

Leonard A. Sawyer

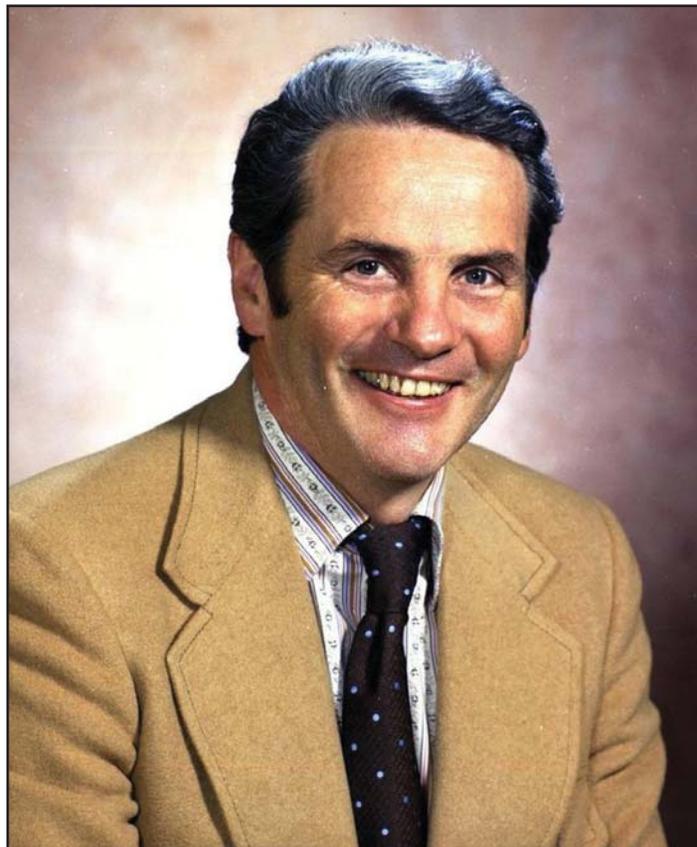
An Oral History



Washington State Legislature
Oral History Program

Leonard A. Sawyer

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Interviewed by Anne Kilgannon

Edited by Melinda McCrady
Legislative Oral History Program
Washington State Legislature
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Preface	1
Introduction	3
Chapter 1: Leonard Sawyer’s Early Life	5
Chapter 2: High School and Sports	9
Chapter 3: World War II and College	15
Chapter 4: Stepping into the Political Realm	19
Chapter 5: The Start of a Long Legislative Career	25
Chapter 6: “The Legislature Ran a Lot Differently Then”	31
Chapter 7: Moving Up in the Ranks	37
Chapter 8: Challenging Speaker O’Brien	41
Chapter 9: The Coalition	51
Chapter 10: “The Jeep” Leads the Minority	61
Chapter 11: Finally, the Speakership	75
Chapter 12: First Steps of the Reform Package	79
Chapter 13: Professionalizing the Legislative Staff	87
Chapter 14: Replacing the Legislative Council	91
Chapter 15: Making the Legislature An Equal Branch of Government	95
Chapter 16: Founding the Legislative Evaluation and Accountability Program	99
Chapter 17: Controversies Arise	105
Chapter 18: Distracted by New Guinea	111
Chapter 19: Unrest in the Democratic Caucus	119
Chapter 20: A bad economy and strained relationships	125
Chapter 21: An Abrupt Ending	131
Chapter 22: Closing Thoughts	145
Chapter 23: Interview with Former State Representatives Rick Bender and Jim Boldt	149

Contents

Chapter 24: Interview with David Ammons, former Associated Press reporter covering Washington State Government; known as “The Dean of the Capital Press Corps.” . . . 167

Chapter 25: Interview with Dean Foster, former Chief Clerk of the Washington State House. . . . 171

Chapter 26: The Reform Program: A Group Interview with Speaker Leonard Sawyer 181

Chapter 27: Interview with Tim Burke Conducted – September 14, 2004 203

Chapter 28: Speeches and Correspondence. 219

Chapter 29: Newspaper Articles 231





Most of this Oral History is based on a long series of interviews with the late Representative Leonard A. Sawyer that were conducted by Ms. Anne Kilgannon. The first interview was held February 26, 2003 and the last one concluded on March 23, 2004. The resulting 2,200 pages of transcriptions remained unedited for more than a decade.

This book contains much of that raw material, as well as a few additional interviews reflecting on Rep. Sawyer's terms as Speaker of the Washington State House of Representatives.

Not every word on the interview recordings is decipherable, but every attempt was made to present Mr. Sawyer's words verbatim.

I am deeply impressed and appreciative of Anne Kilgannon's work on this project. Without her, this story would not have been told. I never met Rep. Sawyer, but Ms. Kilgannon's skilled questioning provided me – and, I hope, readers – with a good picture of a personable, interesting, and committed elected official.

Additionally, I want to thank Dean Foster for his advice, insights, and exceptional memory. His guidance was invaluable to the completion of this project.

~Melinda McCrady

Introduction

Leonard Sawyer's Early Life

Leonard Alson (Len) Sawyer was born May 18, 1925 in Puyallup, Washington to Alson and Velma Sawyer. His father's family came to the Puyallup area from Michigan; his mother's family emigrated from Ontario, Canada.

Alson Sawyer, his father, worked for the Northern Pacific Railroad accounting office in Tacoma, Washington, maintaining that position through the Great Depression. Velma Sawyer, his mother, was a homemaker and, according to Len, the family organizer and disciplinarian. He had one sister, Myrtice.

Len began working at a very early age, delivering newspapers while attending the first grade. He usually completed his paper route on a bike that he shared with his sister, but he occasionally would wear his roller skates and have his dog pull him around town while he threw papers onto porches.

The Sawyer children attended public schools in Meeker and Puyallup. Len was a good student who enjoyed math and science. Though smaller than most of his classmates, he was also a gifted athlete. He boxed, played neighborhood baseball, and was a celebrated varsity basketball player in high school.

Mr. Sawyer continued boxing and playing basketball at the University of Washington, and, upon returning from World War II, attended the College of Puget Sound on a basketball scholarship. Sports was always a passion of his – as a leader in the Washington State Legislature, he said he often looked first to local athletes when recruiting people to run for public office.

When he was elected from the 25th Legislative District to the House of Representatives for the first time in 1954, Sawyer was just 29 years old; at that time, he was the youngest person ever to hold that office. He served in the House for 22 years and was elected

Speaker of the House twice.

During his legislative career, he held many leadership positions within the House Democratic Caucus while in both the minority and the majority. He also served as Chair of the House Highways Committee.

As Speaker of the House, he is credited with many long-lasting reforms in the legislature; hiring non-partisan, permanent staff, instituting year-round standing committees, and starting the Legislative Evaluation and Accountability Program (LEAP) that lawmakers, staff, and members of the public still depend on today for accurate and up-to-date budget information. The goal of Sawyer's reform package was to put the legislative branch on a more equal footing with the quickly-expanding executive branch, and he was widely recognized for those successful efforts.

Outside the Legislature, Mr. Sawyer held a Washington State bar license for 66 years and he practiced law for more than 50 years. He was also a partner in several land development projects.

He was married twice and had seven children. He passed away August 19, 2015.

Obituary

Leonard Alson Sawyer
May 18, 1925 ~ August 19, 2015
“I have had a great life!!!”

Leonard Sawyer passed away quietly at his home in Seattle with his loving wife Dawne at his side. Born and raised in Puyallup, WA, Len often said he had the perfect childhood thanks to his exceptional supportive parents Alson and Velma Sawyer. He forever thought of Puyallup as home no matter where he lived.

Len was predeceased by his parents, sister Myrtice Kapecky (1921-1982) and his twin daughters Connie and Carrie.

He was survived by his wife, Dawne Friesen Sawyer. He was also survived by five children from his first marriage: Colleen Shields, Cindy Schuur, Carla Opheim, Clark Sawyer, Craig Sawyer and eight grandchildren: Kevin, Katy and McKenzie Shields, Willi & Andee Schuur, Hannah Sawyer (Craig) and Adriana Opheim.

Leonard attended Puyallup public schools through high school. He was always active in sports. In high school he was on the varsity basketball team recognized as a special player by his coach and others. He never worried about his small size as he was very fast and highly motivated. Len was also a neighborhood organizer for sports teams and other activities. He carried those organizational skills throughout his life.

He graduated in 1943 during WWII, and joined the U.S. Navy. He entered the Navy's V-12 program at the University of Washington. He couldn't totally leave sports behind. He played basketball at the U.W. and was on the boxing team becoming Welter Weight champion. He was fortunate to attend several other highly rated colleges such as Cornell. As Ensign Leonard Sawyer, he served primarily in China.

Upon return to Puyallup, Len attended the College of Puget Sound in Tacoma on a basketball scholarship, and was high scorer on a championship team. He graduated with a degree in Economics. Len was always grateful for the G.I. bill which enabled him to complete college and law school. He received his law degree from the University of Washington.

Leonard practiced law in Pierce County for over 50

years, first as Deputy Prosecutor for Pierce County practicing criminal law, then in private practice. He and three partners were responsible for the development of several large successful land development projects including Lake Tapps in Pierce County and Lake Cushman in Mason County. He organized state banks in Port Orchard, Hoodspport and Seattle and had a large personal injury practice.

Leonard was elected State Representative from the 25th legislative district at age 29, then the youngest legislator ever elected in Washington. He served 22 years in the Legislature, twice elected Speaker of the House. As Speaker, Leonard was the primary force in designing and implementing legislative reforms in Washington State based on making increased and more accurate information available to legislators to make more informed decisions and make information more available to the public. The program was nationally recognized.

In retirement, Len and Dawne enjoyed golf and great weather during winter months in Palm Desert for the past ten years.

Anyone who knew Len knew he was never boring or bored. He was always planning for the next project. He was creative, determined and enjoyed the process. He was clearly one-of-a-kind and loved life.

Messages may be left at www.bonneywatson.com

A reception is planned for September, soon after Labor Day. Details will be published on the Bonney Watson website and in newspapers in the next few days. Donations may be made in his name to Mary Bridge Children's Hospital, Tacoma.

Published in The Seattle Times on Aug. 30, 2015

See more at: <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/seattletimes/obituary.aspx?pid=175687220#sthash.3lTXdJyh.dpuf>

Chapter 1

Leonard Sawyer's Early Life

Ms. Kilgannon: I'm with former Speaker of the House, Leonard Sawyer. This is our first interview so we're going to talk just a little bit about your family and your background. Your family lived in Puyallup where you were born in 1920?

Mr. Sawyer: Nineteen-twenty, yes. My grandparents came from Ontario, on my mother's side, and then my father's side came from upper Michigan.

Ms. Kilgannon: The lumbering area?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. My grandfather was a cook and then he ran the local telephone company. And that was the main thing that my dad remembers.

Ms. Kilgannon: Your father came with his family to Puyallup when his father decided to move down here. About how old was he? Was he an adolescent or a little older?

Mr. Sawyer: Let's see. He was born in 1900, so he was about twenty. He had started working for my grandfather when he was real young as a mechanic. And then he went to work for the Northern Pacific Railroad in the accounting office and he stayed there for twenty-some years because he was very good in math and that kind of stuff. On the side, he used to keep books for people.

Ms. Kilgannon: So that would be a white-collar job that he worked himself into. I believe he had to go into Tacoma to work for the railroad? That's where the offices were.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. It was the old depot down in Tacoma that they modernized and so forth. And that was the big place in those days.

Ms. Kilgannon: And you said that he had steady employment there all through those years, which got you through the Depression.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. All my friends, well, not all my

friends, but a good percentage of my friends, their dads were working WPA, or their mothers were working. So I was pretty lucky because we always had our twenty-dollars a week or twenty-five towards the end there.

My dad was a very popular type of person. He was just likeable. And he was very intelligent. I wish he'd had an education because even when I was in college he could enunciate and pronounce words better than I. And math, any kind of science, he was very good in those things.

Ms. Kilgannon: So more learning by doing and just being with other people?

Yes. And he picked things up very quickly. My dad went to the eighth grade and my mom went to the eighth grade, too. That was normal education in those days. Now, my grandmother on dad's side, Bessie, she was the only one who had graduated from high school until my sister, Myrtice, graduated in Puyallup. So education was not much. Putting food on the table was the main concern.

Puyallup was kind of an interesting little town. It was really dead during the week, but on the weekend the farmers all came in. Most of them came by buggy. Some came by cars. It was lively.

Ms. Kilgannon: Could you maybe describe your neighborhood that you grew up in in Puyallup?

Mr. Sawyer: Basically, it was in the southeast part of town, and it was purely working people. I didn't notice anything bad about it. I enjoyed it. The best part of town was in the northeast part of town and that's where all the merchants lived and all that. We lived in the working class section of town.

Ms. Kilgannon: This would be the working class that owned their own homes?

Mr. Sawyer: No. Mixed. Owning your own home wasn't that much of an opportunity in those days.

Ms. Kilgannon: This was before loans from banks.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, yes. In fact, I remember the first time my mother and dad bought a house. They paid twenty-five-hundred dollars for it. Then, we were right in downtown, not downtown but within walking distance, a couple of blocks or so. It was a two story and Myrtice (my sister) and I were used to sleeping together, but then we got there and my God, we had three bedrooms upstairs and one down. Didn't know what to do with all the room.

Ms. Kilgannon: So you got your own room?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. And then the back yard, my dad, we always had chickens and so forth, he had a chicken area that the chickens were on, and they made that thing so hard it was almost like cement. So then we put up a basketball hoop back there.

Ms. Kilgannon: In amongst the chickens?

Mr. Sawyer: In amongst the chickens. The whole neighborhood used to come to our house because I had the basketball hoop.

Ms. Kilgannon: Sure. That would be special. Let's talk a little bit about your mother before we get into basketball, which I know is a big part of your life. But I don't want to forget your mother.

What was her life like? What kinds of things did she do?

Mr. Sawyer: My mother was the disciplinarian. She was really a great mother. She took care of us really well. She loved to sleep in, so one day a week she'd sleep in 'till about four o'clock just before my dad would come home.

Ms. Kilgannon: She'd had a bit of hard upbringing. Could you describe that for me?

Mr. Sawyer: She was up there in the prairie living up over a cobbler's shop, you know. There were five children, so she had four siblings.

Ms. Kilgannon: She was the oldest?

Mr. Sawyer: She was the oldest. Her mother, I don't know what she died of, but she died early. She was twelve-years-old when her mother died. Then she took over the management of the house. She did all the washing, all the cooking, everything.

Ms. Kilgannon: Kind of parenting her siblings?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. She was the disciplinarian.

Ms. Kilgannon: That shapes a person, that experience.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, it did with her.

Ms. Kilgannon: When she had her own family, did she take the same tack of being highly organized, or did she relax a little bit?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, yes. She was always highly organized. She was a great seamstress, and so she spent an awful

lot of time sewing for my sister and her.

Ms. Kilgannon: A lot of people made everything then.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, she did. In fact, my sister always griped about never having any store-bought clothes. The rest of her friends did. But she had better clothes.

My mom made pies. She could make pie crust like you can't believe. It would melt in your mouth. And she did canning. God, she spent hours canning every summer. We usually made a trip, once a year, over to eastern Washington and we'd buy peaches and so forth. So we had a lot of peaches, apricots, pears and all kinds of things. Beans. We'd have a whole cabinet full of that.

Ms. Kilgannon: What about berries? That's kind of a berry area.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. We always had lots of berries.

Ms. Kilgannon: I know some kids went every summer as jobs and picked berries. Did you ever do anything like that?

Mr. Sawyer: I tried that. I wasn't very successful in berry picking. I got a job in the raspberry field and the boxes were about three inches high and you got ten cents a box or some damn thing, I don't know. Pardon the language. You'd fill that damn box up and by the time you got it to the farmer, the guy with the check, the berries would settle, and then you'd have to go back out and pick more to fill it up. It was a very frustrating experience.

I had a paper route since the time I was in the first grade. I sold papers on the street corners in the first, second, third and fourth grades. Then I'd go down and sell papers at the fair and different things. I finally got a paper route of my own when I was about eleven-years old.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you have a bicycle? Did you do it on a bike?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. My mother and dad bought us a bike. It was an Elgin, I remember and it had balloon tires and it was for both of us, my sister and me. Unfortunately, I got ahold of it first, and that was her complaint the rest of her life, about I got the bike. She was sick, appendix or something, and she had to sit there in the window and watch me pump it up and down the street.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you use it for your paper route?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, yes. I had my wheels. I'd go any place in town, you know. And then I had a little dog, so I took my roller skates and he'd pull me around town, and that's how I delivered the Sunday paper.

Ms. Kilgannon: I hope it wasn't too little a dog.

Mr. Sawyer: No. He could run about thirty miles an hour!

Ms. Kilgannon: What an image. Was Puyallup the kind of place where a kid could know everybody, go in and out of stores, and know everybody in town?

Mr. Sawyer: I, probably a little more than most kids. When I was young, we lived up above my grandfather's garage. He had little living quarters up there, and it was right across the street from the park, so my playground was the park. And just to left of that was the fire station and the jail, so I'd go and play at the jail and I'd go play on the fire engines, and that was just part of living. So I knew every merchant in town. And then, at that time, I stuttered. And nobody could understand me. My sister Myrtice was my interpreter. She could always understand me. I knew all the merchants. There were only about five thousand or less people in town.

And you'd walk down the street and you'd know practically everybody. After I came back from the war in 1945, Puyallup had doubled in size. Gee, I walked down the street, and I was fairly well-known being active in sports and stuff, I didn't know anybody hardly. It was a shock to me.

Ms. Kilgannon: We should talk a little bit about your schooling too, and then we can kind of move you along. I imagine you walked to school and attended all the local schools?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, yes. Most kids walked. Some had bikes if they were out a little bit, and they had bike racks all over.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you always attend the same schools even though you moved houses a bit? Or did you have to switch schools every once in awhile?

Mr. Sawyer: I attended Meeker when I moved up close to town, and I stayed there at Meeker until I got in junior high. And the junior high was maybe seven or eight blocks from home. Then we moved up by the high school and it was only three blocks again. So it

was all walkable.

Ms. Kilgannon: You just roll right out of bed and go to school. Do you have any particular teachers you'd like to remember?

Mr. Sawyer: My basketball coach was very close. I loved him, but he was the best math teacher I've ever been around.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you have your dad's ability with math?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. And sciences and math. And I enjoyed them. I liked to read about the history. He did, too.

My third grade teacher was this little gal, small little gal, and her name was Mrs. Haviland. And I stuttered so much that hardly anybody could understand me. So she decided to correct that, luckily, and right in front of the class she'd call me up and make me speak.

Ms. Kilgannon: How did you feel? Did that fill you with anxiety?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, yes. At first. But what she'd do, she'd make me wiggle my finger like this. (Wags finger back and forth)

Ms. Kilgannon: Just back and forth.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. And I had to watch the finger. When I watched the finger, then I didn't stutter.

Ms. Kilgannon: How do you think that worked? Just a distraction?

Mr. Sawyer: As she said, my mind worked so fast my mouth couldn't keep up to it. And so by doing that, I got distracted and my mind slowed down, and it worked.

Ms. Kilgannon: I wonder how she thought of that.

Mr. Sawyer: She picked it up someplace. But it just worked like a charm with me.

Ms. Kilgannon: That's wonderful.

Mr. Sawyer: I remember all the rest of the way through grade school and even in high school, if I started to feel stuttering, I'd go (demonstrates)

Ms. Kilgannon: You'd do the little finger waving. That's wonderful. Because that could have just made life very difficult.

Mr. Sawyer: I still had a speech impediment, and I still have one to this day, but it made it workable. I

could communicate.

Ms. Kilgannon: That's amazing.

Mr. Sawyer: And it happened so quickly. It was just like overnight, you know. It wasn't something that gradually happened. She got me doing that within a week. She insisted that I do it all the time, even out on the playground when I was talking to people.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you stutter all the time, even when you were just hanging out with your friends?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes.

Ms. Kilgannon: Not just in tense situations?

Mr. Sawyer: Probably more in tense situations. But my friends got used to it and they understood me, so I was okay.

Ms. Kilgannon: Were you one of those high energy little kids?

Mr. Sawyer: I guess so. I don't remember. But every once in a while, I'd get tired of playing with the kids, so I'd go inside. And I played with paper dolls because I used to cut out sporting people and I'd have football games and baseball games and basketball games. I did that up through high school. I got tired of being around other people and I went in my own little world.

Chapter 2

High School and Sports

Ms. Kilgannon: Maybe that's a good segue. We should talk about what sports meant to you.

Mr. Sawyer: In my early age, boxing was a big thing.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes. You said that you went to some boxing matches of kind of a famous person, Freddie Steele. He became quite a champion.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. He was. But anyway, that's about the first organized sporting event I remember.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you go to that with your dad?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. My grandfather had that garage we were talking about, and a lot of extra space, so he had a group of about four or five fighters who came down there and they used to use that as their training facilities. As a youngster, I'd go down and watch them and they'd put me up on the table or something, and then I'd swing at their face.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did they have the punching bags and stuff?

Mr. Sawyer: They had some punching bags, but they were too big for me.

Ms. Kilgannon: They actually let you hit them in the face? Wow!

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, yes. It didn't bother them.

Ms. Kilgannon: No. I suppose they'd be all kind of hardened.

Mr. Sawyer: I missed probably as many times as I hit. But, anyway, I got started in that and then my grandfather used to second some of the fighters.

Ms. Kilgannon: What does that mean?

Mr. Sawyer: He'd be in their corner.

Ms. Kilgannon: Be the guy kind of looking after them?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. Give them water, and he'd travel with some of them. So, we were pretty wound up in

boxing, and it seems like most of my relatives were wound up in boxing too. I know one uncle was the heavyweight champ— at 160 pounds, he was the heavyweight champ of Puyallup High and different things like that. That was Wes. And so I used to box with him in the garage. He made my right ear just swell at times, because every time I'd drop my right hand, wham, he'd slap me across the face. But, anyway, I'm wandering a little bit....

Ms. Kilgannon: That's alright. Boxing was a kind of thing that was big then.

Mr. Sawyer: It was big in our household. Every time there was a smoker, especially if Freddie Steele was fighting—he was a hometown boy in Tacoma—we'd bundle up and go on into Tacoma. I can't remember, but I think it was the armory they used to fight in. But it had a balcony, I remember, because we usually got up in the balcony. Steele was my idol when I was young.

The thing is I was a pretty good little fighter, boxer and so forth. So every time my folks would go out on a party they'd come home and a lot of their friends, like one of their closest friends, would box with me all the time. So they'd wake me up and I'd go down...

Ms. Kilgannon: You'd be like the party entertainment?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. And the guys would get on their knees and box me, and then I'd go back to bed.

Ms. Kilgannon: Boxing is one of those things organized by size, so there would be an opportunity for someone who's not real big to still compete.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. When I got to college I had a gym class, I turned out for boxing. I took that as a course and right towards the end of school they had this intramural boxing thing that the coach was kind of running. So he came back and he asked me if I wanted to fight in the thing. And I said, "It would be fun, but I don't think I have time." And he said, "Hey. I want you to fight and so you get to fight the top guy in the elimination." I said, "Oh, that's okay with me."

Ms. Kilgannon: You mean you wouldn't have to work your way through the ranks? You'd just get to do the final thing?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. So, I went in, and that's when I became the welterweight champ of the University of Washington in the intramural.

Ms. Kilgannon: Go right to the top there.

Mr. Sawyer: I was a boxer because Freddie Steele was a boxer. As I gained a little weight, these guys started to be about 5' 8" or 9, and so I only got to be a welterweight. But I used to box a lot. In the service, I used to fight with a lot of Golden Gloves champs and stuff.

Ms. Kilgannon: I imagine boxing keeps you in pretty good shape. The quick reactions, the strength...

