been describing here in just two areas, ports and transportation and medical education?

**REM:** Well, you know, I suppose if you look at it in comparison with the next four years, yes. I went in suddenly, I didn't have any time to think about, and I knew I had two years to get ready for my term if I had gotten elected. You know, you have ideas of what you want to do, but there's a long way between ideas and formulation of a plan to submit to the legislature. You don't walk into them and say, "Fellows, we ought to accomplish this magnificent, glorified, ideological program." You've got to have the ABC's of it or you don't get what you want. And our approach was that we went to them with specifics. We went to them with what we wanted, and it was all spelled out and it was there. The legislators that were going to work on it were in place to really take the leadership in carrying it through. So those two years were spent in [chuckles] sort of getting a grip on things and trying to defuse what had almost erupted as an explosive civil rights situation in the state because of integration. Clemson had just been integrated, the University [of South Carolina] had just been integrated, the schools were confronted with it, the Voting Rights Act was passed, the federal registrars were running, you know, trying to run out of your ears, the poverty program was in turmoil and total disarray. I tried to get a grip on it and only had one legislative session between the time I came in and the time I came in for my full term. When I succeeded Mr. Russell it was right at the end of that session, and the state appropriation bill was then in final throes and, as I mentioned earlier, that's when I think with the legislature feeling sorry for me and wanting to be helpful we passed it without a conference or preconference. The next session was the only one, and I'm never one to go somewhere unprepared. I never liked to do that. I didn't like to try a case I wasn't prepared for. Now, I didn't like to do anything I hadn't prepared for. So there was no opportunity in my judgment to really prepare. We had some things we wanted to get done in that first session, and we did.

I've commented on it before that the four-year term is too short. I don't like the two terms. I like a six-year term, and I think I'm a good one to talk about it because I had six years, and I know the benefits, but I also had to run for reelection. That time was taken up with one ear to the political side and one ear to the what-do-you-want-to-do side, and how can you blend that with the political and get reelected. If you don't get reelected, you not going to accomplish anything, so I had to use up that first year to get ready to get

reelected, hold things in line, and worry about all the festering problems around the state that were almost ready to explode everywhere. You know, when I went in, I went in almost immediately with demonstrations in Allendale, demonstrations here, there, and everywhere over the state, including the first boycott of classes at State College, non-related to integration, but related to the administration and the quality of the program. So it was a busy time.

**CBG:** Wouldn't it be fair to say that much of the ground work, though, was laid during this period?

**REM:** And I think people recognized it later.

**CBG:** Yes.

**REM:** We were meeting, we were working, we were developing programs, and I think generally those that were involved or those that were interested knew what was going on.

**CBG:** Councils were started.

**REM:** Councils were started.

**CBG:** Task forces.

**REM:** The task forces were started. Consultants were working.

**CBG:** Your breakfasts were going on with legislators.

**REM:** Breakfast meetings were going with legislators. We were doing all of that, and we were talking about problems and talking about what we needed to accomplish.

**CBG:** What about constitutional revision? Had that started?

**REM:** Constitutional revision. A committee was sort of there and, my recollection is, was studying. It hadn't really gotten going real good, and I had the opportunity to appoint several people to that commission. I remember reaching out and getting [William F.] Bill Workman, for instance, who was then slowing down

but was sort of the authority, had written all the books and things like that, and trying to get good strong people on that commission who I felt again could be effective.

**CBG:** That raises another point, too.

**REM:** John West came along at that time--then very active from the legislative side with constitutional revision.

**CBG:** This raises another general point, namely, the impact of a six-year term on appointments to these various boards and commissions.

**REM:** I was the only person up until then who had had an opportunity at every member of every board and commission. A lot of attention was put into boards and commissions. I remember getting our people to do something that everybody was shocked at when we got the results, even the Secretary of State's Office. We asked for a list of all the boards and commissions so that we could look at them and could review them, and we found that a lot of them were dormant. People just had ignored them, and some of them should have been abolished.

We approached some of that, but we started focusing on them by trying to strengthen boards and commissions, trying to put people whom we felt would take a strong interest and who could contribute significantly to the functioning of that board and commission. We found people who were active in the areas of associations like mental retardation. Pick a Dr. Jim Berry from over in Marion, South Carolina, who was very active in mental retardation because he had a mentally retarded son and bring him in. He brought an awful lot to bear.

As for blacks--in the early stages on the boards and commissions, there were none. I had promised the students and the faculty of State College that we would integrate that board. It was an all-black school run by an all-white board elected by the General Assembly. The General Assembly at that time was in no position to stand up and nominate and elect a black. Well, we worked out an agreement with them, and it was a quiet, easy understanding that when a vacancy developed they would go home and leave it open. That meant the governor could appoint to fill that term until they came back, and I would appoint in the absence. Then they would come back and it was easier for them to, in effect, ratify that. I remember getting for Welfare the now Bishop James, who was then Reverend James, from over in the Sumter area. I wanted to put Reverend James, a very bright, articulate, respected black leader, on the Department of Welfare board, and nobody in the General Assembly was in a position to nominate Reverend James. So they went home, I

appointed him, and when they came back [James] Jim Cuttino, who was then the representative from Sumter County, volunteered to nominate him during the next session. He got elected.

To the State College Board, I appointed just about every member, rather than having them elected. Mr. Cathcart here was an insurance executive, a black. [Samuel] Bacote from over in Kingstree was a black agriculture extension agent whom everybody in the whole Pee Dee area loved and I'd known since I'd been growing up over in that part of the state. People like that said to the blacks, "Yes, you've got representation now on the board." We tried to put blacks on every board and commission as it came along, Mental Health, Criminal Justice, the Pardon and Parole Board, you know, down the line, and we were able in that way, I think, to accomplish that. We ended up, I believe, with them on just about every board that we had.

**CBG:** Did your political ears suggest that this might be a risk that could hurt your election in 1966?

**REM:** It was risk-taking in the beginning because you did have that problem. My campaign was, I think, the last where that was almost the issue and where we had to be faced with the racial question.

**CBG:** Did you get good communications with the leadership, let's say, in the Senate, during this short term?

**REM:** Very good, excellent relationships because, as I mentioned, while being lieutenant governor, I had those weekly meetings on Tuesday mornings with the leadership of the Senate to talk about what we could do with them. By carrying forward with that breakfast meeting with the Senate leadership every week, I kept my touch and ties with them, and by working with individual senators on the special programs that we and they were interested in, I kept a good relationship with them, so I never would let the door close. [chuckles]

***END OF TAPE***