Mr. Sawyer: I was small, but I had fantastic quick reactions, and I had lots of training. So I was a pretty good fighter. A kid in Sumner came over and broke my nose when I was in the eighth grade. He could hit like a mule. And I didn't know that and he was a left hook artist—most kids wouldn't be that—and so he broke my nose. From then on in when he we'd box—he had to go full bore because he hit so hard—so from then on in I knew, so I always circled with my left. He ended up being the welterweight boxing champ for Washington State University. They had great boxing teams over there. The only guy that beat him was the one who became the national champ.

Ms. Kilgannon: That kind of one-on-one sport, what does it do for your character, your development as a person? What does it teach you?

Mr. Sawyer: I think it makes you very competitive. And it makes you realize you're on your own. You must be in shape and you have to really train for it. If you're going to do something, you better know how to do it, and if you don't you get the hell beat out of you.

Ms. Kilgannon: What about baseball?

Mr. Sawyer: Baseball was the only sport they had up in Bengough, Saskatchewan, where my dad grew up, so my dad played baseball. That was his sport. Back in those days that was the main sport, baseball.

Ms. Kilgannon: And every town had a team.

Mr. Sawyer: That's right. And so I just played baseball all the time, and then Little League came along. They had organized—I know I wasn't over the sixth grade, probably the fifth grade—and they were playing in a little tiny lot up in the north end of town. They were standing there looking for a pitcher, and I was so small that I... But I could throw a curve from the time I was about eight years old. The other kids couldn't even see it, so I became the number one pitcher in town because I threw a curve and I could control it. And my best friend was the catcher. So we had a good time.

But then that little kid who broke my nose showed up, and he could throw a ball so fast it looked like a pea coming up. He hurt his arm, he threw so hard.

When we got to high school, we didn't have an organized team, we only had a pickup team. So we didn't have any uniforms or anything, but we'd go over and play Lincoln High and then we'd go up and play in Seattle Prep and all those.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did your team even have a name?

Mr. Sawyer: I don't know. Puyallup. That was it. And he was the main star, that little guy. He could really throw a ball. But his arm would get sore at the end of about six innings. So then I would come in. I played third base so we'd trade positions. We were organized. I had a better earned-run average than he did because I came in throwing balloons at them. They were so slow the ball grows in size as it comes up there. And so they were always trying to hit the ball out of the park for me. And I had good control, so we were a pretty good combination. It was fun, but he was by far the better pitcher. He went on to the Texas League professionally. His arm was always hurt, though. He had to quit because of a bad arm.

Mr. Sawyer: And then I started basketball in the third grade.

Ms. Kilgannon: Back in the chicken coop?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, yes. But organized basketball in the third grade. I played for the Midgets.

Ms. Kilgannon: Was that a school team or community?

Mr. Sawyer: The Meeker Midgets. Each school had a grade school team. And then I advanced to the regular varsity.

Ms. Kilgannon: Would that be junior high by then?

Mr. Sawyer: No. Elementary, too. When I went up to junior high I turned out every time, but got cut every time. About three of us who used to play together did. We'd get cut every time.

In the ninth grade, I met the coach of the high school basketball team. And for some reason he took a liking to me and I got to sit right next to him in study hall and run his errands for him. Before he came to Puyallup we never won anything. When he came. we won a championship every year. But he knew every

kid in school and how well they played basketball, at least from the high school. And then he organized a league for every kid in school. He went around and scrounged up basketball hoops all over town. He had us all playing!

And then in high school he was coaching the basketball. He had gym class and everything. He'd come by every night because that's when the intramural kids would play, and watch them play. Every once in a while he'd pull one of the kids out of the intramural and put them on the varsity.

Ms. Kilgannon: Was he not exactly recruiting, but just scouting?

Mr. Sawyer: He was scouting. For Puyallup High. The high school and junior high were in the same building. Different sections.

Ms. Kilgannon: Were you one of the kids he pulled out?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. He set three of us up for the tryouts. We didn't even get our tennis shoes on and we were cut because we were all small.

Ms. Kilgannon: They were making assumptions about you.

Mr. Sawyer: And Carl Sparks was the junior high coach then, at that time. He was a real good football coach, but – he sent two of us back. He sent both of us back the third time and we were cut.

Our junior high had won the divisional championship by that time. He only brought one kid up from that team. He brought up this Japanese guy who was a really nice guy and good ballplayer, and then he brought up another kid and I. And we were starters on the junior varsity.

Ms. Kilgannon: So you finally got your chance.

Mr. Sawyer: So we got our chance and I ended up being the leading scorer of that team. Then the in middle of the year, he started bringing us up and suiting up half a game for the varsity and half a game for the thing. And so I sat on the bench my junior year pretty much.

In the spring we always had a playoff game between the varsity and the starting varsity, the seniors, and the rest of the team. We had these guys who won championships like mad. And we beat the starting varsity team!

Ms. Kilgannon: Unheard of.

Mr. Sawyer: They were in shock! So that's when the coach started watching us.

Ms. Kilgannon: How did you feel when you were benched? How did you handle that?

Mr. Sawyer: It's part of the game.

Ms. Kilgannon: You were philosophical about it?

Mr. Sawyer: I was just used to it. I was so small. When I went to the University of Washington, same thing. I always started on the lowest team and had to work my way in. You just accept it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Were you frustrated or were you biding your time?

Mr. Sawyer: I wasn't biding my time. I was frustrated. But that's the main thing I got out of basketball was you just have to keep plugging and working. You take the good with the bad.

Ms. Kilgannon: And eventually somebody will notice that you're a good player.

Mr. Sawyer: If you're lucky. When I was in the ninth grade, I think it was, this article came in the Puyallup Herald and they asked the coach what kind of a team he was going to have next year, and he said, "Well, we're going to win the championship again." He says, "How about the other squad?" And he says, "There's a little kid in the ninth grade who I think is going to be a hell of a ballplayer."

Mr. Sawyer: I didn't know that until years afterward. The editor he told me this. "Did you ever read that article?" he said. "Yes." "Well, that's you!"

Ms. Kilgannon: Now Puyallup would be the size of town where everybody'd be watching these games, wouldn't they?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, yes. When we had a small little gym you had standing room only, and if you didn't get there early you didn't get a seat.

Ms. Kilgannon: So it would be a big thing in the community.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. And then when you played junior varsity that game was first and then the varsity game. We played in front of good audiences because they came to see the varsity.

Then in my senior year we won the championship

and I got the all-conference thing. We had five of our players who made the conference teams, first, second and third

Ms. Kilgannon: Those were teams that would play other towns?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, yes.

Ms. Kilgannon: Would you travel around the state very much? How would that work?

Mr. Sawyer: We were the Puget Sound Conference.

Ms. Kilgannon: Just the area.

Mr. Sawyer: And Sumner, Renton, Auburn, Kent. It was all the South Puget Sound. Renton was a big school in the thing.

Ms. Kilgannon: Would you come as far down as Olympia?

Mr. Sawyer: No. We were the southern end of it.

Ms. Kilgannon: How would you get around? Would you have a bus or would you have to get there yourself?

Mr. Sawyer: We usually had a bus because there were twenty of us. If not, the coaches drove us up in cars.

Ms. Kilgannon: Was it hard to keep up your grades doing all the sports?

Mr. Sawyer: Sports didn't take that all my time, but I never did homework much. I was never that great a student, but I...

Ms. Kilgannon: Respectable enough?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. But nobody's going to kick us out. I don't know how we did it. But once, a teammate and I were talking, and I said, "Why don't we see how well we can do in history?"

Ms. Kilgannon: If we actually apply ourselves?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. So we spent about a week working on it. We really read that book and so I got an A and he got an A minus. The teacher called us in and said we were cheating. We didn't cheat. She said, "I don't believe you." And I said, "Why don't you test us again?" So she ran another test on us and I ended up with an A minus, and he ended up with a B plus.

She never liked me much, but she was very active in the WEA. After that time, when I ran for the Legislature, she was one of my biggest supporters. She

always used to get up and tell that story.

Ms. Kilgannon: You never know how things are going to turn out.

Mr. Sawyer: Back then grades weren't that important.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did your parents talk much about what you should do with yourself after school? You ended up with a lot of education, but was that something that was emphasized?

Mr. Sawyer: No, but I was taught to try everything, because if you don't make it, you don't make it, but at least give it your best shot. I got that from my mother and dad. I don't know why. They never went to high school. My sister was the first one in our family, the Sawyer family, to graduate from high school after my grandmother.

Ms. Kilgannon: So that would be the early '40s?

Mr. Sawyer: 1943 is when I graduated, yes.

Ms. Kilgannon: I was just wondering if, in your teen years, you had much direction? If you had a particular thing you wanted to be, or if you were still so absorbed in what you were doing that you weren't looking ahead?

Mr. Sawyer: I was so absorbed in what I was doing. I was always that way. I was focused on shooting the ball and pitching the ball. School came along and... Yes, I was told my mom and dad expected good grades and so forth, but it wasn't any big issue.

Ms. Kilgannon: You were a happy-go-lucky teenager?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. My main goal was I would love to go and be a coach or something. So then when I graduated from high school—that's my dream all my life, you know—

Ms. Kilgannon: To be a coach?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. I graduated from college over at UPS, I'd played basketball over there, too, but I wasn't the leading scorer there. (chuckles)

Ms. Kilgannon: Somebody else gets a turn.

Mr. Sawyer: There were great guys over there. I think one thing I learned is, if you go in as a team, you're tougher to beat than if you're an individual. So being the smallest guy on the team, I always wanted a big guy with me. You went as a team. And I carried that into the Legislature.

Some people are fairly successful in school, more so than me. I had a pretty good ego. In fact, I remember our coach, saying, “You can be cocky as heck. I don’t care. But you’d better earn it.”

If you’re going to be cocky, you’d better be good. And so that was something I learned out of sports, too. I didn’t think I was cocky at the time, but I probably was.

Chapter 3

World War II and College

Ms. Kilgannon: World War II is looming in your high school years, and you already mentioned that some of your teammates were getting drafted or joining up.

Mr. Sawyer: That was after the war started in '41.

Ms. Kilgannon: Do you recall Pearl Harbor?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. I was playing basketball out in my backyard. My sister's boyfriend was over and he was in the army. They were in the house eating or something and all of a sudden somebody came out and yelled at us, "Pearl Harbor. We're going to war."

So we broke the game long enough to go in and find out what happened. And then my sister's boyfriend started getting his clothes gathered up, because he had to report in. He knew right away what that meant. But we went on playing basketball. We didn't understand what it meant.

Ms. Kilgannon: Living on the west coast, was there much of a sense that you could be attacked?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes.

Ms. Kilgannon: You were in part of the blackout area, aren't you?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. And they went through town and gathered up all the Japanese people. We had a big area down in Puyallup, that was one of the places where they amassed them.

Ms. Kilgannon: Do you remember your parents talking about how they felt about that?

Mr. Sawyer: Everybody just accepted it. We're at war. What do we do?

Ms. Kilgannon: You had gone to school with some Japanese kids at some point.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. We knew them.

Ms. Kilgannon: Was there any sense that "Gee, these are American kids like me?"

Mr. Sawyer: We didn't get that far into it. They were just our buddies.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did it feel a little strange when suddenly you had to look at them differently?

Mr. Sawyer: Being young kids, we weren't as wrapped up in the propaganda. Later on... But we knew these people.

My training in basketball, I didn't care what you were if you could help me win the game. I was always that way. And I still am. It's what you do as a person that gears me.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did the war impact your life in other ways?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. We got four gallons of gas a week and my dad got eight gallons because he worked for a war industry or whatever they called them. Food-wise, I don't remember the food being any different. We had a pretty simple diet as it was.

Ms. Kilgannon: What about the draft? Did that feel like fate? There's no use trying to figure out what you're going to do because you're going to be drafted?

Mr. Sawyer: I didn't like the idea of the draft.

Ms. Kilgannon: You weren't feeling particularly militaristic?

Mr. Sawyer: No. And I wasn't patriotic enough to volunteer. Except I did volunteer because I didn't want to be in the army in the trenches. So I ended up in the navy.

Ms. Kilgannon: You got to finish high school, right?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. Our class was about two-hundred and some, I think. And when we graduated there was a hundred and fifty or forty.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did your birthday determine when you were drafted? Was that it?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes.

Ms. Kilgannon: So if you happen to have an early birthday, say, in the fall, and you turned eighteen and you were out of there. But yours is a summer birthday, isn't it?

Mr. Sawyer: In May.

Ms. Kilgannon: So you made it to graduation.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes.

Ms. Kilgannon: And then did the draft loom immediately?

Mr. Sawyer: It loomed before that because a lot of our friends were leaving. We lost one of our basketball players and everything. So we started looking around—my dad helped me there—started looking around for alternatives, you know. You going to go? Where do you want to go? What do you want to do?

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you have any military experience in your family?

Mr. Sawyer: No. My dad, he was a fourteen-year-old kid when the first world war started. So he fell in between. But me, I fell right in the middle of it. So I started thinking about my future a little bit. Before that I'd just drifted along. My dad helped me and we planned out what I wanted to... The schooling programs opened up.

Ms. Kilgannon: To be an officer rather than a private?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. And so the air corps always had a real active... So I liked those navy uniforms and I always kind of wanted to fly and, I was small and quick. And when I went in (to the recruiter) I had depth perception the guy didn't believe. He made me take the test again and all that stuff. I went in in March and took the test and then I passed that so they put me...

Ms. Kilgannon: Is this when you're still in high school?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. March before my graduation. Early March. And I was in the reserves then, waiting for the next class. The next class was going to be July 1.

Ms. Kilgannon: Right after graduation.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. I passed that and then in the middle of May—that was before I got out of high school—they came through with tests for all of us that we could take it if we wanted to. Officers training. I went ahead and took it and I passed that too. So then, around June, I got a notice that they'd transferred me from V-5.

Ms. Kilgannon: What's V-5? That's a program?

Mr. Sawyer: Aviation training. They'd transferred me from V-5 to V-12 which was the college officer's training program. That meant that when you got out of the college program, you went to the air force program. The college program was four semesters. We used to carry about twenty-five hours.

Ms. Kilgannon: What kinds of courses would they

want you to take?

Mr. Sawyer: Basic engineering courses, mainly. We took a couple of navigation courses and basic economics and math. I had a lot of math.

Ms. Kilgannon: Is this at the UW?

Mr. Sawyer: That was at the UW, yes. And then I got transferred down to Whitman College in Walla Walla.

Ms. Kilgannon: Let's see, I'm going to look at my notes for a second. You were at the UW for, I think, about a year or so?

Mr. Sawyer: Eighteen months.

Ms. Kilgannon: Taking engineering courses. And then you transferred to Whitman for one semester? I have here in my notes that you played basketball there as well.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes, we played basketball.

Ms. Kilgannon: And you got to travel around a bit and represent the college.

Mr. Sawyer: In those years, no one had gas and so forth, so we had to travel by train. It was very hard to get on the trains. But we did get to travel around. We went to Moscow and played the University of Montana and went to Pullman and played the Washington State team. Then we went down and played the Gonzaga team and the various teams like that.

Ms. Kilgannon: You'd really have a pretty good grasp of the whole northwest from your travels. As someone later prominent in state politics, that would come in handy. You would know these communities in some way.

I gather that your training was—I don't want to use the word generic, but not very militaristic. You didn't seem to do very much that was specifically military.

Mr. Sawyer: We didn't get much of that. We didn't even get much of that in midshipman's school. But we did get damage control and all those things.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you learn to shoot a gun? Anything like that?

Mr. Sawyer: No. Navy people don't shoot guns.

Ms. Kilgannon: You're preparing to go to war, but yet you're not really...

Mr. Sawyer: No. We were getting background information to prepare to learn things, I guess. It was a good program. They were tough. If you flunked out, you'd go back to the fleet. They didn't fool around.

Ms. Kilgannon: That would kind of keep you on the straight and narrow.

Mr. Sawyer: When I came in they got us all together and this guy got up and said, "Well, look at the guy on your right, look at the guy on your left. One of them isn't going to be here." And that's what they did. They took two-hundred and ten of us, and we ended up with seventy.

I talked to somebody when I was going into the navy and they said, "Get shore duty." That didn't sound very good to me. I said, "Why?" "Because if you ever get aboard ship, you're going to stay aboard ship through the whole war." I said, "Why is that?" "They don't want a bunch of dummies out there running the ships."

Ms. Kilgannon: Not people cycling on and off. They just want you to stay there.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. So I went ahead and took the advice and it really paid off, because I never got aboard ship.

I went to Cornell for midshipman school. When we got done with that, we filled out a form stating what wanted to do. I really wanted to be a SEAL. I was a good swimmer and active and that sounded dangerous but fun.

Ms. Kilgannon: Very dangerous. Aren't the SEALs the ones that go in first?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. Usually. When I found out details about the training, I was kind of glad I didn't get into it. I liked to swim, but I don't like swimming with things hanging around my legs and stuff.

I didn't get that, and then I looked at land duty and port director. I asked for that and I got assigned to port director's school out of Miami after I went to small ships school.

Ms. Kilgannon: So you got to do a little traveling. First you were in the northwest. Then you went to Cornell up in New York and then down to Miami.

Mr. Sawyer: Then from Miami I went to California for port director's school. Then I was sent to Hawaii for assignment and they didn't know what to do with a

port director, so I sat around there for almost a month and a half. Then they finally sent me on to Shanghai.

Ms. Kilgannon: What was happening in the war right about then? Was it winding down?

Mr. Sawyer: I think I was in Miami was when the Germans folded.

Ms. Kilgannon: Shanghai would be towards the end of the war? Is the shooting war more or less over?

Mr. Sawyer: I think so.

Ms. Kilgannon: What were the Americans doing there? What was your role?

Mr. Sawyer: We were occupational troops. We were neutral there because we weren't supposed to get into the fighting.

Then, I transferred to North Korea. They finally found a berth for me up there in a port director's unit. When the ships came in we would berth them and make sure they were resupplied and all that stuff.

Ms. Kilgannon: This would also be an occupation force after the Japanese had been pushed out of Korea at the end of the war?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. I was there for four or five months until they closed down the base because the army was going to take over their own port. I was reassigned to the post office in Tsingtao, China.

Ms. Kilgannon: So, back to China?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. So I got this fantastic duty. When I showed up, I went to meet the captain who was running the base and for some reason he and I just got along well. I usually would have to report in to the executive office, but I got to report directly to the captain. And I thought, gee, I'm going to like this guy.

Ms. Kilgannon: So, what were your duties there?

Mr. Sawyer: I ran the post office for the whole base. I had twenty young men underneath me. And working with us were about another twenty more men who were handling the mail for the marines. It was a marine base. We were just serving the base.

Ms. Kilgannon: That sounds like a pretty big operation.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. There were a lot of troops there.

Ms. Kilgannon: And you were still these occupation

troops?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. But we weren't occupying. We were just servicing our own people. I mean we had no civilian contact.

Ms. Kilgannon: How long did troops stay in China?

Mr. Sawyer: I think we were among the last ones, because they closed down that big base there right after we left.

Ms. Kilgannon: So then you got to come home?

Mr. Sawyer: Before I came home they went around to the guys who were eligible to get out and they wanted to know if we wanted to sign on for another tour of duty. At the time, I was living on the beach. I had four servants and I was getting paid two-hundred-dollars a month plus the per diem. I lived on my per diem. I saved all my money over there. I used to be that way. (chuckles)

So I think, "yes, that's a pretty good deal, I guess I'll sign." Then I went down to take my physical and I flunked it. I was five-foot-five and seven-eighths, and you had to be five-six. The guy said, "Come back in the morning. You'll grow half an inch at night." Everybody tells me that's true. But I never went back. I got to thinking, you wanted to play basketball, you wanted to do all these things, and so you'd better go home. But it was a big choice.

The closest I ever got to fighting was in Korea. I was sitting in a jeep with a guy driving me, and we went back in the interior, not the deep in the interior but about a half mile. We went down to visit a park and it was on a hill, a big flat area with grass and all that. I left him in the jeep and I said, "I'm going down." So I started across there and I got just at the edge of the forest and a whole bunch of Chinese jumped out with bayonets and rifles and they were jabbering away. And I'm like...

Ms. Kilgannon: Oh dear!

Mr. Sawyer: I pointed to my lapel and all that trying to make sure they knew I was a friendly. They didn't do anything to me, but I'll tell you for about ten minutes I was worried. And when they let me go, I went up that hill like a shot. It was a steep hill. I jumped in the jeep and I said, "We're going home!"

So that's as close as I got. That's my war story. I'm

not a very glorious character.

Ms. Kilgannon: Not everyone wanted to be.

Mr. Sawyer: No. I was just trying to get through.

Chapter 4

Stepping into the Political Realm

Ms. Kilgannon: You get home from the war, you're a young man trying to figure out what you want to do with your life, like so many young men at that time, right?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. I went to the University of Puget Sound when I first got back.

Then I went to law school at the University of Washington without too much thought about being a lawyer or anything, but I thought it would be a good background. Going on my theory, just prepare yourself for as much as you can.

Ms. Kilgannon: You mentioned you were even considering joining the FBI?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes, I thought, what the heck, FBI agents mostly are lawyers and I knew one kid who came out of UPS and went into the agency. He wasn't even a lawyer but they picked him up.

Ms. Kilgannon: Wasn't this kind of the great era of the FBI? J. Edgar Hoover and a lot of action? Was it like that for you? Did you picture yourself being a G-man?

Mr. Sawyer: No. It just sounded interesting. But when I came out of law school I kind of lost the idea of going into the FBI, so I just started practicing on my own.

I checked around and didn't seem to be able to find a job anyplace. So I opened my law office upstairs in a building in Puyallup. The Knight Building. I had an office right next to a well established lawyer in town. He just took me on like I was a son to him. I paid ten-dollars a month for my office. He let me use his secretary and I could hook into his phone. It was really nice. He was an exceptional lawyer, especially for a small town. He should have been downtown Seattle.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you do every kind of law? Just whatever came your way?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. Mainly wills and things like that.



Left to Right: Lt. Gov. John Cherberg, Speaker Leonard Sawyer, Sen. Al Henry (District 17), and Sen. Jimmy Keefe (District 3)

Ms. Kilgannon: How did a lawyer get started then? Did you go out and meet a lot of people and pass your card around, or what?

Mr. Sawyer: I knew a lot of people because I'd been a rather prominent athlete there.

Ms. Kilgannon: They had to start thinking of you as a lawyer, instead of thinking of you as that great basketball player.

Mr. Sawyer: The little runt. (chuckles)

Ms. Kilgannon: Was there a way to get out there in the community and say, well, you know, I've hung up my shingle. I'm in business now.

Mr. Sawyer: Looking back, I can't think of anything I was doing particularly. I was next to Les and he sent me a few cases. But I wasn't making anything hardly at all.

At one point, I had a job promised to me in the Pierce County prosecutor's office but it was under a Republican. His name was Pat Steele. But he ran for re-election about the time I was finishing law school, and John O'Connell beat him.

Ms. Kilgannon: So there goes your job.

Mr. Sawyer: There went my job out the window.

Ms. Kilgannon: What made you think of applying with John O'Connell then?

Mr. Sawyer: I needed a job!

Ms. Kilgannon: So private practice was going too slowly for you?

Mr. Sawyer: It was slow. And I had a young baby and a wife, so I was looking. I went in and talked to O'Connell and he asked me if I was a Democrat or Republican. "I don't know. I think I'm more Democratic than anything else."

I don't know why he hired me, to tell you the truth, but we talked for quite awhile and I did have a good background out in the Valley, and so he gave me a job.

Ms. Kilgannon: How many people would be in that office? How big a shop is that?

Mr. Sawyer: Now there's one-hundred-eighteen in it. But we had one investigator. We had four secretaries, three downstairs—a receptionist, two secretaries downstairs and then a reception/secretary upstairs in the civil department. So there were two lawyers up there, about six or seven downstairs, so our total office with everything was around ten or twelve people. And when I went to work there I was in the civil department.

Ms. Kilgannon: As a lawyer who had just been doing a few wills here and there and a few things like that, was this quite a jump up for you?

Mr. Sawyer: It was a great experience because I didn't have a client screaming on my back and so you don't have the same pressure on you. And John was a great boss. He trusted his deputies and so forth. It was a beautiful work atmosphere because we knew he was a great attorney.

He was also really a great speaker, and he when he was campaigning or anything, he had about five pat speeches. When he went to a meeting he just had those five speeches and he'd take a piece out of them and a piece out of another – he never had to look anything up. He was always ready to speak. I learned that from him. It was a great tool.

Ms. Kilgannon: You didn't know then that you would soon be making speeches, but you're absorbing all this.

Mr. Sawyer: You learned from him by watching. He didn't go out and preach at you. He didn't make a big fuss. If you had a problem you could go to him and get the best advice in the world. Besides legal advice, he was a political master.

Ms. Kilgannon: Not that you were planning it, but getting to know all the lawyers in Pierce County and all these people must have played out rather well later

when you did go into politics.

Mr. Sawyer: I'd dealt with practically every lawyer in town. I was in a position to do a favor for every lawyer in town, and we were allowed to do favors for people as long as you were within common sense. If a lawyer wanted a continuance, all you had to do is ask and he got it. Those kind of favors, when you're practicing law, those are important to you.

Ms. Kilgannon: Of course. Let's move on to how you get into politics.

Mr. Sawyer: It's like everything else. I didn't plan on it, just like I didn't plan on going into the prosecutor's office. I reacted to what was there and I tried to prepare myself so that when something did come my way I could do it.

So a man by the name of Harvey Dodd, Jr., he was about four or five years older than I was but very, very active in the Democratic Party and active in the young men's business club and so forth. I think he was an accountant, and his dad had been county commissioner way back when. So he was born and raised and bred in politics, very active out in the Twenty-fifth District, the Puyallup valley area.

And so Harvey came to me out of the blue one day in early 1954 and said, "Len, why don't you run for the Legislature?" And I said, "Harvey, I don't even know anything about it." Never been to a meeting or anything. He said, "That's alright. I know how to campaign. I've got this new theory I want to try out, and I think you'd fit into that."

But I said, "I've never been to a political meeting. I don't know anything." He said, "That doesn't make any difference. People know you and you're competitive."

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you feel, hey, I could win?

Mr. Sawyer: I didn't even think about that. He sat down and then I said, "Well, Harvey, I don't know. I'm going to go ask John O'Connell."

So I went in to see John and I said, "Harvey wants me to run for the Legislature." And he said, "Do you know anything about politics?" and I said, "No, I don't know a thing, John." He said, "Don't do that." So I went back and told Harvey no, John told me not to.

But, Harvey came back about two months later and he said, "Len, I can't find anybody. Would you please

run for the Legislature?”

Ms. Kilgannon: Were you meanwhile thinking about it at all, or had you dismissed it from your mind?

Mr. Sawyer: I just dismissed it. So then I said, “I’ll have to go and talk to O’Connell, because he’s already told me not to.” I went and talked to O’Connell again, and he said, “Len, what do you really want to do?” And I said, “I don’t know. It sounds kind of interesting, John. It’s competitive.” And he said, “Well, go ahead and try it then.” And I said, “I won’t do it if you think I shouldn’t.” And he said, “No. It’s fine. It’ll be a good experience for you. Go do it.”

So I went back to Harvey and told him John said it would be a good experience, and so we went ahead and went to work on the thing. I had no money. I didn’t know anybody who had money. I came up with one-hundred dollars someplace.

Ms. Kilgannon: How did Harvey identify you in the first place?

Mr. Sawyer: He wanted people who were active and he didn’t want political hacks.

Ms. Kilgannon: Besides the prosecutor’s office, what where you active in?

Mr. Sawyer: I joined the Elks, but I just joined it because I could put it on my literature, and it was a nice place to go drink. (chuckles) I was a member of the VFW because I was a service person. I always say that the traditional way of getting into politics, especially back then, was to go around to all these clubs. I was an Eagle, too.

But, I wasn’t even close to the Democratic Party. I hadn’t even been to a meeting. First time I went to a meeting it was announced I was going to run for the Legislature. And everybody went “who the heck is he?” because these are all the old political people. But my family had always been basically Democratic. My dad was kind of the shop steward and that type of thing.

Ms. Kilgannon: So the party has their own candidates that they’re grooming? You were an outsider?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. In a way I was. But I knew more people than they did through athletics. That was my basic strength. I had people I had played with and against in all the little towns up there, and they were all athletes who were well-known, and they each had

their own little clique. And so I got each one of them to organize in their area. That’s how I worked it.

Ms. Kilgannon: It’s like a goldmine, this athletic brotherhood.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. As a matter of fact, when I was looking for candidates while I was Speaker, the first thing I’d tell people to look for—do you have any athletes in your area? And then we’d go through that because they just had a natural following.

I also used to work the taverns because people are sitting down there and I’d just have my little cards and I’d walk in there and it was like their front room. In those days, taverns were their front rooms. That’s where they had recreation. Especially the little towns that I was in.

Ms. Kilgannon: The local watering hole.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. And so I would go in there and the first time I’d go around, they said, “Oh, a kid. Buy us a drink.” And I said, “I don’t have any money. I’m just out campaigning.” And pretty soon they’d be buying me drinks. That’s the way it was. Instead of trying to be a big shot to them, I went in and was just a person.

Ms. Kilgannon: Was that more appealing to them?

Mr. Sawyer: Sure it was. Because they felt they could talk to me. But basically, our campaign strategy was doorbelling, mailing, some newspaper advertising and organizing groups out there to go out and doorbell. And it those days we didn’t have any mailing lists, so we had to go down to the county auditor’s office.

Ms. Kilgannon: Voter lists. Where’d you get the idea to do that?

Mr. Sawyer: Harvey.

Ms. Kilgannon: Where did Harvey dream up all these new methods?

Mr. Sawyer: His dad used to do a lot of them way back when. And he was a real smart young man, and he knew what the tradition was but he didn’t always follow it.

Ms. Kilgannon: The more traditional way of campaigning, as I understand it in those days, was just going to the Elks Club and giving a speech and connecting up with the business community and that sort of thing. Doorbelling and all those things were fairly

new, wasn't it?

Mr. Sawyer: I don't know who else was doing it at that time.

Ms. Kilgannon: I understand that one of the reasons Harvey Dodd was looking for a candidate was that your representative from that area, Tom Montgomery, had switched parties and become a Republican?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes.

Ms. Kilgannon: He'd been in there for a while and then there was the Eisenhower sweep coming through and the House started to edge towards being Republican. Did he look at that as I better get on the bandwagon? Or was he sort of naturally a Republican?

Mr. Sawyer: He was more naturally a Republican. He owned the Puyallup Herald. His folks were quite wealthy and he came from the rich part of town.

Ms. Kilgannon: So the Democrats are looking for somebody new because they've got to contest this, I guess. He'd been in there since 1939. That's quite a while.

Mr. Sawyer: He was chairman of Appropriations at the time.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes. I understand you used that against him.

Mr. Sawyer: (chuckles) Oh, yes.

Ms. Kilgannon: Called him to task for why he hadn't done more for the area?

Mr. Sawyer: No. For kindergartens. He'd come out and said he was against kindergarten. I said, "Here we have a man with all that money and he wouldn't help our kids."

Ms. Kilgannon: Your father had something to do with this too, didn't he? Didn't he play a role in your campaign?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. He'd never been interested in politics either, but then once I got into it he really became involved with the 25th District. So it was really great because it took the pressure off of me. I didn't like those kind of meetings and he seemed to enjoy it, and he was a very likeable type of person.

Ms. Kilgannon: So he would go to a lot of community things representing you?

Mr. Sawyer: Democratic things. He ended up being chairman of the 25th District Democratic Club. He also worked hard on my yard signs. My mom would get a group of her friends together and they addressed envelopes and mailings for me. That first election was a family affair.

Ms. Kilgannon: The 25th is a fairly big district, isn't it?

Mr. Sawyer: A big district. Very difficult place to campaign in, but once you were the incumbent it was tough to beat you because you had to set up all these little communities. And that's what Harvey did so well. I had a lot of fun.

I went around and talked to all the former legislators. Harvey told me to do that, and I always remember one. He was a little Italian farmer and I stood there while he was milking in his barn and the mud was ankle-deep, and he was milking away and he said, "Yeah, kid, you're going to be lobbied down there. Drink all their booze, eat all their food, and then vote against them!" That's the way he did it. It was funny. And I said, "Oh, okay." I didn't have any idea what he meant. I'd never even been down to the Legislature.

So it was a people-to-people campaign. Everybody laughed at me. I'd never even been to a political meeting, and there were six other Democrats running in the primary and I beat them. And in the general election, I'm facing this guy who'd been in the Legislature for I don't know how many years, the current chair of the House Appropriations Committee and all that. I didn't even know that was so important. But I really rammed that at him because he was one of them who voted to kill the kindergarten.

Ms. Kilgannon: Was that the main campaign issue at that time?

Mr. Sawyer: The only issues that I remember because that's what I campaigned on, were institutions and kindergartens. Big issues.

Ms. Kilgannon: Those were important to people, yes. You had institutions in your district and everybody's got children at that stage.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. This is the beginning of the baby-boom years. And those mothers would doorbell too, you know.

Ms. Kilgannon: Was the real issue for state kinder-

gartens purely a money issue?

Mr. Sawyer: It was funding, yes.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you think you would win, or was this just kind of a lark?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. I was convinced I could win. Harvey just laid it all out how it was going to work, and by golly it worked! I was elected in November 1954.

Chapter 5

The Start of a Long Legislative Career



Left to Right: Former Speaker Tom Swayze, Sen. John Jones, Speaker Sawyer, and Rep. Hal Wolfe.

Ms. Kilgannon: In 1954, your first legislative race, you were handily elected. You and Elmer Hyppa represented your district – two Democrats. But the Democrats only came out with a majority of one in the House?

Mr. Sawyer: That’s right. But the Republicans had a majority of two in the Senate, and the governor was still Langlie, a Republican.

Ms. Kilgannon: It had been a Republican House the year before, too?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. Mort Frayn was the Speaker of the House then.

Ms. Kilgannon: So you must elect a new Speaker?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. Several people contacted me, trying to entice me to vote for either John L. O’Brien or Julia Butler Hanson at the re-organization.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did they contact you themselves, or did they have other people contact you?

Mr. Sawyer: They had others, mostly. Like with me, Elmer Hyppa talked to me. He was for Julia Butler Hanson. Then a guy by the name of Brown from the Laborers International Union contacted me about O’Brien. He was a great guy and he contacted me and I just listened.

Later, Julia Butler Hanson came out and spoke at the Democratic district and so we had her at our house for dinner. That was it. I think Elmer Hyppa was for her and I think he said he would get me. Well, he didn’t, see, and so she never liked me. I was a traitor.

Ms. Kilgannon: So you were supposed to be in her pocket, but in fact you were not.

Mr. Sawyer: No.

Ms. Kilgannon: How did you actually make your choice? That’s a pretty critical one. Did they stand for

different things, or was it just a personality contest?

Mr. Sawyer: It was more of a personality contest. Julia was a very bombastic type person and John was pretty quiet.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did that appeal to you more?

Mr. Sawyer: I think so. I was more that way, too. John came out to talk to me, and said I should tell him what I wanted.

Mr. Sawyer: I just got elected. I didn’t know much. So John came out and he was talking to me and I said, “John, how do you make committee assignments?” He explained the process and I said, “I’ve got institutions in my area and I’d like to be chairman of Institutions.”

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you realize that as a freshman that’s a somewhat outrageous request?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. But you’ve got to realize it was only a one vote margin.

Ms. Kilgannon: That’s right. You may as well go for it.

Mr. Sawyer: He finally said, “Well, I don’t know.” He said something about being a freshman. I didn’t say anything. I just said that’s what I wanted and shut up. It was his problem then. I didn’t know how the heck to do it, but it ended up being a heck of a smart move.

Then, later, after he got elected Speaker, he called me into his office with Rep. Gordon Brown, and he said, “Len, I’ve got a problem making you chairman of Institutions. If you really want it, I’ve made the commitment and I’ll do it, but it’s tough.” And I said, “I really want it.”

And then Gordon Brown said, “John, I’ll give up my position and Len can have that.” That’s the kind of great guy he was. And I turned around and said, “Gordon, I’m not going to ask you to do that. John, if it’s a real problem, just remember I did you a favor.” (chuckles)

Ms. Kilgannon: Very good.

Mr. Sawyer: And so the next time came up and John asked me what I wanted after he was in. I want to be on Rules. Okay. I was on Rules. I was the youngest member who’s ever gotten on Rules.

Ms. Kilgannon: I think so. Yes. You were in your second term. Unheard of.

Mr. Sawyer: He honored that. And the thing is, I wasn’t bleeding for Institutions. I was just told it would be good to have that in my district. I already got elected without it, so I wasn’t going to be bleeding for it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Can you tell me about your first day down in Olympia as a legislator?

Mr. Sawyer: I was just starting to practice law on my own, again, and John McCutcheon and I became partners. I was down in my law office real early, about seven-thirty, and the session didn’t start until twelve. So I worked up until about eleven-thirty.

Ms. Kilgannon: Cutting it pretty fine.

Mr. Sawyer: I got in the car and boomed down there. By the time I got there the doors were all locked and they were starting the procedure. I’m on the outside and so I pounded on the door and the Sergeant at Arms stuck his head out, and I said, “I want in. I need to get in there.”

They said, “You can’t come in right now!” I looked so young. I said, “Yes, but I’m supposed to be in there. I’m a legislator.” And they said, “Oh, yeah.” Finally I said, “Do you know Si Holcomb?” “Yes.” “Would you go tell Si that I’m out here waiting?” So I waited another ten minutes and Si shows up.

Ms. Kilgannon: The Chief Clerk?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes, he ushered me in. Showed me where my seat was. Probably the worst seat in the House. On the Democratic side, the right side, they have three seats at the very back on the side?

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes.

Mr. Sawyer: I was in the center, and the water fountain was right behind me. I could always tell who was drinking and who had partied the night before. They were all at the water fountain.

Ms. Kilgannon: I assume you have to be sworn in before the election for Speaker can be held. Were you sworn in one at a time, or the whole group?

Mr. Sawyer: Whole group.

Ms. Kilgannon: And the next big thing is the election of the Speaker. Because it’s a one vote majority there can’t be any waffling or anything. All the Democrats have got to stick together.

Mr. Sawyer: Margaret Hurley got in a car accident coming over to Olympia. So they’re all waiting for her, and Si Holcomb announces, “We’ll have a short delay before we move on.” And nobody knows what’s happening.

Ms. Kilgannon: That’s a dramatic moment!

Mr. Sawyer: Yes, and pretty soon the back door was opened and some guys carried Margaret in on a stretcher. After she voted for all the organization, then they took her right back to the hospital.

Ms. Kilgannon: I wonder what would have happened if she had not been able to do that? It’s one of those moments in legislative history where there’s a lot of, well, what if it had gone some other way? Pretty interesting. This was John O’Brien’s first nomination for Speaker, wasn’t it?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes.

Ms. Kilgannon: Was the rivalry between Julia Butler Hanson and John O’Brien a friendly one or a deeper one?

Mr. Sawyer: It was pretty deep, yes.

Ms. Kilgannon: Could they work together afterwards?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, yes. They worked together, and he pretty well let her run the Highways the way she wanted to. And then she’d just get certain issues. Like she didn’t want dams on the Cowlitz River. I don’t know why, but she was against that. That was the first time she and I tangled. I didn’t tangle, really, I just didn’t agree with her and she just got pretty upset. She came storming to the back to my seat, so Augie Mardesich came back and stood in between us. (chuckles)

Ms. Kilgannon: Was he the floor leader yet?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. He was the majority floor leader.

Ms. Kilgannon: When you did not vote for Julia and you voted for John O'Brien, she did take it personally?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, boy! Because I lied or something. I don't know what the hell, but I was in deep do-do there.

Ms. Kilgannon: Were you ever able to overcome that enmity?

Mr. Sawyer: No. I served on her Highway committee. I just went in and listened. After about the second term, I'd never show up.

Ms. Kilgannon: It wasn't worth it?

Mr. Sawyer: I got highway things important to my area, but not with her cooperation.

Ms. Kilgannon: I see. Would you have to work around her, basically?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. It was very difficult. I crossed her on the speakership and then on the public/private power and so forth.

Ms. Kilgannon: You were digging yourself in pretty deep here. Julia became Speaker Pro Tem and at the same time the first formal limits on the Speaker's power were put in place. I don't know if she pushed that through or if that was something that was just evolving anyway. But instead of the Speaker appointing everyone to their committees, there became this new thing – the Committee on Committees – that also had a say in who would be placed where?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. But the Speaker appointed those committee members.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes. But there was a little bit of a shift there that was new.

Mr. Sawyer: It wasn't very effective.

Ms. Kilgannon: Some people saw this as a little wedge for a change in how the Speaker's going to operate.

Mr. Sawyer: It probably was. But I was new – I didn't know much about how it was before that.

Ms. Kilgannon: Were there particular legislators that you took note of and watched because they were very skillful and you could learn from them?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. Augie Mardesich. Gordon Sandison.

Our leadership. We had good, strong leadership, I'll say that. I would watch them, yes.

Ms. Kilgannon: There were some rather pressing issues at the time. The state was in debt.

Mr. Sawyer: I was a Democrat and we never worried about that. We worried about the people.

Ms. Kilgannon: But that brought up the whole issue of taxes. Whether you were for a flat income, graduated, or no income tax.

Mr. Sawyer: The income tax thing. We fought that for years. Every session had a big income tax thing. Of course, I was for income taxes.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you have to take a stand right away, or were you able to put that off for a little while?

Mr. Sawyer: I don't remember. I was committed to it one way or the other, so it wouldn't have made any difference.

Ms. Kilgannon: Which kind of income tax? Flat or graduated?

Mr. Sawyer: Graduated.

Ms. Kilgannon: There were always public and private power issues during these years that are tinkering with one method or another. Did you have to take a stand on any of those issues at the very beginning?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, yes. At the very beginning. I was pretty much public power. They had a real good lobbyist. His name was Stewart, I think, and he was one of the better lobbyists. And it was something the Democrats were pretty much for so it was easy for me to do that. I had a strong private power group, Puget Sound Power and Light, in my area, but I also had Tacoma City Light.

Ms. Kilgannon: You had both public and private.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. I had both. I got close to Tacoma City Light and so that was my public power. The people from eastern Washington, they had a little different outlook on what public power should be.

Ms. Kilgannon: Was that difficult for you, that you had two different kinds of power arrangements in your district? Because that became a very contentious issue.

Mr. Sawyer: It did later, but at first it wasn't for me. The private power people were Republican and I just

accepted that. I'd heard private versus public power, but I'd always just heard it was a Democratic issue and I didn't think anything more of it because it wasn't a big issue in our area. With Tacoma Utility and they never got in the fights with private power like the other groups did. Later, of course, it becomes a very big issue for me.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes, we will cover that issue in detail after while. But at that time, you're the kind of legislator who paid more attention to what was happening in your district and if, for instance, that issue wasn't big in your district, that it didn't play out quite the same for you?

Mr. Sawyer: I didn't go on many crusades. I was oriented pretty much to my district. Income tax is one exception.

Ms. Kilgannon: Certainly, income tax if you want all these services for your district, the money has to come from somewhere.

Mr. Sawyer: It makes more sense to me to do that than the taxes we were running. I forget what our sales tax was then, but the income tax seemed more fair to me.

Ms. Kilgannon: That's a discussion that continues to this day, right?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes, it is. And the sales and property taxes are higher and more unfair.

Ms. Kilgannon: When you finished your first session, were you fully intending to go back? You'd already made up your mind and you were set to go?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. I liked it. I liked it because it was fun. You're king for ninety days and then you go home to be a peon. A lot of guys never could make that adjustment. It was easy for me. Once I was away from it, I just forgot it. That's why I didn't want any interim work or anything like that. I had to go to meetings occasionally, but they were fun.

Ms. Kilgannon: When you came back from the session, did you go to community meetings and report on the session and kind of get back to people?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes.

Ms. Kilgannon: How did you package what you had done?

Mr. Sawyer: I packaged what I had learned. My favorite

one was... I was down there for thirty days. I did a lot. I found out where the bathroom was. I found out where the lounge was. I did those kind of things. There were a lot of things that went on in the Legislature so I just reviewed it with them. I made light of my participation.

Ms. Kilgannon: But you also conveyed that you were paying attention.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. And I just told them I know what's going on now. I didn't before and it's been a real education. And now I can really help the district.

Ms. Kilgannon: What about your legal work? During session would you come to a complete halt, or would you somehow keep it alive?

Mr. Sawyer: We tried to keep it alive.

Ms. Kilgannon: You're trying to build a practice. I was wondering what was happening to your clients.

Mr. Sawyer: It was tough. That's what I'd do a lot of times in the afternoons if I had some free time, boom, I'd make appointments and go back to the office and take care of that. And on the weekend I did a lot. I didn't have much of a practice at that time.

Ms. Kilgannon: Your law partner, John McCutcheon, is also in the Legislature, so it's not like there's somebody back there taking care of business.

Mr. Sawyer: We were just starting. We'd both just come out of the prosecutor's office and we shared offices with John's dad and his partner. And so they kind of took care of us.

Ms. Kilgannon: They could keep an eye on you.

Mr. Sawyer: They had a secretary that was really good so she kind of took care of us.

Ms. Kilgannon: So it's not like you're in an empty office and the phone's ringing and there's nobody there?

Mr. Sawyer: No. If something had to be done, they'd just do it. People used to do those kind of things in those days. Anyway, us poor lawyers did. I don't know about the big-time lawyers.

Ms. Kilgannon: The per diem. Was it adequate for you to live on? I think it was still fairly low, but maybe costs were low too. I don't know.

Mr. Sawyer: We were paid one-hundred dollars a month when I first got there and we got \$10 per diem, I think.

Ms. Kilgannon: So you weren't actually out-of-pocket? You might actually come out with a few dollars?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. Especially when you could rent an apartment down there for sixty-dollars a month. And we got ten dollars a day for expenses. That's three-hundred dollars a month to spend. When I was in the prosecutor's office we only made three hundred-ten dollars a month.

Ms. Kilgannon: So this is not a huge economic hit for you?

Mr. Sawyer: It wasn't at the time. I don't remember it being one. It's hard to tell. I think probably for a more established person it would be more of a hardship. But we had nothing to lose. We were just down there.

Ms. Kilgannon: Your first year, you actually co-sponsored or sponsored fourteen bills which is really quite a few for a freshman.

Mr. Sawyer: I was popular. (chuckles) Although, I don't think any passed.

Ms. Kilgannon: You were a busy guy.

Mr. Sawyer: I thought it was important to get your name on a lot of bills because I didn't know. It was I guess, but I found out later on it was very marginally helpful. You make just as many enemies as friends, you know.

Ms. Kilgannon: You were reelected handily in 1956 – your second term – and the Democrats had a very large majority. They had six new Democrats to get fifty-six to forty-three Republicans, which is a comfortable margin. Now, you're not brand new anymore. You know where your desk is, you know where the bathroom is.

Mr. Sawyer: Even knew where my parking spot was. (chuckles)

Ms. Kilgannon: You've really arrived. Besides that comfort level of knowing what you're doing this time, did you have new goals or a new attitude in any way?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. When I first went in there, as I said, I was just all ears, and I still stayed that way in the second term as much as possible, but I started picking up some issues. And then I was on the Rules committee and I got a real picture of the thing, so I had plenty to keep me busy.

Ms. Kilgannon: There were, of course, some new members, but you would have been acquainted with most.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, yeah, I spent lots of time back there with the new guys – after all, we second-termers weren't too important at that time, either.

Ms. Kilgannon: So the ordinary back-benchers, or whatever you were called, wouldn't have quite the role then that they came to have?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, no. I really concentrated on the back row and so forth when I was in leadership, but that wasn't the way it worked then. Funny, even though I did a lot for them as Speaker, they were the ones (who later rebelled)... I taught them too well, I guess.

Ms. Kilgannon: You gave them the illusion they had power, and darn it, they did.

Mr. Sawyer: They did.

Ms. Kilgannon: You never know how these things are going to turn out. When you got to choosing the leadership, was there any question that it would be John O'Brien for Speaker?

Mr. Sawyer: No. And Augie was Majority Leader.

Ms. Kilgannon: How would you assess Representative Mardesich as your leader? Did he keep the caucus together and keep you all lined up and moving things along? What was his style?

Mr. Sawyer: He was so well informed and he spoke so well that it was really easy to follow him. In our caucus when I started, that first one, we were really a tight caucus. We didn't have any votes to spare. I don't remember people...

Ms. Kilgannon: What about this year when you get so big?

Mr. Sawyer: In fact, it gets to be a little tougher because people don't feel the responsibility. They feel like, what the hell?

Ms. Kilgannon: They can peel off and vote however they like. Was Mardesich effective in keeping that herd of cats going in one direction?

Mr. Sawyer: I don't remember him ever working anything, but we all had a lot of respect and admired him. And I don't think he did it making speeches in caucus, I think he just did it by example.

Ms. Kilgannon: What about just sheer power? He was, by repute, a forceful, even a fierce person. But he was more of a gloved hand with his own caucus?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. I think he became a little more fierce when he got to the Senate, to tell you the truth, because he went into a very antagonistic picture there. But in the House, I just don't think that was the case.

Ms. Kilgannon: Maybe that reputation for him, as you say, developed later and he didn't have any need to...

Mr. Sawyer: O'Brien was a fairly strong leader at the time.

Ms. Kilgannon: Would he come down, like in your caucus meetings, and tell you what's going to happen?

Mr. Sawyer: They were always in the caucus. The Speaker always attends his caucus and he tries to lead it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did he and Mardesich work well together?

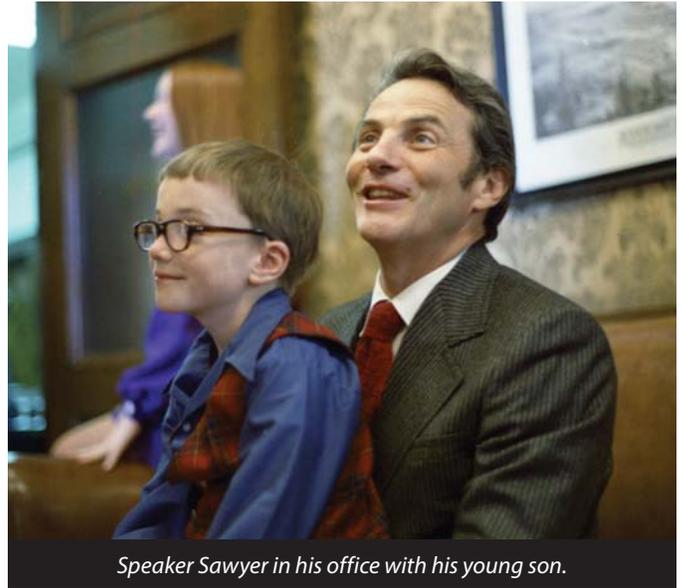
Mr. Sawyer: Yes. For years.

Ms. Kilgannon: They seemed, personality-wise, not too similar.

Mr. Sawyer: No. But legislative-wise, they did well.

Chapter 6

“The Legislature Ran a Lot Differently Then”



Speaker Sawyer in his office with his young son.

Ms. Kilgannon: In your earlier days, about when do you think you started to specialize and get certain interests? I understand that legislators can't do it all, so they start focusing on a few things.

Mr. Sawyer: I was lucky. I got on the Rules committee when I was very young, legislatively speaking – my second term, I believe. There, you're not just concentrating on a few issues. You've got the whole spectrum in front of you all the time. I think that experience is unmeasurable. I had Charlie Johnson sitting on my right, the Republican assistant who was a very intelligent tax person, and August Mardesich on my left. And right next to him was John O'Brien, so I got to listen in to all the conversations that would be going on.

Ms. Kilgannon: Pretty high-level understanding.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. And so, I really got a real indoctrination. And that big picture appealed to me more than individual issues.

Ms. Kilgannon: Just how the whole thing works? How the institution works itself?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. How the institution works, and what can we do to better it? The Legislature ran a lot differently then.

Ms. Kilgannon: The idea of making it work better will come into play later in your career, for sure. Let's save that for a minute. You were on six committees your first term? Could you keep up?

Mr. Sawyer: Pretty much. I went to most of the Highway committees. I went to all the Judiciary committees. They met every day, the Judiciary I think, if I remember right. State Institutions and Buildings didn't meet often.

Ms. Kilgannon: How much would you be in committees compared to on the floor? What would be the

proportion of the time?

Mr. Sawyer: About sixty-some percent in committee. That's where the real work took place at that time.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you have many public hearings?

Mr. Sawyer: Not too many. They had them but they just had them in these little rooms.

Ms. Kilgannon: How would members of the public know that there was going to be a hearing?

Mr. Sawyer: I don't know. I think their lobbyists would probably call in groups because they kept on top of it. But it wasn't advertised. Hearings were often very spontaneous.

Ms. Kilgannon: I understand it wasn't exactly open government like we think of it today. You really had to be on the inside of things to know what was going on.

Mr. Sawyer: No. Rules Committee was all private. The Rules Committee was more effective. It was really a better committee when they didn't know, because you had a chance for people to vote just what they felt, rather than what they thought they had to.

Ms. Kilgannon: You had no staff because you're not a chair. You just had your desk. No telephone.

Mr. Sawyer: We could go to the committee staff for some things, but no, we just had to work lobbyists to get information.

Ms. Kilgannon: I understand you sometimes had hearings right on the floor of the chambers. That there weren't that many places you could actually meet.

Mr. Sawyer: We didn't have too many on the floor of

the chambers, unless it was a big meeting. Otherwise, we had all these little rooms in the Legislative Building.

Ms. Kilgannon: Kind of a beehive?

Mr. Sawyer: Beehive, yes. Like the Highway Committee was right off the floor. It was also used as the majority caucus room. And then the Judiciary committee had another room right off the floor that was used by the minority caucus.

Ms. Kilgannon: So they would do double duty? They would have multiple purposes?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. And then all the way around we had those rooms. There'd be two or three committees in those. They were big enough to have three desks. And each one of those committee rooms would have one person, one staff person, which was all political. They weren't particularly selected for their knowledge of the subject, they were selected based on who they knew and also what they could do. Could they type? Could they do this? Could they do that?

Ms. Kilgannon: I hope they had some skills.

Mr. Sawyer: That was a practical thing for us. It was having some place where we could get some work done. So if you could get a committee chairmanship that was one of the things you liked about it because you'd have a part of a secretary. Or a clerk. Most of them were secretaries.

If you weren't a chair, you just had the steno pool. Basically, you've got your desk and your little roll of stamps.

Ms. Kilgannon: So if you wanted to dictate letters or write something you could send for someone from the steno pool?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. They would come up to the floor of the House or wherever you wanted to meet them. Sometimes if you could find an empty committee room, you could go in there. But most of the time you did it right on the floor of the House.

Ms. Kilgannon: Not much privacy.

Mr. Sawyer: No. People would come and interrupt you and everything else. Augie (Mardesich) used to get so mad because you'd walk down the aisle and people would actually grab you. He had buttons torn off his jacket.

Ms. Kilgannon: So, you're really in a fishbowl.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, yes.

Ms. Kilgannon: What's it like for continuity or consistency in your letters if you're getting different people all the time to write them? Did you have any problems with that?

Mr. Sawyer: It could be a real problem, yes. I'd keep copies of the letters I'd sent so if I wanted to have the same thing, I'd just give it to the person coming up.

Ms. Kilgannon: I know that most members develop quite a strong relationship with their assistant or their secretary, so that must have been difficult. Did you have any caucus staff?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, yes. We had the caucus attorney and some other person. The caucus attorney was the one who you could go to and he'd do a lot of research for you and stuff.

Ms. Kilgannon: Do you remember who that was?

Mr. Sawyer: Max Nicolai. And we also had some committee staff on the bigger committees, but then I wasn't a chair, yet.

Ms. Kilgannon: But when you became a chair?

Mr. Sawyer: When I became chairman of Highways I had about three or four staff.

Ms. Kilgannon: That's a big committee. These positions, are they patronage positions?

Mr. Sawyer: Mainly patronage, yes.

Ms. Kilgannon: Usually, with patronage positions, the question is did they get the job because they knew somebody or they actually had the skills, or both, hopefully?

Mr. Sawyer: You started with knowing somebody. And then... I turned Dawne's (Friesen) name (my legal secretary from my law firm) into Si and Si—he was a sly little fox—he would sit there and try to find a place where he thought they would work. If he couldn't then he'd go back to you, and if you really cried real hard then he'd probably find something anyway. But, basically, he handled the employment.

Ms. Kilgannon: So it went through him. But people had to have some skills to work there? They just couldn't be your neighbor or your cousin or something?

Mr. Sawyer: No. Just like I told them, Dawne (Friesen) was a real secretary. Then they found out she couldn't type very well. She never was a good typist, but the best shorthand person I've ever been around. And she didn't test well, so he called me back in and kidded me.

He was always wanting to know if it was somebody's girlfriend or...

Ms. Kilgannon: Why exactly they were recommended?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. I'd just tell him if it was. He wouldn't get shocked at anything, but I said, "No. She was my legal secretary." Then he called me in and he says, "Leonard..."

Ms. Kilgannon: Oh, dear. Any conversation that starts with that...

Mr. Sawyer: I said, "Yes, she flunked the typing test," and he said, "Yes." I said, "I'll tell you, she can do shorthand like mad." And then he said, "I'll look around and I'll see what I can find."

And I said, "Well, she's smart, and she's good. We're always looking for those kinds of people." We were. It was a task trying to find somebody to come down for ninety days. So that's when he put her out in the front there as docket clerk. And then he called me back in later and he said, "She's the best docket clerk we've ever had. I'm sorry, she's really sharp, isn't she?" And I said, "Yes." "But she can't type."

Ms. Kilgannon: This is one of the things that changes pretty radically during your career – who works for the Legislature, how it's staffed – and it's hard for people now to understand what it was like then. An entirely different situation.

Mr. Sawyer: Like I said: The Legislature ran a lot differently then. The only other time they had staff was on interim committees. The staff hired there, I think, was pretty much selected by the chairman. So it was purely patronage. Most of the time, if you're a chairman, you'd want somebody that could do it, so it was really picking out people who had worked through the session. And they were mainly locals from Olympia.

I always found that the staff we had, even back when they didn't have any organized staff, it's always amazed me how dedicated they were and how they liked their jobs. They liked what they were doing.

Ms. Kilgannon: So they would be people who were

really engaged in the legislative process? They would look forward to session?

Mr. Sawyer: The basic core would be. Then you had people who were out of work right then and so forth. But basically, overall, the staff was good.

Ms. Kilgannon: Would they come back year after year? This is what they would do?

Mr. Sawyer: A lot them did.

Ms. Kilgannon: Because it's a little world unto itself with its own vocabulary, its own processes. You'd have to be somewhat inducted into what's going on.

Mr. Sawyer: People get hooked on it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Back to facilities – everything was all in that one little building?

Rep. Sawyer: Yeah, it's much more spread out now. And they have their own year-round staff. Now, at least you can talk to somebody that knows where the legislators are or give a message to them. Then, it was almost impossible. Once they left that floor, you didn't know where they were going.

Ms. Kilgannon: They were much less accessible to constituents?

Rep. Sawyer: Right.

Ms. Kilgannon: So let's skip way ahead to the 1967 session for a minute. Republicans are in the majority, and they elect Don Eldridge as speaker. They also elect Tom Copeland as the speaker pro tem and this, for the first time, is going to be a really active office. Before that it had been somewhat of an honorary position but he kind of seizes the opportunity, shall we say, and has a whole list of reforms that he's interested in pushing through.

Most notably, he wants to create offices for every legislator. You're going to have your desk, in a room with a telephone, you're going to have staff and you're going to have other facilities. He's very keen on using computers to update your information and give you volumes of information quicker.

Rep. Sawyer: We did get secretaries that session, and that was good. All those plans were good, all were things that needed to be done. And normally, I think the Democrats would have moved quicker on it but they're always conservative because they don't want

to be seen as spending money on themselves.

Ms. Kilgannon: But Copeland worked pretty closely with John O'Brien on these particular reforms. They get pretty tight with each other and push through a lot of different changes which perhaps, I don't know, sets the stage for then what you want to do later?

Rep. Sawyer: It was a small start. I thought the changes to facilities were pretty good. The main thing then was, we had to get the type of staffing that would really get the work done rather than only having a pool secretary. You know that's good for communication back home with the people, but it's also a great convenience for the legislators.

All those things, I think, helped take care of the physical things that the legislators needed to do their jobs better. We didn't get great wages or anything like that. These are things that, you know, the press didn't even argue about. I guess they wanted better conditions, too.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, you know, for certain things, the time had come. And when it becomes so evident that you need these things and the resistance kind of melts away after a certain point.

Rep. Sawyer: But not everyone was in favor of the changes. I thought it was a good step forward. (Speaker) O'Brien had been working on that too but every time he tried to do it, the Republicans would tell us, "Oh, you're going to spend too much money." So we were so happy when Copeland, representing the Republicans, agreed it was worth it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well right in the midst of the remodeling you have a really whopping earthquake, in 1965. Where were you when that hit?

Rep. Sawyer: I was on the way to the Capitol.

Ms. Kilgannon: Oh, so you weren't actually there.

Rep. Sawyer: No, that's the one I was on the way to the Capitol – but I remember Representative Sam Smith come running up. As I pulled in, I looked up and there he is, coming down the steps about four at a time. He's really running, you know. And he's scared coming out of there and I'm wondering what the heck.

Ms. Kilgannon: So you hadn't felt it in your car?

Rep. Sawyer: Oh, yeah, I felt a little wiggle in the car

but it wasn't all that bad. I didn't even think about it, so then when I got there and he was saying, "Earthquake, Earthquake!" And I said, "Oh, really." And he says, "Yeah, it's inside; it's all falling to pieces in there." So we stayed out. He said, "Don't go in there, glass is falling." See the glass falling out of the ceiling.

Ms. Kilgannon: The skylights.

Rep. Sawyer: The skylights. I guess when he was sitting there, a great big hunk of glass came down and pierced the seat next to him. That's my recollection of what he said. But anyway, when finally it was okay to go back in and we went to the rotunda and it was a mess; there was glass all over. And it actually moved the top of the dome and we couldn't go up there anymore. That used to be a popular thing to go up there in the [tunnel] but they were afraid to let anybody go up

Ms. Kilgannon: So obviously you didn't have session that morning in the chambers. Where did you go? What did you do?

Rep. Sawyer: I can't remember. I don't think we went any place else. Maybe we must have – they had to clean up the mess but other than just a mess, you know there wasn't any structural stuff to such an extent except the dome which we didn't even know about at that time.

Ms. Kilgannon: So they didn't bring in engineers or go through the building and make sure it wasn't going to fall down? (Laughs)

Rep. Sawyer: I don't remember going any place else. I'm sure we went into the chambers. The chambers were okay, except for glass all over.

Ms. Kilgannon: Now, of course, with the more recent earthquake they've shut the whole place down.

Rep. Sawyer: I don't think they did then.

Ms. Kilgannon: So you just came in in the aftermath. So you didn't have to actually go through the trauma of it.

Rep. Sawyer: Well I was there a little early for some reason. So it was lucky that I wasn't in the building. I don't think any of the committee rooms were damaged much. It was mainly the chambers.

Ms. Kilgannon: I understand that the air was just full dust. That people walking through, fairly soon after it stopped shaking, that they were all – it was

just gray in there.

Rep. Sawyer: I went up kind of a back stairs, you know, to get in. And I was just completely amazed by what had happened to the chambers. I wasn't walking around the building much that day.

Ms. Kilgannon: Was your desk damaged? Do you remember?

Rep. Sawyer: I don't remember that so it must not have been. But Sam's was. There was plenty of glass around. I saw lots of glass laying around but none of it was on my chair.

Chapter 7

Moving Up in the Ranks

Ms. Kilgannon: Your third term, starting in the 1959 session, were you getting more involved in pre-session activities, setting things up for the session, helping choose leadership?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes, somewhat. In the '59 session that, my seatmate was Ray Olson. And he was very strong. Early in the session he said, "Len, why don't you go over and talk to John and get appointed to the World's Fair Commission?" I said, "Well..." He said, "What the heck, it's interesting." I said, "Oh, okay. I haven't ever been on an interim committee."

Ms. Kilgannon: We'll get to that, yes.

Mr. Sawyer: I went up and asked Speaker O'Brien and he put me on the World's Fair Commission. That was a delightful experience. It really was. Supposedly, we were the governing body, but the Chamber of Commerce and all those people kind of took it away from us. We had four House members and it must have been four Senators and the rest of them were civil people like Eddie Carlson. That was worth it to me. What a guy. He was a doer.

Ms. Kilgannon: That's got to be one of the most exciting parts, just meeting these really top people who get things done. Whole world fairs.

1958 was quite a great election for Democrats. Of course, you still have Governor Rosellini. And you had huge majorities. In the House, you had sixty-six to thirty-three members, and in the Senate thirty-five to fourteen. It's overwhelmingly Democratic that year.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. Those were 'rosy' years. Rosellini, rosy years.

Ms. Kilgannon: To me it's a surprise, but the Republicans put on another right to work initiative on the ballot again after the disastrous defeat the last election, and it brought people out of the woodwork again. They never did it again. In fact, they passed a



Speaker Leonard Sawyer with former Speaker and Speaker Pro Tem John L. O'Brien.

resolution never to do it again, but two elections in a row they did.

Mr. Sawyer: It was not good for them at all. They were basically business oriented, you know. In those days we had all the good issues.

Ms. Kilgannon: This was particularly disastrous for them.

Mr. Sawyer: We had the teachers. We had education. We had institutions and highways. They were active on the highways but basically we had the best issues. And we were pretty dedicated toward them. And they responded well, our state employees.

Ms. Kilgannon: You certainly rolled up the vote here. But in some ways having these large majorities didn't do you any favors because your party started to develop splits and less discipline in the sense that it was harder to make people tow the line and vote with the program, shall we say?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. That's true. But I'd rather have sixty-six members than fifty. (chuckles)

Ms. Kilgannon: Or forty-nine or forty-eight.

Mr. Sawyer: Forty-nine. I was in that position when I was minority floor leader.

Ms. Kilgannon: With these huge numbers there was room for more individualism, but was it harder in a sense to run the caucus?

Mr. Sawyer: I don't think so because the caucus was never split up that much. That means that you have fourteen people who can shy off on you. The only time

you really had to call them all in was when you had to have two-thirds. But, basically, we were running on those issues. They were very popular, but if there are people who really HAVE to vote against them, they can.

Ms. Kilgannon: For reasons of their district or one thing or another?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. I always believed they should be able to if at all possible. Represent the district!

Ms. Kilgannon: Let's see. It's the beginning of session. Your caucus got together, and by all reports—and I want you to tell me if this is true—unanimously chose John O'Brien as Speaker for the third time. Somewhat unprecedented.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes.

Ms. Kilgannon: There were no issues there?

Mr. Sawyer: It was all pretty copasetic.

Ms. Kilgannon: When you have a really strong person like that...

Mr. Sawyer: That's when I was assistant majority leader.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes. You're kind of coming up in the ranks. At what point—I guess not yet—does someone always having a certain position become a problem where the people underneath start to get a little restive?

Mr. Sawyer: It's funny, because John was so popular at that time. But then, those moods change pretty fast. I had no ill feelings about John, but I thought for some reason it was just the same old thing type of thing.

Ms. Kilgannon: I was just wondering at what point that sentiment starts to be felt?

Mr. Sawyer: I don't know; it's hard to pinpoint. You just start feeling it, you know? More people are mad at him, most of the time, and for a lot of good reasons. And then you start sensing it.

Ms. Kilgannon: But isn't it also the case that no one else can advance as long as the top positions are locked in? Sort of "what am I going to do with all my ambition if he's always got it?"

Mr. Sawyer: That's true.

Ms. Kilgannon: I was just wondering at what point that starts to circulate?

Mr. Sawyer: It starts bubbling after about the second

session.

Ms. Kilgannon: But, there he is. He's very effective. He's a good leader for you. Julia Butler Hanson is chosen Speaker Pro Tem for her third term. Did you know at that point that that would be her last term?

Mr. Sawyer: No. Probably some people did, but I didn't. I think when she ran for Congress it was somewhat sudden. Russell [Mack], the congressman from their area died and I think that was not expected.

Ms. Kilgannon: So she appears to be a major player on into the foreseeable future, for all you know. Although I know she had been approached to run for Congress before. Si Holcomb, of course, is still there. He's an institution. And Sid Snyder is in his second term as assistant chief clerk.

Mr. Sawyer: He went over to the Senate around that time.

Ms. Kilgannon: Is Si still pretty solid with John O'Brien, or are they starting to have some problems?

Mr. Sawyer: They were having problems even back to when I first came into the Legislature. I don't know where it started or what it was, but they weren't the closest of buddies.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did they have a different approach about how things should be run? Or just maybe a personality thing?

Rep. Sawyer: I don't know. It might have been personality. Si was a real different kind of guy. I thought he was great. Most people thought he was, but a lot of people just didn't like him.

Ms. Kilgannon: Oh, really? But yet he's there. Voted in year after year.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. I think John might have decided he was going to change clerks, I guess, and he didn't have the votes. I think that was something that kind of may have started the bubble rolling.

Ms. Kilgannon: I see. Certainly Si Holcomb emerges as a factor in some of the splits, shall we say? He certainly gets involved.

Mr. Sawyer: He was a very active guy ever since he started down there.

Ms. Kilgannon: I was just wondering if he took other members under his wing as he did with you?

Mr. Sawyer: I'm sure he did. I don't know names... But he had a following. That's why O'Brien could never touch him.

Ms. Kilgannon: It's your third term. You're getting to be quite experienced. You're not wet behind the ears anymore. You're in fact, the assistant leader with Augie Mardesich. Is that a growing relationship that you have with him that's pulling you along? You talked about sitting beside him in Rules and learning from him. Are you forging something there?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. We were working together on things, hundreds of little things. And I had a lot of respect for him and I guess he did for me, too.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you hit it off in a special way?

Mr. Sawyer: No. Augie is a funny guy. He's not real easy to describe.

Ms. Kilgannon: No, he's not.

Mr. Sawyer: It just slowly happened, you know. Paul Stocker who was a very close friend of mine at the time—he was a legislator from the Snohomish Mafia, because they really hung together. So I started to get to know the whole group pretty well. And Paul was very close to Augie. He was a real good trial lawyer. He was kind of a character, fun guy. Very smart.

Ms. Kilgannon: Representative Mardesich had already been there for ten years. He came in '49, I think it was. So he's pretty experienced and of course he's your leader. He would definitely be a person to get close to.

Mr. Sawyer: Just being around him you knew he knew what he was doing.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes. An enormously intelligent person. There was a little group that he talks about in his oral history that got together after hours and really read the bills and really plowed through things. Were you part of that?

Mr. Sawyer: No.

Ms. Kilgannon: How did you get chosen to be the assistant leader? Did Augie Mardesich come to you or John O'Brien?

Mr. Sawyer: No. It's just I'm on the Rules committee and all the leaders are there and you get to know them. I don't think I even asked for it particularly.

Ms. Kilgannon: But you're moving up pretty fast.

You're now on the inside of things. Did that imply that you went to a lot more meetings and talked about how things were going to go and a lot more strategy kind of things?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, yes, during the session. Still, the strategists were mainly Mardesich and O'Brien. And Sandison.

Ms. Kilgannon: Gordon Sandison, yes. But you're a little closer. It's a real opportunity to get in close and see how it's done.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, yes. That's right. Be an observer.

Ms. Kilgannon: So you're in there kind of absorbing all this. Did you have any particular duties? What does it mean to be assistant?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, we have a bill and I go around and cultivate people and try to get the votes if we need to.

Ms. Kilgannon: Make sure everybody's on board?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes.

Ms. Kilgannon: You'd have to really be knowing what's going on.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. Taking a little keener interest in the mechanics of it.

Ms. Kilgannon: And that appealed to you?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes.

Ms. Kilgannon: Obviously the Speaker is a different role from being floor leader. These are all different routes to power and also to just knowing more about the process. Were you starting to feel ambitious in any particular direction here?

Mr. Sawyer: I didn't in that session. I think the animosity started working on O'Brien, and John loved titles and so forth. I never participated in this. When Si Holcomb and John really got mixed up, some talk started. At the time, I don't think I'm going to be a candidate for Speaker, but you know... "Well," Si said, "If you become Speaker, realize you're not ever going to get elected to any big office."

Ms. Kilgannon: That the Speakership is a dead end? That that's it?

Mr. Sawyer: I said, "How come?" He said, "You have to make too many decisions. You're out there on point, and you have to make too many decisions." And if you

look back on it, no Speaker ever did.

Ms. Kilgannon: That's true.

Mr. Sawyer: And they still haven't. Now, floor leader for some reason, a few of them have done pretty well when they ran for higher office.

Ms. Kilgannon: Certainly you saw Dan Evans jumping from floor leader to governor.

Mr. Sawyer: Si said—this is a little later—“If you're thinking about running, Leonard, and I'd like to have you run, and I think you'll be good, but I want you to realize that if you have any other ambitions, don't do it.”

But I never did. I told you I never had any visions of running for anything else. Once you're Speaker and you have a lot of power, people come around thinking you ought to run for governor. Baggie listened to that. (chuckles)

Ms. Kilgannon: Interesting. When I was thinking about routes to power or authority or responsibility—all those are usually wrapped up together—there's also being a committee chair and specializing in one area

Or they're specializing in the institution itself which is the route to the Speaker. And you were both. You were chair of Highways and you were in leadership.

Mr. Sawyer: But my main passion was being a student of the processes.

Chapter 8

Challenging Speaker O'Brien

Ms. Kilgannon: But eventually, in the 1961 session, you do make a run for Speaker. So, with that in mind, whenever it is that you made that decision, would you be trying to build a following?

Mr. Sawyer: Sure!

Ms. Kilgannon: And that would be chiefly done through helping people with their campaigns?

Mr. Sawyer: We started out very simply. We weren't getting much help from our leadership as far as campaigning – it just hadn't been done. Bob Greive did it in the Senate, but nobody in the House was doing it much so we went ahead. I went through the legislators – the Democratic legislators – and I picked out the best campaigners I could find.

Ms. Kilgannon: That would be Bob Perry and -

Mr. Sawyer: Dan Marsh, John Bagnariol, there were several. But they, in my mind, were the best campaigners we had. So then we started meeting and talking about, how do we help people? We tried to figure out how we could help them financially, which we knew was important, and with publications. You know, when you're first starting you don't know anything at all. And so we would come in and help them write their brochures, help them prepare to speak to the public – and we'd tell them "don't have more than maybe three issues, four at the most and then alternate them so... So you can get up and speak extemporaneously at any time because you've got those there with you."

And so we did that, and we showed them how to doorbell, how to organize, everything that Harvey Dodd had taught me; analyze your district and prioritize. You know, we really were consultants and we went around and helped them succeed. As a result, we were really strong with the new people.

Ms. Kilgannon: So when you say you helped with finances, where would you find the money?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, that's simple. I'd been in the Legislature a long time, you know, and Perry was always a good campaign money raiser. And what I did, I made a list of everybody that I knew had ever donated – whether they donated to me or not. Just people who were involved. See, we didn't have any public disclosure so you had to figure it out. And Si would help me with that list because he knew the people.

So we made this list – I think the lobbyists were at the top of the sheet and then at the side, we had candidates we wanted to help. So most of these were small campaign donations. And big campaign donations are a hundred bucks, then, so these are people normally in the \$50 to \$100 bracket. So what I'd do then, then we'd find a candidate....

Ms. Kilgannon: And how would you go about doing that?

Mr. Sawyer: Jeez that's the most laborious thing. Oh and it's tough. We had a system. We sat down and said, "Who wins elections?" And we tried to put a little profile on the thing. It didn't always work but, like me, I said, "Let's get an old beat up jock strap; they know people around the district and it worked for me and it worked for Buster." So, that was one way.

Ms. Kilgannon: Somebody whose already got name recognition in the community – yeah.

Mr. Sawyer: But the main thing is get somebody that's willing to work. And one of our main criteria is "Alright, how many people can you get to go help you?" If they couldn't come up with eight or nine people, we got worried about them. But if they could come up with eight or nine people that they thought would help them, then we'd really get serious.

Ms. Kilgannon: So they've already got a strong social group, or people they can call on.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah. The PTA, whatever, we didn't care. But they had to have people to do it. We're not going to count Democratic Party members so much because they all want to be chiefs, we want a bunch of Indians. So you go get your Indians and get them lined up.

And we had these legislators spread around, so if they'd hear about somebody promising, they'd go talk to them and then I'd go talk to them. And try to talk them [into it]. So, of ten people, we'd end up with maybe four that were interested.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, it's a huge commitment.

Mr. Sawyer: And then they would go to their wife and fifty percent of those people would be knocked down because their wife didn't want them to do it. And then, after that, they have to go to their employer. So of the ten people, we end up with maybe one or two. So you can imagine how many we were hitting. And this was after we'd already evaluated – making sure we thought they could win.

Ms. Kilgannon: What about not only could they win, but what did they stand for? Was there much litmus test type of things going on?

Mr. Sawyer: No, no, we didn't get involved in that. Because they knew their own districts.

Ms. Kilgannon: There's the perception, articulated by Ken Billington and others, that your campaign efforts were tied to public/private power issues. He identifies you as going specifically to PUD county legislators and trying to sway them into your camp. That's his construction of your effort. Is that – shall we say – over schematic?

Mr. Sawyer: Well yeah, because we were just out talking to anybody.

Ms. Kilgannon: There's also the perception – put about by pretty much the same group of people – that you accepted campaign contributions from private power companies and used them to help people get elected.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. That's true but I accepted them from anybody I could find. I mean, you know, the guy might be a hundred miles away from where I am in thinking, but that doesn't mean that he isn't straight up and he's got a point and so forth. But I never tried to get the money. I just made the contact for them. I told them who to go talk to.

Ms. Kilgannon: Okay. Now, without actually linking all these things together – and I want to be really clear that I'm not trying to do that – you did work on all these campaigns in 1960, and the Democrats win big in the House.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes, we had some real successful campaigns that year. Recruited some great people.

Ms. Kilgannon: Then the next thing that really comes up, chronologically, is you do try to unseat John O'Brien as speaker. More people than yourself were getting a little dissatisfied, as you were describing earlier.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, otherwise we couldn't have done it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Your name comes up as one that is, you know, grumbling in the background. Augie Mardesich, also. And John Goldmark. Did you have some earlier organizational meetings were you start to challenge John O'Brien?

Mr. Sawyer: No.

Ms. Kilgannon: Because apparently at some stage of this John Goldmark, who had been considering a challenge, pulls his name out of the running and puts his group behind John O'Brien.

Mr. Sawyer: Um hmm. Well, I don't know who was in his group.

Ms. Kilgannon: I don't know. It's never actually stated, it's just that this is one of the things that sort of happened, according to a couple of different sources. In his Oral History, Augie Mardesich remembers that you and he were talking and the first thought in his memory is that he should run for speaker. Is that your memory?

Mr. Sawyer: That was my recommendation to him. "Augie, I think this is a wonderful opportunity. I think we can make you speaker."

Ms. Kilgannon: Was he interested in that?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh yeah, anybody's interested if they're offered speaker. But it wasn't any promise. I just told him the opportunity was there.

Ms. Kilgannon: Is that because he had seniority?

Mr. Sawyer: No, he was just a hell of a leader. It wasn't based on seniority, it was just based on my experience being in the Legislature with Augie Mardesich. And so, he said, well, yeah, he'd be interested. And I said, "Well, fine – we're getting a group together."

And we sat down afterwards – we did it up at some resort, some kind of thing, I don't know how we did it. But basically, he was right. That's exactly what was said. And then when we got down to it, after the election or right towards the end, Augie wasn't – people weren't relating to him because he wasn't out there helping them. He wasn't out there talking to them. Augie didn't like to do that, just like he didn't like to campaign at home.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, was he off fishing? (Laughs)

Mr. Sawyer: No, no. Well, probably.

Ms. Kilgannon: He wasn't home much.

Mr. Sawyer: That wasn't Augie's style. He was just one heck of a legislator. And people were drawn to him for that. In my mind, he deserved it more than I did but I had more – I was the one that had more energy.

Ms. Kilgannon: At what point in there did you think that maybe you should be the speaker? That you should try for it?

Mr. Sawyer: I don't know. It was either just right after the election or in the last month of the elections. Augie and I had a talk and I don't know. It wasn't anything where I sat down and structured the thing.

Ms. Kilgannon: No, no. But there's a shift in there somewhere and your name sort of rises up.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, because I was out talking to more people. I campaigned for and with people all over the place.

Ms. Kilgannon: So for Augie, he could – you know – take it or leave it?

Mr. Sawyer: No, he didn't need the title of speaker to get things done. Titles didn't mean too much to Augie. But being Speaker of the House is a real honor. And I thought he deserved it, to tell you the truth.

Ms. Kilgannon: His remarks about it are somewhat ambiguous. I don't know if that's hindsight or what but the way he talks about is like, "Yeah, I could have done it but I didn't and that's fine."

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I'm not saying he couldn't have.

Ms. Kilgannon: He didn't seem to have the sort of heat in the belly about it. Some people do and other people just don't.

Mr. Sawyer: That's the difference. We were out really pounding people to get them going and doing this. And it caught on.

Ms. Kilgannon: So we're right up to session. You're still campaigning for the speakership and it's not settled.

Mr. Sawyer: No, we looked like we have it locked in but then the Democratic Party and the governor and all those people started chipping away at us because John (O'Brien) had the establishment with him.

Ms. Kilgannon: Aah. So maybe the pressure starts

to move the other way?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah. And most the people hung in there. But you know some people can't. They've got their livelihood hanging in there. And we didn't have anything to offer them other than just we're going to change things.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, also if you hadn't actually promised them anything, the support starts to slip a bit.

Mr. Sawyer: No, that kept their interest high. They could dream on.

Ms. Kilgannon: (Laughs) I see, I see. The suspense was killing them. You did have a twenty-nine/twenty-nine split when it came to an actual vote. And somewhere I read that you would have had it except that one member was not present?

Mr. Sawyer: Clayton Farrington.

Ms. Kilgannon: It's very interesting about Clayton Farrington because he's conspicuously absent this entire session. We know he's ill but it plays a role in so many different events that it's...

Mr. Sawyer: You know I forgot he'd gone to Arizona permanently. But he was sick.

Ms. Kilgannon: He was pretty much out of the picture.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, he was sick. And Clayton was a nice guy. He might have been committed to both of us. I have no idea. But O'Brien never challenged the statement that he was on my side.

Ms. Kilgannon: Now, John O'Brien himself – he flirted with running for mayor of Seattle about this time – and he's kind of looking around too. But then he kind of comes back to the Legislature and recommits – you might say. Maybe that's too strong a word. But he does not run for mayor. Were you aware of some of his other wanderings, shall we say?

Mr. Sawyer: No, I wasn't at all. We started going and all our thoughts and all our motivation came from within the group.

Ms. Kilgannon: O'Brien does come back. He definitely wants to be Speaker. He has been Speaker three times. He's about to run for an unprecedented fourth consecutive term. I don't think anyone else had ever been speaker that many times in a row. Was that one of the issues – is that nobody should lock up the speaker-

ship for that many terms?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I certainly didn't count them, but I bet I looked at that fact.

Ms. Kilgannon: Soo there was a kind of restlessness at the bottom there?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah. Of course. They had these people up there – I don't want to name names – but they'd been in leadership, been in chairmanships...

Ms. Kilgannon: The other thing that's often said about this split is that it's connected with the private and public power debate – who went for who. But, ultimately, it seems it didn't split that way.

Mr. Sawyer: On our side that was never an issue. If a guy was going to be with us, he could vote however he wanted on everything else. All they were binding themselves to was an organization vote. And we made sure of that.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, who do you think was in – say – John O'Brien's camp that you were able to identify? Was it partly a King County thing?

Mr. Sawyer: I think maybe partly. And chairs.

Ms. Kilgannon: So those that had chairmanships under O'Brien would probably want to stick with him?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, I would think so, the way they were working it then. They'd have too much to lose. Then there was Goldmark and I think Margaret Hurley from Spokane. See I thought I might have had a chance at her because she was in education. I was working the education group real hard, because I knew the lobbyist real well. He was a buddy of mine. And Bill Cline, he was an attorney out of Vancouver. And then Dick King. I was surprised when Dick didn't go my way. Rep. Litchman....

Ms. Kilgannon: Is he part of the King County group?

Mr. Sawyer: I think there was a fight between he and Perry. They used to be inseparable and then they broke up or something, I don't know. And then McCormick – Spokane. Jeez, I knew Bill real well. But he was Catholic and he was also from the power people over there. McFadden – Dr. McFadden, I don't know. I can't remember anything – I just assumed he was with O'Brien. He was an older guy but a very nice person. Ann O'Donnell was from the Seattle group, real close

to O'Brien. Then Olson – Ray Olsen was real close too. And then Schaefer was part of that group from Vancouver. He was very capable. And then Sam Smith was from Seattle. Henry Backstrom, who I thought was real close to Augie but I guess he wasn't. So, that was O'Brien's group, I really think.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, that's certainly a mixture of private and public power interests.

Mr. Sawyer: And then there's Dick Kink.

Ms. Kilgannon: Dick Kink. He's from – what Whatcom County, isn't he? Dick Kink became the chair of Utilities and he's somewhat controversial in all this.

Mr. Sawyer: McElroy I just don't have any feeling about him one way or another. Rickner, he should have been with us, but I think he was probably with O'Brien because was a restaurant person, and the Restaurant Association's all King County see, so I think we couldn't get him. Jeanette Testu I don't know. I just assumed she was with O'Brien. Somebody told me later she wasn't. So I don't know.

Ms. Kilgannon: Actually O'Brien identifies her as being with you. But other people say that she was under O'Brien's thumb and would do anything he told her to do so there's such conflicting stories about her.

Mr. Sawyer: That was my – she's just a lovely person. I loved her. But I just don't think she would – she was status quo but other than that I should have had a good shot at her. Wes Uhlman was very close to Bob Perry so I don't know, he might have been for us. Otherwise he would be with O'Brien.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, isn't that interesting because there's friendships, there's geography, there's all kinds of things and you never know which way it's going to play.

Mr. Sawyer: And they're trying to make it this one-issue thing.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, the Legislature doesn't work that way. It sounds like you really studied everybody and knew what interested them, what mattered to them -

Mr. Sawyer: You darn right – that's what lobbyists should do.

Ms. Kilgannon: – and then you could work towards making that connection. Did you kind of take a page

from the good lobbyists and say, "Now what is it they do that's so effective?"

Mr. Sawyer: No, this is just the way I've always been. This is what Magnuson, way back when, told me to work on. You know the people. It's a people's game, so you better know the people.

Ms. Kilgannon: Which people who were clearly for you?

Mr. Sawyer: Bob Bernethy – I think we had him. He was an old timer so I don't know but I put him down on our side and I think we had Brink but he was a King County lawyer. Buster Brouillet was with us, Burns was with us and then there's the other guy that I think was with us, Cecil. He was down from the Tri-City area. Jack Burtch we had, he was Eric Anderson's seat mate. And we had Campbell and he lived in Spokane but he was not a Spokane Democrat.

Ms. Kilgannon: Not the usual kind anyway.

Mr. Sawyer: Then Connor, he was a hundred percent for me. He was in the Twenty-first District out on the Peninsula. And then Bill Day was for me.

Ms. Kilgannon: Bill Day being a Spokane Democrat too, so they are not monolithic either.

Mr. Sawyer: No. Arlie DeJarnatt was a teacher and I got him through the election...

Ms. Kilgannon: The education thing, interesting.

Mr. Sawyer: And then Farrington, I think.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, he was a teacher as well.

Mr. Sawyer: I did well among the teachers.

Ms. Kilgannon: Now, here's a question. Sometimes you read that public school teachers are somewhat – they have some concerns about Catholic legislators because they think that they don't support public education. Some people worried about Rosellini that way. But was that also true for O'Brien where there was that slight hesitation, not knowing whether he would be for public education as much as they wanted him to be?

Mr. Sawyer: Probably to a certain extent. But it wouldn't be a valid criticism from John. John ended up delivering for education most of the time. He wasn't as gung-ho as Buster and I were, but he was very supportive.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, I don't think anyone could be

more gung-ho than Buster Brouillet.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I was pretty gung-ho too.

Ms. Kilgannon: But would that be – prejudice is too strong a word – but would that be – a perception that would cloud the issue for public school teachers? The whole Catholic school issue? This was pretty hot in these years.

Mr. Sawyer: I don't know, we never used it. Because I voted, most of the time, for private schools. To me it was a matter – how can we educate people the easiest? Now if we can give a little tax break to a group of people and they're going to take some students off our education rolls, I'm for it. It's the cheapest thing in the world. Now, that's how pragmatic I was on it. Now, my wife's uncle was big in the Shriners. He didn't like me because I did that, but that's what I believed.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, for some people it was a pretty hot and cold issue, there wasn't any middle ground.

Mr. Sawyer: And I wasn't very good in those kinds of situations. Let's see – then there was – Avery Garrett. Garrett was with me because of Martin Durkan.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, they came from the same district.

Mr. Sawyer: That's right. And he pretty well owed his election – his original election to Durkan. And there's something that I think Durkan would do.

Ms. Kilgannon: So some sort of association there.

Mr. Sawyer: But he was also close, I think, to Perry. I'm not sure. He was with us very reluctantly because he wanted to be the speaker.

Ms. Kilgannon: Everybody's got ambition. That's part of the mix isn't it?

Mr. Sawyer: Sure. I think we had Marian Gleason from Pierce County.

Ms. Kilgannon: So geography played a role there?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, it plays a role -

Ms. Kilgannon: So did you have the Pierce County people all with you?

Mr. Sawyer: Most the time, yeah. That's one thing I really worked, keeping the county. "We got to stay together. We got to stay together." And even when I wasn't being speaker, I always pitched that because it worked.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, the King County people kind of stick together. Or the Spokane people? I mean do people get more for their area that way?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh I think so. We also had Mildred Henry. She was for us. Her husband and John had a few falling outs, particularly before he went to the Senate..

Ms. Kilgannon: Though it must be said, she's quite an independent voter from him.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. And Holmes, I'm sure Paul was with me. He was with me. He was a private power guy. Mardesich was for me and he was public power.

Ms. Kilgannon: So the power issue wasn't a deciding actor. How many of these people in your camp were people you actually helped campaign?

Mr. Sawyer: Most of these I helped to some degree. Garrett, I don't think I helped.

Ms. Kilgannon: So, some but not all.

Mr. Sawyer: Most of them – I tried to help. If I didn't help it wasn't because I didn't try.

Ms. Kilgannon: Were there people in the other columns, the other camps that you would have helped as well, that would have ended up in different groups?

Mr. Sawyer: I think I was pretty stingy when it comes to anybody outside the camp. We had plenty here to do.

Ms. Kilgannon: Oh yeah, that's a big geographic spread you've got going there.

Mr. Sawyer: You can say it's all over. There isn't any rhyme or reason to it other than it was personal.

Ms. Kilgannon: Just who you clicked with.

Mr. Sawyer: It was a personal thing. And then, what the heck – Pat Nicholson, we had him. He was from the Peninsula up there. I think he was from Bremerton. And then Perry was for me. And, of course, I was for myself.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, really. (Laughs)

Mr. Sawyer: Dick Taylor was for Augie and then Witherbee was a real strong labor guy and I think I got him, I'm not sure but I think I did. I think we probably captured most of the freshmen both of the times I ran. The second time, definitely.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yeah, it looks like you did. And then

a part of it was figuring out the senior Democrats who left the House at that time: Gordon Brown, Wally Carmichael. There are some senior Democrats who make room for all these new people. So there's quite a change over. I think that's the part that is really interesting is that everybody's got so many things they are bringing to the table here.

Mr. Sawyer: If I hadn't had Augie with me at the start, there were several people I would have had trouble with.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, when it comes down to it, people figure out their interests and decide which way they're going to vote.

Mr. Sawyer: Right. One of the things we always found effective is when going to counties surrounding King County – "Hey we've got to get together and stop these guys, they're going to get everything."

Ms. Kilgannon: Who? The Seattle people?

Mr. Sawyer: The King County people.

Ms. Kilgannon: And these are the years when all those places are developing all the little suburbs.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, and so that was a real good one. Because they could identify with Pierce, we were small enough. King County, though – a little harder to identify with. Now that was a bigger issue than power.

Ms. Kilgannon: Interesting. What kinds of things do you think they wanted? Roads? Attention?

Mr. Sawyer: We never got that specific. But when King County come looking for something they usually got it. And so that starts bothering people because they got a lot of votes.

Ms. Kilgannon: So you were trying to create a different kind of coalition.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, that was stuff we did from my second term on, once I found out how the thing worked – That's why I worked with the Kitsap County people, worked with the Snohomish group, you know. They were a pretty tight little group. And all those things have effect and none of them I can say are going to work every time. But you have a better chance if this and this and this. So that's what we worked for.

Ms. Kilgannon: It makes sense.

Mr. Sawyer: So that's why I laugh when they say "It was all about public versus private power."

Ms. Kilgannon: It's a little simplistic. You went right into session with this undecided, according to the newspaper accounts. That there was still tension, right up to the first days of session.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh there was tension, but we – Augie and I said now, we were not going to go into any coalition or any of that kind of stuff. We could have picked up the phone and we'd had many, many Republican votes. But we weren't gonna do that.

Ms. Kilgannon: At what point did John O'Brien realize that you had a pretty strong challenge mounting?

Mr. Sawyer: About the last month.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did he come to you in any way?

Mr. Sawyer: No. Never.

Ms. Kilgannon: Or did he start solidifying his side?

Mr. Sawyer: He went back to the governor and all the people – see this guy that I know that used to be in that group – he and I become real close friends, he told me, they really got out there. They were pounding.

Ms. Kilgannon: So running scared a little bit here?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh yeah. So they woke up and almost too late.

Ms. Kilgannon: But not quite.

Mr. Sawyer: No, not quite. They did a good job. Because we had it going good.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yeah, you certainly were right up there. At what point do you have this twenty-nine/ twenty-nine vote?

Mr. Sawyer: It was the organizational meeting – I can't remember the precise date. Normally it's done at a different time but it can be done any time. It was done up here in Seattle.

Ms. Kilgannon: So whenever you had this vote, do you then start meeting with John O'Brien and try to figure out what you're going to do?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, we did have that one meeting and it was obvious that he was going to punish us. We were bad boys. We were his lieutenants, you know. We had joined the mutiny. And so when his appointments came out...

Ms. Kilgannon: There's a lot of talk about you and

Augie Mardesich bargaining with him about appointments, committee assignments.

Mr. Sawyer: We didn't have any. If you go through that you won't find any of our members as chairmen.

Ms. Kilgannon: (Laughs) Well, that's the thing that really stands out is that you didn't get it.

Mr. Sawyer: We didn't get anything.

Ms. Kilgannon: No. In fact you were punished. You're quoted several times as saying, he didn't keep his commitments to you. That he was supposed to give you four chairmanships for your side.

Mr. Sawyer: No. That's what we sat down and asked for and he turned us down. I don't think he ever made a commitment.

Ms. Kilgannon: I see. It's in the press.

Mr. Sawyer: As far as I'm concerned there was no commitments made. I don't know what Augie thought. I've heard that there were promises made, too, and I kept thinking, maybe he did make a commitment but I didn't remember it. Maybe that's just how forgetful I am.

Ms. Kilgannon: (Laughs) There's one description here in the Post-Intelligencer I guess it is, Sted Nelson's writing, he's describing what he calls the "Democratic civil war was averted by hasty compromises in five fateful minutes. The shakeup was principally due to a tight, tense battle for the top House spot between O'Brien and Representative Len Sawyer. The Sawyer forces had not given up when the opening gavel sounded at 12: 05 p.m., there was frantic activity on the floor and in the adjoining corridors with the rival forces holding impromptu meetings as the roll call drawled on."

Mr. Sawyer: I don't remember. My memory as far as Augie and I is concerned, he was going to win. And we couldn't see a great advantage to joining forces.

Ms. Kilgannon: So then there's all this talk, in the press, at any rate, about this deal that you're supposed to get with committee chairmanships. But you're saying that that was not really the way it was?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, that's what we wanted. I don't remember ever getting even to the stage, I don't know if we even talked to him about it. But that's what we wanted. And Bob Perry liked to be out making bold

forecasts all the time.

Ms. Kilgannon: Maybe he was the origin of the stories.

Mr. Sawyer: Perry and Sted Nelson were very close. He had real good relationships with the press – much better than I. He and Shelby Scates were very close, too.

Ms. Kilgannon: Here's more Nelson articles. He's got you saying, "Representative Len Sawyer of Puyallup and Augie Mardesich of Everett, the principals in the close fight for the speakership with O'Brien said the committee appointments were 'nowhere near the commitments he made to us. O'Brien did not come close to keeping his commitments' Sawyer said."

And then he says you were supposed to get an equal break in the chairmanships of four major committees. "O'Brien insisted that his major commitment to Sawyer forces was fulfilled with the appointment of Dick Kink of Bellingham to the chairmanship of the Public Utilities Committee."

Mr. Sawyer: (Laughing) Oh, that sounds like Dick was on our side then, doesn't it?

Ms. Kilgannon: But you don't really have him there.

Mr. Sawyer: I don't remember. Because I thought he was but then somebody told me he wasn't.

Ms. Kilgannon: This twenty-nine/twenty-nine vote, were you in a room where you could see everybody and their hands are up? Or is it secret, is it a secret ballot?

Mr. Sawyer: Secret ballot.

Ms. Kilgannon: So you wouldn't know actually who in the end voted for you.

Mr. Sawyer: No, not for sure.

Ms. Kilgannon: Now, this appointment of Dick Kink to the Public Utilities Committee as chair snowballs into a lot of meaning because people assume that he's in your camp and that this is part of some master plan.

Mr. Sawyer: But see what I can't understand is why – was that quote from O'Brien or who? The press?

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, it's a [Sted Nelson] article and this seems to be what O'Brien is saying. That you requested Dick Kink be chair of the Utilities Commission.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I think maybe Bob Perry might have, but I never did.

Ms. Kilgannon: Would people think that if Bob Perry asked for something that it's really you asking for it? Or he a bit of a free agent here?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, our group came on and we didn't ask for stuff unless it was a group thing. And most of the time it was probably true. Perry was very active in it; Mardesich was very active. A lot of people were very active. But most of them weren't saying a word.

Ms. Kilgannon: Where does this big issue with Dick Kink come from?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, supposedly he got a job with I don't know – Puget Power, maybe? and therefore that was supposed to be his vote for what? I don't know. I think it would have said it was his vote for staying with O'Brien. (Laughs) I don't know.

Ms. Kilgannon: So that construction is just something that's put on this afterwards? There's no master plan here?

Mr. Sawyer: No. Why would we give up everything for one person? Especially when we had that thing "all for one." That was our basic theme, "all for one." Because we could have sat down and made some deals with O'Brien even though he didn't want to make them, but then we'd have to start breaking up our unity.

Ms. Kilgannon: Which wouldn't further your cause.

Mr. Sawyer: Wouldn't further our cause any.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, it seems like John O'Brien is implying it's a concession to you to give Kink a chairmanship even if it has no particular meaning to you.

Mr. Sawyer: It wasn't done that way as far as I was concerned.

Ms. Kilgannon: Now, when you were making this challenge to the Speaker, were you concerned about the punishment issue if you didn't win? Because there certainly were effects.

Mr. Sawyer: Well no. I mean I was never one for titles much. Neither was Augie and we were talking that down the whole time. And the main thing, if we stick together, what are they going to do? They're not going to pass anything they want. So if we're going to do any horse trading, we'll trade it later.

Ms. Kilgannon: I see. There were repercussions, you're both pulled off Rules...

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah.

Ms. Kilgannon: You were pulled off Ways and Means, you were given no chairmanships despite your seniority. You were marginalized, or at least in some people's eyes.

Mr. Sawyer: And I think that was the biggest mistake he made. Made martyrs out of us. Now that was a big mistake on John's part. But he was so engrossed with that type of thing – you reward your friend, you know, punish your enemies, I guess

Ms. Kilgannon: You are pushed out of leadership – so is Mardesich except for this rather curious title he was given. He was assistant speaker pro tem.

Mr. Sawyer: Assistant to the assistant.

Ms. Kilgannon: There had never been such a title before in fact he makes sort of a joke out of it and says, "You know, I've never heard of this title. What is it?" And it was supposed to be like a band aide but it in fact -

Mr. Sawyer: No, it was a put down.

Ms. Kilgannon: it had no meaning at all.

Mr. Sawyer: So we sat there and laughed about it, a big joke as far as we were concerned. O'Brien gave him the podium one day because he had to go do something and so Augie immediately got up and appointed me assistant to the assistant of the speaker pro tem. In fact, they had Big Daddy Day and they picked me up and walked me down the aisle – oh, yeah if O'Brien had been there he would have died.

Ms. Kilgannon: What a picture. (Laughs)

Mr. Sawyer: You've got to make a little fun.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, that's quite an image! Assistant to the assistant to the assistant.

At the time you do vote finally for the speaker, you're one of the seconders. So, you're extending the olive branch in some ways.

Mr. Sawyer: We were just trying to keep ourselves, our caucus, united.

Ms. Kilgannon: The committee assignments came out early in the session as usual and then there was some changes made a few weeks later. I'm not sure why, but things were just shifted around a little bit so you gained a sixth committee, which is really a lot of

committees.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, as far as I was concerned, that isn't where I was going to be spending my time. I was going to be spending my time keeping our people together and working with Augie.

Ms. Kilgannon: At some point you make a – you and Augie make a promise not to be disruptive. But all accounts of the session say that you weren't disruptive, but that it wasn't the smoothest session and that the Democratic caucus was not the most glued together group of people. That there was still that split.

Mr. Sawyer: Um hmm.

Ms. Kilgannon: So in caucus meetings, how was that handled? Was there an obvious split? Or was it kind of all over the place depending on the issue?

Mr. Sawyer: It was more on the issues, but to get the caucus to go on certain things, he had to work at it. (Laughs) But it wasn't just automatic. Nothing was automatic.

Ms. Kilgannon: So behind closed doors was it a little more difficult than usual?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, it was difficult for them because they never knew for sure where we were going to go. And we didn't make it easy for them. I think that maybe Augie talked to John. I never remember talking to John about much during that time.

Ms. Kilgannon: So you just sort of played your cards close to the vest as they say. And – you kind of watched and waited.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, if people needed help, we'd be there and try to help. Well, they didn't really have to ask, because we were all looking to help each other. So when somebody got up from our side and made a pitch you could almost count for sure on our group.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you do anything to undermine O'Brien? Or did you just kind of wait?

Mr. Sawyer: Didn't have to.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, what about that story you just told me about trying to keep them nervous and off balance?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh yeah, that was kind of fun. Augie is kind of mischievous and I am too- and so what we'd do is get up and go around and talk to different people

from the Republican caucus, and different things....

Ms. Kilgannon: Looking like you were up to something?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah. Especially on Democratic issues you know. And John's up there and he's just watching us like a hawk. And then we go back and sit down.

Ms. Kilgannon: Innocent as pie?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, never say anything to him.

Ms. Kilgannon: So it was more to keep him a little bit on the edge?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, keep him nervous. He had ulcers so we helped him along.

Ms. Kilgannon: Oh dear. So, I mean, it's not really revenge but it's a little -

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, it's revenge. But we tried not to do anything that was going to hurt the Democratic policy or stuff that needed to be done. We never played around with that. Everything else was fair game.

Ms. Kilgannon: I see. So if your greater goal is the benefit of the Democratic party, you keep that in mind but underneath you can do these little things.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, Democratic ideas. On schools and different things, and state employees – well I was real strong on that. I think Augie wasn't particularly strong on schools but he was strong on state employees and different things like labor issues.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did this tension last the entire session?

Mr. Sawyer: I don't remember to tell you the truth. I think O'Brien got used to it a little bit. We just liked to do it occasionally to keep him on his toes. He wanted to be speaker, then be speaker.

Chapter 9

The Coalition

Ms. Kilgannon: During the Democratic convention in the summer of 1962, a group of people loudly protested the party platform. They said it was too liberal, that it had gone too far, and they walked out of the convention. That was publicized of course.

Mr. Sawyer: Makes good headlines.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes, they reported there was a fair amount of discontent in the ranks and many comments were that the Democratic platform had become too – some people even used the word radical. Herb Blake pushed through a very strong plank for public power and for some other issues that not everyone could agree with.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, Herb was very liberal – not only in public power – and he really believed it; he was going from the heart.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you go to that convention?

Mr. Sawyer: Probably. I can't remember ever taking a real active part in the convention. You go over there and shake hands and make sure everybody's happy and –

Ms. Kilgannon: Except in this case they weren't.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah.

Ms. Kilgannon: This walk out, of course, is one the links in the chain towards the infamous coalition. This group is upset and they vow that they are not going to vote for John O'Brien ever again.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, they were but let's face it, underneath it all, they wanted control of the House. That was the main thing that was driving them. Bill Day wanted to be speaker, you know. And he was a pretty good speaker when you get down to it. He was a little too one way – he tromped on people.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well everybody's got a pretty strong opinion on how that went. I don't know how much you would be aware of this discontent. You said earlier that

some of those people had approached you about forming some kind of group but that you turned them down.

Mr. Sawyer: That was in the '61 session.

Ms. Kilgannon: They didn't come back to you at any point?

Mr. Sawyer: I don't think so. I had several people wanting me to run for Speaker again and yeah, as I said, "If you want to go vote for me, great, but I'm not going to go out pounding nails. I can't afford it. That's very expensive.

Ms. Kilgannon: So maybe they felt you out a little bit and then when you didn't quite jump onboard, they..?

Mr. Sawyer: I didn't go the full route with them before, I guess, is what they figured. And I don't know what the full route was supposed to be. Anyway, no, I knew that they were thinking a coalition.

Ms. Kilgannon: It was one of the – a fairly well-kept secret but at least some people like yourselves, may have heard bits and pieces that there was this thing building?

Mr. Sawyer: I don't know. I can't pin it down. I knew they were thinking about it but you know, thinking about it and doing it is two different things.

Ms. Kilgannon: Quite, quite.

Mr. Sawyer: They were bouncing around, you know, trying to figure out where they were going.

Ms. Kilgannon: Perhaps unbeknownst to you there was a group of Democrats that did contact the Republicans and right up until just before the session, according to their accounts of it, they were negotiating and planning what they were going to do on the floor.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, that's when they did it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes. Right up almost to the day of the session opening they were still working out the plan.

Mr. Sawyer: I'm sure they were.

Ms. Kilgannon: So you – are the organizational meetings where your caucus gets together after the election and decides on leadership....

Mr. Sawyer: Um hmm. We knew then....

Ms. Kilgannon: You choose John O'Brien as your speaker. Avery Garrett is going to be the caucus chair, Ann O'Donnell who is fairly new, is rising in the ranks pretty quickly, she'll be your secretary. Robert

Schaefer seems to be rising too. He shows up a lot as doing things.

Mr. Sawyer: He was very close to O'Brien.

Ms. Kilgannon: Where do you feel you are in all this? In '63 were you still a little bit on the outside of things or were you kind of coming back in?

Mr. Sawyer: Practicing law. (Laughs) Being on the outside?

Ms. Kilgannon: Yeah, after the '61 session where you'd lost your chairmanship, etc.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes, I was more involved then than I was in '63. But, in '63 I was still very strong in the caucus. I had a lot of people – so not as strong as I was in '61 because I had worked that. I hadn't worked that much since – it was the leftovers. My main strength came from Pierce County then.

Ms. Kilgannon: So the first day of the session, there's all the ceremony and being sworn in and you know that something is going to happen. And then Mr. Schaefer puts forward the resolution about temporary rules and then there's a call of the House and the sergeant at arms locks the doors, which seems a little unusual for a speaker nomination.

Mr. Sawyer: No, you wanted all your votes there. If there was any doubt -

Ms. Kilgannon: And you know it starts off the way that you would expect. Mr. Schaefer rises first and nominates John O'Brien. There are two seconds to the nomination and Mr. Braun also speaks for John O'Brien – all normal.

But then the chief clerk recognizes Margaret Hurley and she rises and she's a little keyed up in her speech. You could sort of see that something is about to happen, perhaps. She said, "We all realize – no matter what our political party – that the selection of speaker is not something to be determined lightly, for on this decision depends the whole trend of legislation to be considered during this session. Will we have responsible expenditures or thoughtful economies, increased governmental controls or protection of individual freedom? Will we carry out the will of the people as indicated by the election of these new members I see around me?"

And she was a big proponent of you represent your

district, not your party. So this has a fairly loaded meaning for her, I think. And then she goes on to talk about the role of the speaker and again says that "we're here to represent our districts and your vote for a new speaker will be your first opportunity to fulfill that oath."

Mr. Sawyer: She makes a speech before she nominates.

Ms. Kilgannon: Oh yes. Quite a speech. Then she nominates William Day and then Mr. Kink seconds that and Mr. Chet King also seconds it.

Mr. Sawyer: Chet King did?

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes.

Mr. Sawyer: I'll be darned.

Ms. Kilgannon: So people are lining up. Do you remember – what did you think of this? This is a little unusual.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh no, we knew that was going to come – there had been talk in caucus before that. No, I knew it anyway.

Ms. Kilgannon: Normally this is decided not on the floor of the House. It's unusual.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, well I don't think it was decided on the floor of the House this time, either. They had their own little caucus and they met and they [had a deal] with the Republicans and -

Ms. Kilgannon: Right, but did you have any inkling of that?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh yeah.

Ms. Kilgannon: Hmm. Then Mr. Canfield is given his turn and he, of course, nominates Daniel Evans. Mr. Moos seconds that, and there are no further nominations. On the first ballot, Mr. O'Brien gets forty-five, Mr. Day six, Mr. Evans forty-eight. So nobody wins. The six voting for Speaker Day would be: himself, Margaret Hurley, King, Kink, McCormick, and Bob Perry. So then they have another vote.

Apparently the galleries were pretty full and people were kind of flocking in, and the Senators were coming over to see what you guys would do.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, they knew what was up.

Ms. Kilgannon: It's a little tense. There's another vote and you go through the whole thing again. Mr. Day

picks up another vote – Mr. O’Connell switches sides; now he has seven so it’s still not decided.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I thought he was aboard all the way along.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, not till the second vote. Maybe they’re trying for drama. Then there’s a third vote, and apparently all hell broke loose at this point. The dramatic switching of all the Republicans over to Mr. Day, except one, who just couldn’t quite do it.

Mr. Sawyer: Who’s that?

Ms. Kilgannon: Representative Holly. Anyway, so there’s all of a sudden there’s this whole new lineup of votes and I gather that you could tell which way the wind was blowing there pretty quickly. A couple more people come over – Arnie Bergh comes over to the other side. He switches his vote from O’Brien to Day which is kind of interesting. And then, of course, Speaker Day is the speaker.

Mr. Sawyer: Umm hmm.

Ms. Kilgannon: And I’ve seen a series of photographs of this vote and there’s – the Republicans look pretty self-contained, I guess you could say. They’re very quiet, they just vote. They don’t display anything.

But there’s a lot of eruption on the Democratic side, certainly from John O’Brien. He’s up and he looks devastated and he looks like he’s going to throttle somebody perhaps. What are you thinking during this moment?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I just knew it. I knew I wasn’t going to be in the coalition and I just knew we didn’t have the votes to win. John kept thinking he had some votes. I think he was daydreaming about that thing. The die was cast, you know. And when the die’s cast, you might as well sit back and relax unless you’ve got some political points, and I didn’t have any political points to make of it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, he doesn’t take it easily, that’s for sure. Representative Schaefer votes on the prevailing side, so that he can ask for reconsideration but the clerk denies him that and says he doesn’t have the power to do that. And that’s the end of it.

Then Speaker Day is escorted to the rostrum as is the custom. And he gives a fairly lengthy speech and he makes several pledges during his speech. The chief

one being there will be no new taxes. He calls it living within the revenue.

The other piece that we haven’t talked about that was definitely a theme of this whole maneuver was redistricting. You’ve been struggling over redistricting for several sessions. So that’s their lure to do this rather unusual maneuver. And according to the accounts, the coalition Democrats said that that’s what they would give in return for what they needed for their program and that as long as they were taken care of in their districts, the Republicans could do whatever. How did that feel for the Democrats?

Mr. Sawyer: I’d forgotten that that was even the issue.

Ms. Kilgannon: I don’t know if anyone realized that redistricting would get into the snarls that it did.

Mr. Sawyer: No, that was a hot issue.

Ms. Kilgannon: For the Republicans, their stated purpose in joining the coalition was that they were very afraid that with a Democratic Senate, House and governor the resulting redistricting would remove all their chances for ever becoming a majority party.

Mr. Sawyer: I would definitely agree that redistricting would have some effect, but it wouldn’t be that drastic.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, they took it pretty seriously.

Mr. Sawyer: I mean when you’re in the minority, you think of the worse that can happen to you and then go out and talk as if it is happening. We all did that.

Ms. Kilgannon: This brought them to the table in a very different way. So it was a big deal for them, shall we say.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, you can see why it would be.

Ms. Kilgannon: The other thing that Speaker Day pledges is a sixty-day session. You don’t actually manage to do that, but that’s what he wants to do. What becomes one of the hottest issues in the session is he also wants to reduce the number of committees from thirty-one to twenty-one and do a reorganization bid and have members on fewer committees so that they could actually attend their committee meetings. This is something that other people have wanted from time to time.

Mr. Sawyer: Well the reason that they wanted it is it’s easier to control smaller committees and that is what

I thought they were doing.

Ms. Kilgannon: So is there a sort of sub-text here to this committee reform that isn't about reform but about control?

Mr. Sawyer: We just expect those kind of things and that's the reason I thought they were doing it at the time.

Ms. Kilgannon: It turns into this huge problem, this issue that takes forever to settle. Anyway, he kind of outlines his program and he says what he wants to do and I don't know, while he's speaking are John O'Brien and various people still kind of ricocheting around the room? Or are they listening, what's the protocol here?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, you're supposed to listen. I don't remember them running around. They weren't disturbing him, I don't think. I certainly wasn't. I mean, what the heck, the guy -

Ms. Kilgannon: He won.

Mr. Sawyer: He won.

Ms. Kilgannon: The coalition is – in their accounts of this move – adamant that they were not deserting the Democratic Party, they were against John O'Brien as speaker and that's it. That they were still good Democrats and that Bill Day was a Democrat and they were simply voting for a different speaker. That's their interpretation of what they were doing.

Mr. Sawyer: Well that's probably pretty true. They just wanted to be in power themselves (hearty laugh)

Ms. Kilgannon: Now, you of course, had challenged John O'Brien and you were not run out of the party for doing so. You suffered a little, but not in the way...

Mr. Sawyer: We were within the normal rules of conduct, you know. They went outside that.

Ms. Kilgannon: So is this – this is stepping over the line?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah. When you go across and talk openly with Republicans on the major issues like that, you have to take a look. On organizational votes especially, that's an unwritten law. You stay with the party on organization votes. Well, they formed their own caucus.

Ms. Kilgannon: So, are they being disingenuous when they say they were not voting against the Democratic Party, they were simply voting against John O'Brien?

Mr. Sawyer: Well they were. They were voting against power – control of the House. No, most of them understood the Democratic philosophy. A very conservative one but they were...

Ms. Kilgannon: But making common cause with the Republicans was a little beyond the pale here?

Mr. Sawyer: The organizational vote – that's too meaningful a vote, it controls the whole session. So that's why when you do that, you call it a coalition.

Ms. Kilgannon: People continue to operate from these different interpretations about what was going on – all through the session you see this fight.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, everybody has an excuse. They know they're going to have to go home and defend themselves so they've got to have something to say.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well that was their line and they stuck to it. When Speaker Day finished his speech, Dan Evans, who was the minority leader of the Republicans stood up on a point of personal privilege and congratulated the speaker, and declared a new era. He said the Republicans had actually pulled over fifty-three percent of the popular vote in the last election and that they deserved to be in the majority, and that it was sort of a trick of redistricting that they were not and they were going to rectify that. He said and that was why they joined in the coalition – they felt that they actually were the true majority and should act that way. And so they were seizing this opportunity and to make their districts reflect their true power.

Mr. Sawyer: But it had nothing to do with fracturing the Democratic caucus. (Laughs)

Ms. Kilgannon: No. No. He went on kind of like that and then he alludes to the Democratic convention of '62 and he said that that was a deciding point for them. He said, "We had to make a choice of you who walked out of the convention and those who adopted a platform we felt was radical. We couldn't buy that kind of principles and that kind of ideas. We had to go to those who had the courage to walk out of the convention like that rather than those who either advocated or tolerated the type of platform that the Democrats adopted this spring."

Mr. Sawyer: That's plain bullshit.

Ms. Kilgannon: What is he referring to?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, he's inferring that these guys were heroes. It's just a speech.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, this plays out. What happens this day plays out throughout the whole session. So I just wanted to take a look at it. And then he says what the Republican values are and that they are going to promote that.

Mr. Sawyer: What was the result of the redistricting plan that year?

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, in fact there wasn't a redistricting plan that year. It kind of goes on for a few sessions. It ends up in the court and -

Mr. Sawyer: Well, yeah, exactly.

Ms. Kilgannon: They thought that they were going to get somewhere that year but they didn't. The next person on their feet is John O'Brien and he is -

Mr. Sawyer:irate.

Ms. Kilgannon: Livid, shall we say. Irate, definitely. He says, "This is a very unusual position for the presumptively majority party to be in a minority position. We think it is a very bad mistake for the Republican Party to go to this low type of political maneuvering." He's not mincing his words here. "In my opinion it is absolutely politically dishonest and immoral. After all we come here to Olympia to do a real job. There should be a code of ethics, even among legislators." He is really laying it out there. But you, yourself, didn't quite see it to this degree?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, no. I, in fact, I thought he went a little overboard. He degraded himself the way he handled it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, was he kind of in shock?

Mr. Sawyer: He couldn't believe it. He'd survived when I ran against him, and he just thought that he could hammer away again. Well, these guys weren't going to let him. And they are tough legislators, every one of them.

Ms. Kilgannon: He goes on, even though someone protested they'd been impugned. He says, "Good government in the state of Washington has been hindered and handicapped from the blame and the whole responsibility is going to be placed on the Republican Party. I will be one that will help in doing this."

Mr. Sawyer: I don't think they worried too much. John

was old school, you did it down at the Legislature.

Ms. Kilgannon: He was very, very upset. He says, "I feel very sorry for the people who have supported me and who were planning to take a very active part in this Legislature." So it seems that already he's formulating that the strategy will be to withdraw and not take an active part. "It was rightfully theirs to have important committee chairmanships and now this isn't going to happen." So, I don't know if he's quick on his feet, or what. But this is actually what turns into the big fight, committee chairmanships.

He goes so far as to say this, he says, "I believe there is one thing we should do here this session, Mr. Evans, and that is to get an oath of loyalty from each and every person who filed for a respective party position that they are going to abide by party principles and party caucuses." Do you remember the speech - this call for a loyalty oath - how you felt about that sort of notion?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, see now, that's something that I would be a hundred percent against. At the time, I just thought John kind of lost his cool; he was overly emotional because, you know, he was really a professional politician and a sharp guy and that speech wasn't up to John O'Brien's capabilities or normal reaction.

Ms. Kilgannon: So he kind of lost his temper right about then?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, he was very emotional because he had a big battle with me the term before, and then when I didn't show up to fight this next time, I guess he thought he was going to be king. Well, these people had other plans. They'd had them for a long time. I knew about them; I thought he did.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, an oath of loyalty - I mean those words are pretty loaded in this era. This is not so long after the McCarthy era when loyalty oaths had a lot of resonance, shall we say. That particular phrase.

Mr. Sawyer: I didn't think that was one of O'Brien's best days in the Legislature.

Ms. Kilgannon: I'm sure it was one of his worst days in his whole life.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I voted with him but I remember thinking, "Why don't you shut up John, you're not helping anything." He made it all personal.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes. He basically calls the coalition

Democrats “Duffs of the Republicans.”

Mr. Sawyer: That’s all right. Maybe they were, I don’t know. I just can’t get all that excited when you make those kind of speeches.

Ms. Kilgannon: Most of the Democrats, however, did take his side and stuck with what became the minority Democrats pretty strongly after that. But he wanted to read the dissident Democrats out of the party immediately and he starts with Bob Perry as the king pin in this effort here. Had Perry talked to you about the coalition?

Mr. Sawyer: Either Bob or – it must have been Perry – said they were going to form a coalition and wanted to know if I’d be interested and I said, “No.” I said “I just don’t want to get in that kind of a hassle.”

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you counsel him against doing such a thing?

Mr. Sawyer: No, I didn’t.

Ms. Kilgannon: He didn’t ask you for your advice? (Laughter)

Mr. Sawyer: He had made up his mind. He was just stating a fact to me and so I accepted the fact.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you think it was a bad idea? Or a good idea? Or just an expedient thing to do?

Mr. Sawyer: No, I think whenever possible, you should stick with your caucus on organizational votes.

Ms. Kilgannon: For this session alone – the ’63 session – did it make your relationship more difficult? Did you have to do anything differently?

Mr. Sawyer: No, I’m a lawyer; I’m used to confrontation and then getting in the courtroom and battling and then go out and have a cup of coffee or a drink with somebody and so forth. And I’ve always tried not to get real personal about the things – tried to keep them – didn’t always work but I worked at it.

Ms. Kilgannon: I was wondering, there was so much suspicion and so much anger about the coalition, if you were seen at that time as still aligned with Bob Perry or talking to him the hall or that sort of thing, would people look askance at that? Just during this session?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, if they did, that’s their problem, it wasn’t mine. I mean people always are reading into things and you have to be a little careful, but heck he

was a legislator. And so I didn’t feel any compulsion not to speak to him.

Ms. Kilgannon: There was that sort of feeling in some remarks by different legislators that these people are completely in the cold and we are not even speaking to them. Did you feel that was a little overboard?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I didn’t feel that way. I thought it was overboard. I didn’t think it would last, and it didn’t. Because you’re down there working and you work with a lot of opposite party people, you know. If you’re going to be effective, you have to be able to work with all segments of the Legislature. That’s my feeling, at least. It’s unfortunate I wasn’t always right.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, maybe at the time. Well, we’ll be kind of tracking this as we go along, because this – how people felt about the coalition – touched the whole session and there was just a continuous battling and sarcastic remarks and a great edginess to the whole session that was different from every other session.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, there was; some people didn’t want to give up the battle and then Bob Perry wasn’t what you call the most diplomatic person, and Bill Day was a pusher. He’s a good legislator, but he was aggressive – he always was an aggressive legislator and so was Perry. And so aggressive people rub other people harder than passive people do.

Ms. Kilgannon: When they move on to the election of the chief clerk, even John O’Brien votes for Si Holcomb. It’s unanimous. But Si Holcomb had played quite a role in the creation of the coalition, didn’t he? Was it known at that point that he had actually thrown his hat in with the coalitionists?

Mr. Sawyer: I don’t know. See Si definitely helped me when I was running, but I wasn’t aware that he was helping the coalition. Even Republicans liked Si, though – he knew what he was doing. He ran pretty nonpartisan. So I wasn’t surprised that they all voted for him. And I wasn’t surprised at all that the coalition voted for him because I know Bob Perry really respected him. So did Bill Day and those guys, the main people. In fact, most of the people did.

Ms. Kilgannon: Would it also be kind of a gesture since some of the previous votes had been really divisive to say, “Well, look here, we can all get behind this person.” Would that work that way?

Mr. Sawyer: I think that was part of it, yeah. I can't remember because I was kind of an outsider right then.

Ms. Kilgannon: The assistant chief clerk, Sid Snyder, was also elected unanimously. There was some talk – at least a little later – of one party having the chief clerk and the other party having the nomination for the assistant chief clerk so there would always be a balance.

Mr. Sawyer: Well they talked about that but -

Ms. Kilgannon: But this isn't operating at this point?

Mr. Sawyer: Sid Snyder was a very popular guy. He was very efficient, nice guy. Everybody liked him, you know.

Ms. Kilgannon: The next nomination is for sergeant at arms and you're the person that nominates Elmer Hyppa. You do it in kind of a light way – you use it as an excuse to get up and announce the birth of your son and pass out cigars.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes, my first son. I had cigars, and then candy for the women.

Ms. Kilgannon: So you were all set and ready for that one. A little bit of a joyous moment for you.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, I thought we had to lighten things up a little bit. Things were getting awful heavy.

Ms. Kilgannon: The Democrats, I understand, went into caucus after the elections and tried to figure out what they were going to do with the new look. There's a lot of discussion in different newspaper articles and whatnot that you went into your caucus and immediately discussed whether the coalition members should be expelled from your party. Do you remember that discussion?

Mr. Sawyer: I remember there was a discussion but I don't even remember a lot of details. I know it wasn't done. And I don't think I could have voted for that.

Ms. Kilgannon: Was the caucus fairly divided? Were some people pretty hot on it and others a little cooler?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, yeah, some were really hot, the ones that – I shouldn't say this but – the ones that had a lot to lose.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, that makes sense. They kind of had the rug pulled out. When you first went into caucus, did the coalition members come into the room? Or what did they do?

Mr. Sawyer: I don't think they did at first. They weren't a real active part of our caucus is my recollection. Because later when the committee chairman – you know committee appointments came up – I got up and made the appeal that we should turn them (the appointments) all down.

Ms. Kilgannon: In caucus.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. And they all did, except for Marian Gleason.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you turn them down because you wouldn't really have the power?

Mr. Sawyer: I thought, politically it's stupid. A vice-chairman has very, very little power – it's a position usually given the freshmen and so forth. And so there was no use giving the coalition members a chance to say, "Oh, we appointed all these Democratic..." If they were going to do that, they should take the consequences of it. The best way to force them into that was to say no, and each got up and made a speech. So that was just my reasoning behind it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Makes sense.

Mr. Sawyer: I mean it wasn't any great big deal or anything. But it was fun at the time. What we were trying to do was force them into putting Republicans in as vice-chairs. They wanted to be able to say "What do you mean the Republicans? Look at all the Democrats we elected." And so that's why I thought it was real good to get up and say, "No, Democrats are not part of this organization."

Ms. Kilgannon: So they wanted to blur it and say, "This is a Democratic administration, even if it had been brought into power by Republicans." They wanted to have that.

The committee assignments are passed out and immediately you know – one after another – you get up on a point of personal privilege, beginning with Avery Garrett, and decline. You know "respectively declined to serve" is the phrase.

Mr. Sawyer: We weren't bound by that, it was just a suggestion in caucus and everybody seemed to think it was a good idea and so a few of them needed the title. That was up to them.

Ms. Kilgannon: Mr. Beierlein says "In declining the vice-chairmanship, I want to make it clear I'm not

declining service on the committee.” And then he talks about that a bit and then he says, “It is my fundamental belief that the party in control has the responsibility and the power to have the legislation that they want, so why should I occupy a position where I, in the final analysis, do not have any influence?”

Mr. Sawyer: That’s a good statement!

Ms. Kilgannon: And that’s kind of your – everybody’s take on that. So one after another, Democrats decline. When it’s your turn, you say, “It is with a great deal of regret that I wish to decline the nomination of vice-chairman of Licenses. I realize that whether Mr. O’Brien or whether Mr. Day was elected speaker, this is my position.” You go on to say, “I do this because of a very deep sense of responsibility and I wish to serve notice on the Republicans at this time that if during the session you fail in your coalition, which I hope you don’t, but if you do, we on this side will be very happy and delighted to move back in and assume the full control of the House.”

You have a nice way with words here. “... and also the full responsibility and I think that that is something that the people in control have to realize.” So you’re making that point too. “When you grab the plum, there’s also the responsibility to go with it.” Kind of a nice pithy statement there. And then you pledge to continue to serve on this committee, “I hope I can, I’m interested in this committee. I feel I can be of service to the House but not as a vice-chairman because I do not feel that I will be in any position of authority in this session of the Legislature. Thank you.” And you close your speech.

Mr. Sawyer: Jeez that was a big speech. (Laugh)

Ms. Kilgannon: Fairly big! And it goes on like that, person after person. Marian Gleason at first declines the appointment as chair of the Committee of Commerce and Economic Development. But I understand that later she does take a chairmanship. And she pays a certain price for that; she had trouble hanging onto her seat in the next election. Anyway, the anger and the bitterness go practically right through the session.

Mr. Sawyer: Into the next election.

Ms. Kilgannon: There’s just a lot of recriminations and remarks and your caucus – you might go so far as to say – take up an obstructionist role of constantly

pointing out differences and fighting with the new speaker. There’s an abnormal number of comments all through the Journal arguing with the speaker and saying, “Well you didn’t get the rules right; it’s really like this.” And just really going by the letter of the book.

Mr. Sawyer: I wasn’t involved in that because John considered himself a great parliamentarian and he was good. And I think he was giving them the needle.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yeah, it’s pretty apparent.

Mr. Sawyer: They deserved it from him.

Ms. Kilgannon: Was that an agreed upon strategy? Or just something that kind of happened because people just couldn’t do otherwise?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, I think it just happened. Maybe some of our Democratic leadership and caucus agreed to, but then I wasn’t part of that and so if they decided that, I wasn’t particularly aware of it, no.

Ms. Kilgannon: There’s all this turmoil.

Mr. Sawyer: It was ridiculous how people would shout. You would think the world was coming to an end!

Ms. Kilgannon: Pretty close. By the second day, the sort of militancy really is in place and there’s a lot of arguing about every little thing. One of the pledges is to reduce the number of committees from I think it was thirty-one to twenty-one.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, that’s because they didn’t have anybody to serve as chairmen.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, it was supposedly an efficiency move.

Mr. Sawyer: No, it was just that they didn’t have that many chairmen.

Ms. Kilgannon: And there’s a lot of arguing about that Rule 59, which concerns committee structuring, there’s just a huge debate about that. You’re still debating it the next day. The Journal is just – you know one person after another jumping to their feet and objecting to one thing after another. It’s pretty inflamed. So the tempers are still hot there. It goes on like that for days.

How did you feel about that strategy of taking so long to just get organized? Were you a little worried about what legislation would pass? Or did this seem like an important thing?

Mr. Sawyer: No, I think the main thing that I think the caucus felt at that time – they didn't know how far these guys were going to go and so they were really upset. And so they imagined the worse. And so all their thinking and all their speeches were as if everything they did was under suspicion. And I think that was natural.

Ms. Kilgannon: It went further than not wanting to accepting Bill Day as the speaker. People started to keep a record of what they said were the violations of the parliamentary rules. And it went pretty far. There's something on the eighth day by Representatives Ackley, Garrett and Burtch, that just – it's really bitter. They call the Republicans to task, they call the speaker to task. They begin by saying, "Civilized men live by their laws by the Constitution's statutes and rules of order which they have developed over long periods of history to assure that all men receive equal and constant protection from arbitrary, capricious, and unfair actions of mobs or despots."

Mr. Sawyer: That's a pretty good speech there.

Ms. Kilgannon: And then, "Those who for temporary expediency flaunt the law must therefore reject civilization, decency, order and respect." I mean they really take the high road with the rhetoric. Anyway, it kind of goes on like that and then they say that the constitution is being violated and the House rules are being violated and the minority Democratic Party, as they call it, and the Republican Party are riding roughshod over the rights of members and then they start to list all these violations of the rules committed by the speaker. They close their statements by saying, "Such anarchy, such wholesale violations of our Constitution and rules, such total disregard for the rights of the minority cannot be permitted to continue during the remainder of this legislative session and will not be permitted to continue." It's pretty hot language. "A record will be kept of each violation of the rules of this House and of each violation of the Constitution of this state if any hereafter occur. And the legality of any actions which may be taken as the result of any improper procedure here may be subjected to court review either during the legislative session or thereafter."

Mr. Sawyer: That's lawyer talk.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes. Well, what happened? Did they continue in this vein?

Mr. Sawyer: I don't remember. I do remember they were so upset and when they would get up there and make these speeches, I realized it was coming from emotion.

Ms. Kilgannon: This was a little over the top for you?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah. It was. But, then again, when the Republicans took total control the next session, they really rode roughshod.

Ms. Kilgannon: Now, the Republicans, they have a new generation of leadership starting.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, Dan Evans.

Ms. Kilgannon: You have the rise of Dan Evans. You have a new generation coming in there in similar ways. And they are building their sense of unity and their cohesiveness behind Evans. In fact, they're sort of famous for that – of really sticking together. Are you watching what they're doing?

Mr. Sawyer: Sure. And they did a hell of a job. They kept us out of power for six years. See I pretty well, once this coalition thing broke, I kind of – I was still active but being inactive in leadership – I was busy practicing law and so forth. But then I got tired. In the early '70s, I decided I've got to either quit the Legislature or get back in the majority. This being in the minority is a waste of time.

Chapter 10

“The Jeep” Leads the Minority

Ms. Kilgannon: So you are at a crossroads, then? Either quit the legislature or work your caucus out of the minority?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, yeah. I got really tired of being in the minority. We were so spoiled, we had the majority every year for so long, but the Republicans got the majority in 1967 because they did a real good job out there in the districts and all of a sudden, we’re out. I thought well, “It’s temporary, I’m not going to worry about it. I’ve got all sorts of other things to do.”

But then they got had the majority again in 1969. Finally I decided, “Hey, I’m not going to be down here if I’m just going to be in the minority. I’ve got too many other things to do.” So I went ahead and jumped in. I don’t think I would have ever done it if I realized what a commitment it was. But once I got into it, I was stuck.

Ms. Kilgannon: So what did you do? How did you go about trying to get the majority back?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, basically what we did is organize a group of the best campaigners in the House – technique-wise, and get to work.

Ms. Kilgannon: Would this be Bob Perry and -

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, Bob Perry, Bagnariol, Ceccarelli, Wes Uhlman...

Ms. Kilgannon: He was already Seattle mayor – but he got involved?

Mr. Sawyer: He helped us too because he was a real campaigner. Oh I don’t know – there were about eight of us. But they knew how to campaign, every one of them. And so we discussed how to run a campaign. We discussed it the first time then we came back and we wrote out a little campaign kit.

Ms. Kilgannon: Like a manual?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah.



Speaker Leonard Sawyer and his wife Beverly at Governor Dan Evans' Inaugural Ball

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you also recruit candidates?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh yeah. That was a big part because after we recruited them, we wanted them to do well. That was one of the reasons – well, we should have won in the ’70 election because we were ahead by about three seats after election night, but after absentees, we lost four seats with less than 200 votes a person.

Ms. Kilgannon: Oooh, A real squeaker.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, we were ahead. But the thing, we were just concentrating on new candidates and we realized that some of the other candidates were getting lazy and didn’t do what it took, so...

Ms. Kilgannon: So some of the incumbents lost.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, and it was just enough you know. Didn’t have to lose very many.

Ms. Kilgannon: No, and not by much.

Mr. Sawyer: And the Republicans were campaigning, everyone was campaigning very well at that time too. So we made up the manuals and then we set up campaign teams. And what we’d do, well first off, we had to go find candidates. And we all were working on that.

Ms. Kilgannon: And what kind of people would you look for? Did you have a kind of profile in mind?

Mr. Sawyer: I had a profile. I wanted just as many athletics as I could find because they knew a lot of people and they were energetic and they were competitive. But basically, just can this person communicate with people and is he willing to work? And one of our first questions was “Can you get ten people to work for you?”

Ms. Kilgannon: Ummm, that’s your litmus test.

Mr. Sawyer: And, "oh, what we really need is twenty."

Ms. Kilgannon: So not any particular ideology or perspective, but a personality type? Were some of them self-identified or did you actually go into communities recruit them all?

Mr. Sawyer: We found them any way we could. If there was a legislator in the district, we worked on him to find somebody. If there wasn't a member, or maybe even a senator, we'd go any place for them. We worked with school organizations for them, we worked the state employees to get people to run. It just was multiple things, and it's the hardest thing I ever did.

Just like Tub Hansen, that used to be a Democratic district which the Republicans had taken over. And it's a basically fairly conservative district and yet in the old days it used to be very liberal because it had the mines and all the workmen there. So we went over and talked to Tub Hansen and he's a big farmer there with thousands and thousands of acres. And besides that, he published a farmers' news thing.

Ms. Kilgannon: So he's already got a name in the community.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh yeah, and that's what we looked for was people with names. And then when we met with him, he just fit. You try to find people you thought would fit with the district. He was just the district. He was just a perfect fit. And he was kind of lukewarm so we must have been back there two or three times. And finally he said yes, he would do it.

Then he called back about a week later and said, "Well, no, I talked to my wife and we just don't know if I can spend that much time." Oh, he had a big business and everything. And that wasn't unusual. We'd try to identify about four possibles in targeted districts. About fifty percent of those we went after would say no because of business, because they don't like politics. So then you get down to two and you lose another one of those because of the wife and family. These are all real bona fide reasons not to run.

So, we just had to keep going on and finally get about one out of every four that we wanted. And then, every once in a while, there will be a couple of guys coming out of the blue, every election. And so that's the way you do it. You're looking for that guy that might come out of the blue. And sometimes you don't even catch him

in the primaries, he finally blossoms in the finals. But normally we watched the primaries very closely and tried to pick strong people.

Ms. Kilgannon: If you had a district where, low and behold, there were two strong people in the primaries, would you tip your hand to one or the other of them based on some kind of consideration?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, no. What we did, if they were a good candidate, we'd go make available all the information we had. We wanted good people in there.

Ms. Kilgannon: It didn't really matter who.

Mr. Sawyer: That mattered to us more than anything else. The Republicans had done that way back when Evans and Pritchard and those guys had all that energy. So we had to get just as much energy as they did because they were tougher opponents than we were to them. The only thing we had going for us was redistricting.

Ms. Kilgannon: Now always with these elections there's a lot of excitement in some circles about the party platform. But you understand that the people interested in the party platform rarely seem to be the people who end up in the Legislature or there's much connection. Would you be asking those sorts of questions of people – what they thought of the platform?

Mr. Sawyer: We never tried to work through the party much. I think because basically the party people are interested in the bigger picture. See, we're interested in small little areas, districts, and so forth. They would help. But they are more interested in who the congressman is or who governor is and so forth. And they have to be, because that takes an awful lot of work too. So we never expected it. If we got it, it was a plus. In some areas we got it, but most the time, we just didn't expect it.

Ms. Kilgannon: But as long as the person identified themselves as a Democrat and could win, that was enough? There were no other considerations?

Mr. Sawyer: No, we never asked, "Hey, are you a Democrat?" We came in to find out if they were possibly interested in the Legislature or politics and being elected. And the reason I liked athletes so often, we didn't get a lot but the ones we got we were pretty successful, is their name recognition, and that they're competitive. They don't like to lose.

Ms. Kilgannon: They have that drive.

Mr. Sawyer: They have that drive. And they usually have a lot of friends.

Ms. Kilgannon: They play team sports.

Mr. Sawyer: So when we went in and talked to somebody, yeah, we were more interested in him as an individual than anything. I figured we just had to get enough and then let the philosophies form themselves. Because of course, that's my own spirit. I don't like people telling me.

So those are the kinds of people we were interested in. The first question we asked them, after they said yeah, they wanted to do it, was, "Well, now we have to get your qualifications, do you know ten people that will work for you? You need twenty, but you can get by with ten. If you have ten people that will go out and put up signs –" and in those days you had to address envelopes, and do all this -

Ms. Kilgannon: A lot of footwork, yeah.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah. And you need volunteer help. And you don't want chiefs, you want Indians. There's all kinds of chiefs out there but what you need is Indians. And then we will give you the technical advice on what to do. So the more contact you have with the people working the thing, the better off.

And so we would tell them simple things like "If you can get somebody to come down and work, all his relatives then will be voting for you because he's enthusiastic." It's even more important than when somebody gives money, but money is the same way. That's how you build it from a little seed. And it just explodes out! So it was a fun deal but it was a lot of work.

Ms. Kilgannon: What would people be most worried about? Would they be put off by the idea of fund raising? Of asking their friends for money? Or would they be worried about, you know...

Mr. Sawyer: There were a hundred different questions. I think I mentioned we make a booklet. It spelled out what they needed, and then we told them where we could help them. Like the signs, we can help them by having lobbyists willing to contact them. And lobbyists we would send them would be the cream because well, lobbyists, on the whole, were pretty good people,

contrary to what people say. And if they're not, they don't last long. A then we'd have these schools. And we'd go out and take our book, and preach the book to them.

Ms. Kilgannon: Would it also help break down the tasks so that it didn't feel so overwhelming? That if they did these five things, they would get a good start and they wouldn't have to invent it themselves? Would that make it much easier for them?

Mr. Sawyer: What we told them is think of four issues that are popular or a problem in your district. And if it happens to be a state-wide issue, ok, but realize you're not going to gain any brownie points by getting involved in too many federal issues.

Ms. Kilgannon: No, you can't solve those.

Mr. Sawyer: You can't solve them but then you've got to be realistic of what you can solve, anyway, because people start wondering what some whipper-snapper thinks he's going to do. But you find out what's important in the district. So we tried to get each candidate to – instead of just taking odd blanket things – identify those issues and focus on them.

To make sure that things were put together right, we also had two people that would go ahead and write things for them. We even got them to go up there and talk to the candidates about their districts.

Even when I was speaker, I always told, "Here's what the caucus wants, and we really want you to do this if you can all do it and think you should do it or we wouldn't ask it. But you've got to look at your own district because we want you elected again."

Ms. Kilgannon: Yeah, that is the kind of bottom line, isn't it?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah. We didn't lose too many that way, to tell you the truth.

Ms. Kilgannon: You often read in the newspaper kind of derogatory comments about the Legislature. Would you have to overcome that appearance issue with people? Were people worried about becoming politicians, becoming those people that are written about in the papers?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, that came from the family more than the person, usually. And the families do pay. My kids, I know, when somebody says something nasty,

it's just -

Ms. Kilgannon: It's a bit of a fish bowl.

Mr. Sawyer: The main thing is when we went in there (to meet candidates), we had a good attitude ourselves because our theme was, "Accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative, and don't mess with Mr. In-between."

Ms. Kilgannon: (Laughs) Oh my goodness.

Mr. Sawyer: Really, it was.

Ms. Kilgannon: I can almost hear the theme music.

Mr. Sawyer: Well we weren't singing it but that was – we'd go right in and say, "Hey, when you get in their face, I want you to accentuate the positive. I mean we weren't for smearing people. We figured if we had to do any negative stuff, we would do it from outside. And we nailed the Yakima people real hard on their property tax loopholes, because we knew it was a tough issue and they got on the wrong side of it. Well, they were madder than heck because they knew we were coming in and putting in the ads for their opponents. But very seldom do we have to do that.

Newhouse and I used to laugh about it all the time. "God damn you guys, stay out of my district."

Ms. Kilgannon: (Laughs) All's fair, I guess.

Mr. Sawyer: I guess they used to call him up and say, "Oh, God the bus is back." (big laughs)

Ms. Kilgannon: Watch out!

Mr. Sawyer: So that bus really worked though because not only could we carry stuff, but we could meet people there. And our staff always – we liked to have about four people go with us. And you get four people that are energetic...

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, you're creating a positive image right there.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, we are.

Ms. Kilgannon: It's like asking, you want to join this fun group?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, now here's what we do. And we'd tell them, you know. We didn't blow it out of proportion. You really believe in something, and you're accentuating the positive.

Ms. Kilgannon: But you were definitely under the radar out there.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, yeah. What amazed me, we were out on the road, helping people, but afterwards, people "in the know" in King County wondered where in the hell I came from. God, I'd been all over the state, that's where I came from. And the papers never picked it up.

I don't think they realized because the type of politics we preached is the quiet type. You go do your work and you make contact to a million people and you just build support. You don't go out and talk about it, you do it. And then we fixed the timing so mailings didn't all go at once. We liked to break them up into different sections. So, what we wanted to do was creep up on the opponent. We didn't want the opponent to know what our guys were doing.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, you certainly jumped up the numbers. You had had forty-three seats in 1970, and you jumped up to forty-eight. And the Senate also increased by two so you had a pretty strong showing there. So, you don't have a majority a yet, but you were certainly breathing down their necks.

Mr. Sawyer: We were and a lot of their heavy-weights weren't there anymore. See, Evans is the governor, and I think Pritchard went to the Congress and so forth.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yeah, he retired and was trying for the Congress. He didn't make it that time, of course. Slade Gorton's in the AG's office, so their top people have all got their energies elsewhere.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you look particularly good because the Republicans looked particularly in disarray? Was it the contrast as well as the actual work?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, it was a little bit of both. But I think we were well organized and we had just – we thought we were going to be in control. At the end of the election night, we were four seats up on them – we were ahead of them and then in the absentee votes, we lost. In fact, I had to pay Senator Twig \$100.

Ms. Kilgannon: A wager with him that you would win the House?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, it was just \$100. And Dave Cesarelli was in on it, too.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes, let's tell that story.

Mr. Sawyer: So I was telling Dave Cessarelli that I've got to go over to the Senate and pay Twiggie, and he said "Well, so do I." I said, "Let's make Twiggie work for it a little bit because they should never have won." We had to do something to kind of make it funny, and Twiggie's such a great guy. So we came up with the idea of the pennies. I think I did. And David thought that was great, so we went down to the Treasurer's Office and we got these bags of pennies.

Ms. Kilgannon: That must have been heavy.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, yeah. We had to get some kind of cart to carry them – and then when we went into the Senate Chambers and while the senators were down for lunch, we took the pennies and just poured them all over his desk. And they were just stacked. You don't know how many \$200 worth of pennies is!

Ms. Kilgannon: That's a lot of pennies.

Mr. Sawyer: Jeez, they were just all over the thing. And then we disappeared. Oh, I don't know, we might have – written a note "paid in full" or something like that. Of course, Twig came out and he laughed and he thought it was funny. So we have a picture of that – yeah. Those are the fun things to do.

Ms. Kilgannon: He was a good sport.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh yeah, I mean Twiggie was that way. He was a good lawyer and he'd fight you tooth and nail, but afterwards he was your buddy.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, that's the way it should be.

Mr. Sawyer: – that's the way it should be. It really is. You get things done that way.

Ms. Kilgannon: Within your own caucus, after the election, are you – it's all over the papers that you're a shoe in for minority leader, but when does that actually happen? You have a caucus meeting and you're elected?

Mr. Sawyer: Afterwards, yeah. We had that caucus meeting, I think it was about two weeks after the election – it was the later part of November or the first part of December.

Ms. Kilgannon: And was that pretty much a given that you would be minority leader?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, at that time.

Ms. Kilgannon: You didn't have any rivals?

Mr. Sawyer: Well Charette and Grant and a few others were interested, but we'd been out there doing the work and -

Ms. Kilgannon: You clearly were the leader.

Mr. Sawyer: We didn't organize it out there – "Hey, you're going to vote for me." We weren't going to -

Ms. Kilgannon: No promises were made.

Mr. Sawyer: We organized with the idea, "We've got to get control of the House. We've got to get control of the House." As the minority, you might as well just stay home. Not stay home, but you're going to be awfully frustrated. And so we really didn't make any promises and I made some selections that surprised everybody when I was speaker. We'll talk about those later, but we didn't make any promises here, either.

Ms. Kilgannon: Not like Senator Greive, for instance who says, "I'll help you," He was pretty clearly tied to keeping his majority status.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, the Senate were more experienced legislators. We were out picking people – a lot of them weren't that experienced. We were more – we're going to get together and we'll decide the leaders later.

Ms. Kilgannon: You'd keep it open.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, and just because you've been there a long time, that's one consideration, but that isn't going to be the only one. It's basically how good are you? How hard will you work? And you can show us how hard you'll work by getting out in these elections.

Ms. Kilgannon: So, you're proving your point there.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah.

Ms. Kilgannon: You're positioning yourself (for leadership) even if you're not actually asking for it.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, no. Basically we're saying, "Hey this is going to be determined, but we're not making any promises."

Ms. Kilgannon: Some newspaper articles say that Charette does make a bid for the leadership but he doesn't make it.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I don't think he went right down to the wire. He saw how -

Ms. Kilgannon: Which way it was going?

Mr. Sawyer: He got out there and did his thing. Bob and I went to law school together. I wouldn't do anything to hurt him even if we were running against him – I'd run against him and he'd run against me.

Ms. Kilgannon: It seems more amicable than some of them.

Mr. Sawyer: But there weren't any, as far as I knew, any dirty punches pulled.

Ms. Kilgannon: No, it didn't seem that way. He's said to represent the younger group, the up and coming legislators.

Mr. Sawyer: He said that?

Ms. Kilgannon: No, the newspaper said that. I don't know what he said. Was it kind of that way? You'd been there a long time, it's true, though you're not like old.

Mr. Sawyer: He'd been there too. He'd been in the Senate.

Ms. Kilgannon: Charette?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, and then when they changed the Senate district down there, he switched over to run against Bob Bailey for the House seat. But I don't know.

Oh, I know what they were talking about, and this was true: once I was speaker, we had all these young people and we wanted to keep them aboard, yeah, and Bob was meeting with them more than I was. But as far as the organization thing, I was the one out there getting them elected and so forth.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yeah, definitely.

Mr. Sawyer: And I had the initial contact with them. Bob didn't get involved in that too much. Well, he has a big law practice. And you can only do so much. I must have been nuts doing it, when I look back on it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Just a real energizer bunny here.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, yeah, jeez. The work we put in on the thing.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, you had that drive for some reason. Did he and you represent different spectrums of the Democratic Party? If a person was going to support you over him or whatever, it was just a personality thing? You know, what you had done for the group.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, that would be a real strong factor. But no, Bob and I were – we were what we call "moder-

ate liberals." We were liberals, there's no doubt about that, but we sure weren't way outside on the thing. We were both, I always used to say, I wore pink underwear.

Ms. Kilgannon: Oh. (Laughs). Well, the papers, of course, were speculating like mad and it's difficult to tell what the differences are except for what you were doing.

Now, minority leader, we haven't had a chance to really talk about that. What does that mean? What were your chief duties? What was your chief emphasis?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, the chief duty – the way I looked at it – was to form up a Democratic policy or have the caucus form one. But you know, it usually ends up that the leaders do most of it.

Basically, getting the policy and trying to implement it to the best of your ability. And then, trying to help the individual legislators with their problems and their individual districts which aren't always political. So between those two things, you're pretty busy. And so you have to use what power you have to make sure that the majority is not jamming stuff at you. When they start jamming stuff at us, then we'd go to work. We were pretty effective.

Ms. Kilgannon: Are you considered the first among equals, as minority leader? Or are you head and shoulders above the other caucus members? How does your leadership style work in this position?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I don't know. I -

Ms. Kilgannon: Do you cajole people – do you -

Mr. Sawyer: I was used to being a leader. I was in athletics and so forth. But I was also very cognizant. You've got to have followers; you have to have people with you. So I wasn't what you call a – I wasn't a headline grabber or anything like that.

Ms. Kilgannon: In fact, in some ways you seem to go out of your way to give all kinds of people roles and let them be jumping on their feet and saying things. And you seem fairly quiet, in fact. You're not the one jumping up every time.

Mr. Sawyer: No, I never have been. When you're minority leader, yes, you get into a big argument, you've got to come forth and I could when I had to, but I go back to Maggie, he told me, "Keep quiet when you can."

Ms. Kilgannon: Would you be the one that would decide the floor strategy?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes.

Ms. Kilgannon: Say for each bill? Now, let's do this -

Mr. Sawyer: Not for each bill.

Ms. Kilgannon: But for the big ones?

Mr. Sawyer: For the ones the caucus was interested in. So unfortunately it kind of ends up being a lot of political ones but they are really in the minority of bills.

Ms. Kilgannon: So, you'd get together in your caucus room and would you have a game plan each day, say? Or would you have a leadership group and work it out with them and then tell everyone else? Or how would that work?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I can't remember how we did it in the minority. We weren't as well organized as we were when I was speaker. You could control things a lot easier.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, certainly. Because your group really worked together so something was happening behind the scenes.

Mr. Sawyer: We were working – talking all the time. I mean in those days you did an awful lot of it in restaurants and bars at night. You know, you'd meet with people and you'd talk and so forth. And then we were watching the committee – we had a minority chairman and we depended on him. We just got as much information – and in the final analysis, a lot of it ends up falling on the leader to go ahead and make a decision. But boy, I wanted as much input as I could get.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you do anything new or different as minority leader? Go into the office and say, "Okay, I've seen other minority leaders, now I'm going to do it this way?"

Mr. Sawyer: No, I just went by – I'd been there so long, that it's kind of an osmosis type of thing. You can see something starting right off the bat if you'd been watching all those years, you know. And it's just like when you play sports, you know. You do something and you practice, practice, practice. And then in the game something comes up that way and you just do it and you don't even think about it. And that's basically, I guess, what it depends on when you're in the

minority – but we were much more structured when we were in the majority.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yeah, well this is like being in training. You're really getting your group together. You did one thing, and I'm don't know how conscious you were of it, but people commented on it and a reporter wrote a whole article on it. You did not sit in the front row as leaders normally did. You sat in the middle and you had kind of a group – a ring – it sounds like around you, your leaders, your people, your lieutenants or whatever you want to call them. You had Bob Perry, you had Ted Bottiger, Charles Moon, Robert Charette, Ceccarelli, Gary Grant. Did you have like little hand signals?

Mr. Sawyer: No, they were right there –

Ms. Kilgannon: – everybody's right there and everybody knows what to do.

Mr. Sawyer: Right. And we probably made as much policy during the session as any other time, you know. Because things happen. When you're in the minority, you have to react. You've got to have a plan where you want to go eventually but it's pretty broad. And it has to be very flexible. And so – O'Brien when he was floor leader and so forth, he always had his people down in front and the reason for that was, you're closer to the podium, you know, and it's easier to communicate to the rostrum staff. And then when you turn around and speak, you're speaking to everybody.

Ms. Kilgannon: Ah, nobody's at your back.

Mr. Sawyer: But, you give up the feel of the people behind. If you're right out there among them, and you've got the people that you really think can do a job around you, I think that's more important. But it's a trade off.

My style wasn't being up speaking all the time. So, then, you know, like the majority starts shooting some body shots at us or all of a sudden something would come up, I'd reach over and say, "Give 'em a shot here." And somebody else would stand up, and boom! Well, that's what I was trying to do. People see you're communicating all the time back and forth. And that's what made us so flexible and so fluid. We didn't miss too many things because we had good people all listening, paying attention

Ms. Kilgannon: I was also wondering, you're in the middle physically, are you also in the middle philosophy

wise, policy wise? So that you could stretch to the more liberal people and still keep track of the conservative people. Do you position yourself naturally that way?

Mr. Sawyer: No, no – I don't remember if I consciously did it or it just made sense to me. I felt more comfortable that way.

Ms. Kilgannon: It just felt right. Who would assign those seats? Would you have put people where you wanted them to sit?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah.

Ms. Kilgannon: Is that part of your job as minority leader?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, technically it's the speaker that assigns them but normally the speaker would sit down and say which seats are Democrats and which are Republicans. Then the respective caucuses would choose them, or the leadership or whatever.

Ms. Kilgannon: Would you also be the final decider on who sat on which committees? And who would be the minority chair?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah. When you're a chairman of something or if you're if you're the leader of the thing, they are going to listen to you, you know. And the secret is to be able to influence them without them getting mad at you – saying you're trying to run everything.

That's just like so many people, when they're in charge of things they're afraid to have people from a diverse opinion. Well, I never was afraid of that; I guess I should have been, but I never was. Like the Republicans when they got power, they immediately tried to squelch the minority. Well, they'd been in the minority all along. I never felt that way. I wanted a strong minority. Because if you have a strong minority, they'll keep you from making mistakes. I think it's real important to have a strong minority and a vocal one. I like to have leaders with common sense.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, yes of course.

Mr. Sawyer: But I've always been that way on that one. Like when I was Speaker and we were hiring staff, we made it a joint committee. We had control of the committee; there were five people, we had three they had two. But they had two strong people and we knew it. So it works.

Ms. Kilgannon: There's not just one right way. So it helps broaden the picture a bit. So all these experiences helped you grow as a legislator?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh as a legislator and as a person.

Ms. Kilgannon: One of the early pieces of your first session as minority leader, of course, is that Governor Evans comes in and gives the State of the State address and his budget message to the Legislature. That certainly sets the agenda for the House Republicans, and that's the structure you have to play off of.

He has fifty executive requests, quite a program, but the real context of that session is the economic doldrums that the state is in after the Boeing bust. So that's what really what sets the tone.

Mr. Sawyer: It sounds like today.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes, it is rather cyclical, isn't it? But here we go. It was the first time around.

Mr. Sawyer: It was really bad, you know.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes, this seemed pretty dire. Evans strikes a pretty somber note talking about the economy, setting priorities in hard times, that sort of thing. You had kind of a triple whammy; the cancellation of the SST contract which set Boeing into a bit of a slump, high federal interest rates that were impacting the forest industry and the construction industry, and the threatened closure of the Hanford Nuclear facility which would impact another corner of the state.

Mr. Sawyer: Remember, the thing was, "Last one out of Seattle, turn off the lights."

Ms. Kilgannon: Yeah, the state was definitely into that scene. At any rate, the combination of these things -

Mr. Sawyer: I'm trying to think back because it was sure bad news. I remember we had high interest rates, because it affected our development at Lake Cushman. First the interest rates were up and we were borrowing at twenty-two and loaning at nine.

Ms. Kilgannon: Ooh. So Governor Evans proposes what he calls an austere, realistic balanced budget. I think the Democrats, perhaps, had a slightly different view of it, but everyone agrees it's bad. What to do about it, of course, is another issue. He maintains that you can get through without raising taxes, except for what he calls "a few revenue measures.."

Mr. Sawyer: (Laughter)

Ms. Kilgannon: A five cent increase on cigarettes, an increase tax on liquor. He wanted people to pay inheritance tax sooner. I'm not really clear how that works, but anyway. Then there's this other measure, the taxes would be due on the twenty-fifth of the month, and not the end of the month and he said some other accounting kinds of issues that –

Mr. Sawyer: That's just a phony – it's one of the things we did in those days, yeah.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well you add a month somehow.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, I remember that.

Ms. Kilgannon: He proposes to close five or six state institutions. He didn't actually name them in his address. He would prefer to have people use local community services rather than be in institutions. And besides the budget measure, it's a total different philosophy on how to take care of people. He also has a very large package called Jobs Now – it's a public works program based on building pollution control facilities in courts, building on community colleges, building – a lot of things that the state actually needs but he proposes to pay for this, with the sales tax on gas.

Mr. Sawyer: He knew it would never pass.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, the Jobs Now idea was an immediate influx of money with these public works [rolled into a] much larger program that he calls Washington Teachers. He's got quite a large program there. Though he blames the federal government for many of your financial woes, he doesn't want to go to the federal government for what he called the rescue. Instead, he wants to form a citizen task force to look at all these ideas.

Mr. Sawyer: He always did that. Form a committee.

Ms. Kilgannon: He also says he assumes that you're going to need a special session in 1972. I think this is a little bit new? You can tell me what you think. Usually when you have a special session, it's called after the fact. You would have gone through the whole session and then some things would have been left undone and then a special session would have been called.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, but it was automatically called every year, anyway, so.... Annual sessions, you know. I believe in annual sessions but it wasn't something that

I was going to go out and die for because ever since I've been there, they had annual. Well, no it's not true – the first couple of sessions I don't think they called back, but after that – the governor just automatically called them back.

Ms. Kilgannon: He seems especially up front about that issue. Is this a backdoor way of having annual sessions?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, yes. In effect it would be. He's telling us ahead of time and even though we knew it anyway – see, the federal matching funds were great in those times but you didn't know what you were going to get until they acted and that was always late in the year, after session.

Ms. Kilgannon: Sounds hard to get those things to line up.

So he has a big program. He lays it out and certainly the House Republicans, who are in the majority, have to run with this and see what they can do.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I think they also were going to put an additional gas tax on to build roads and so forth, which we did, if I remember right. Anyway – it was a big thing.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yeah, we'll talk about that in a second. The big difference was a sales tax on gas.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, I remember him trying to -

Ms. Kilgannon: Why is that more touchy than any other kind of tax?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, for the simple reason that the Constitution says that you can't use road tax money for other public purposes. Money raised by gas taxes are not available for anything else. So maybe the sales tax – but the gas tax – the road people were just adamant about protecting their source of revenue. And I mean really adamant.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yeah, and not spreading it even to things like rapid transit; nothing but highways.

Mr. Sawyer: And then there's always the people who don't want to pay tax on anything and on top of a real organized group like the highway people, you might as well – that's a toughie. Even I didn't take on! (Laughs).

Ms. Kilgannon: So when he kind of throws down the gauntlet like this, do you think he's serious?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, you never knew with Governor Evans. He did a lot for show, but he also was a lot more liberal than most Republican governors so I could live with most of his stuff.

Ms. Kilgannon: So is he just setting the bar really high here and saying, "This is really serious, I'm even going to go this far."

Mr. Sawyer: Well, people were really alarmed at that time about the economy. I mean it really was serious, so he was out there trying to be the leader on the issue, and if I was governor, that's the way I would have gone.

Ms. Kilgannon: You certainly need to do something.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh yeah. He was trying, and how realistic a lot of it is, so what? So you only get part of it. Giving them everything they ask for is no good because they'll just come back for something the next year. So give 'em a piece of it. That was always my theory.

Ms. Kilgannon: So, by coming up with these solutions, does he start the discussion way over here rather than somewhere in the middle and push people along in the direction he wants to go?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I don't know. I didn't particularly feel it but then we had our own -

Ms. Kilgannon: Maybe he was addressing himself more to the House Republicans.

Mr. Sawyer: Well it could be because, he did liberalize a lot of the Republican caucus movements.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well this is the context of the session. You are only on two committees this year which are, of course, big ones. And you have a huge role just being minority leader. You're on Rules and Administration, as it's called in this time. And you're on Revenue and Taxation. Now I've seen different labels, and the 1970 session was sometimes called the year of the environment, and the 1971 session was called the year of the tax payer. So you're kind of front and center here.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, that was selfishness a little bit on my part, because my legislative district really got hit on that property tax. Even Buster Brouillet, who always ran real high numbers – we both got knocked down (in election percentages) really quite heavily. And besides that, it just wasn't right. And Evans is the one that started it all by changing the rules that the local governments had to assess by.

So the poor little assessor out there, like in our area, he'd been elected for twenty-some years and one of the most popular guys in the county. He ran fourth in a four-man Democratic primary in 1970. And a poor fourth. Whenever I was out at a meeting, you were always looking over your shoulder seeing when the tar would show up and the feathers. It was just interpretation of the "highest and best-use" formula. Well, that makes sense, except it doesn't reflect what the real value of property is when you go out and just pick the highest prices that are paid in the area. And especially a property that's on the fringe. You'll be paying these high taxes five or six years before the property's worth that, even if you wanted to sell it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, also I gathered from all the comments, it doesn't reflect the present use of the property. Say if you're little mom and pop acreage, your property has the potential to be developed and made into all these things, but it's not. You're just living there and you're on your pension or whatever, it's not like you're about to sell it and make a million dollars, you're just trying to live.

Mr. Sawyer: And my district was made up of – well much of the area was made up of small farms, some right next to a lot of developing areas.

Ms. Kilgannon: One of the other pieces of this, what you just alluded to, is what is the area that you're being compared to? Just on your block, or a much bigger area or what? Of course, you've got all these little pockets.

Mr. Sawyer: There's no real solid guidelines on that. The courts just -

Ms. Kilgannon: Nobody wanted to say.

Mr. Sawyer: Well the courts just said "comparable properties." You know, that's why I told you I represented a couple taxpayers in court, one was my next door neighbor and so I really got into it. I was dumbfounded when I found out what was going on. They started out with a \$7 million dollar tax assessment; by the time we got through the whole appellate thing, it was down to \$1 million.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, that's a big difference.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, gee. It's stupid! And luckily that company was large enough that they could go ahead and attack the thing. What's the average little farm guy going to do? Go through that whole procedure?

And it scares the hell out of 'em anyway. First, you had to go to the assessor, then you had to go to the local board, then you had to go to the state board and then, after all that, you could still have go to court! It was horrible; it was just so unfair.

Ms. Kilgannon: People actually would lose their homes?

Mr. Sawyer: I don't know that because we attacked it pretty soon. We started giving some exemptions and it took some of the heat off. So, no I didn't have anybody coming up to me and telling me "I lost my home." I did hear a lot of concern from people that they were going to lose their property, you know, especially when they were out in the field screaming at us. It was a very helpless feeling when you knew it wasn't it your fault, you didn't have anything to do with it. Or that you should have corrected a system that worked fine back when it was passed, because you didn't have big developments going in and all that sort of stuff.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes, that whole flashpoint between the old and the new, isn't it?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, horrible. And it was very traumatic. I learned about politics then, boy. I thought I was going to get defeated big, you know. And it did cut my numbers way down that year, and it carried over into the next election too. I was really unhappy with the Department of Revenue. They had this expert we all relied on and he came in there (to the committee) and was telling them things that I'd been to court on and knew were not so. I knew it was different, you know. So I really exploded.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yeah, that was one of the biggest issues of the session, the property tax bills, especially HB 283 by Representative Flanagan You offer some pretty pertinent amendments and take a real lead on reworking this. You work with Representatives Bottiger, Wolf and Zimmerman -

Mr. Sawyer: Because they all had similar districts. We were representing the people that were really getting the shaft.

Ms. Kilgannon: You also wanted to increase tax exemptions for low-income elderly citizens.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh yeah, especially those people living out on a little old farm for all their lives, definitely.

Ms. Kilgannon: You also call for a moratorium on

the effective date of property reevaluations. You have this great quote. You say, "We cannot let the property tax take the place of the governor's income tax which the people rejected." Of course, Evans had just had on the ballot an income tax measure which failed, rather spectacularly. So, did you feel that the governor was going around and looking for other places to make money?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh definitely. I mean this was a real sneaky way of doing it and he didn't even get any pressure about it. Because you go out and try to explain that, you know, it takes so long to get through.

Ms. Kilgannon: So this is not sound bite material, this is really complicated.

Mr. Sawyer: This is complicated because it was a formula that the state put onto the assessors.

Ms. Kilgannon: I notice that you had Charlie Hodde helping you formulate this. He's a longtime tax expert. What role did he play?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, Charlie, I relied on him when I was speaker all the time because I had so much respect for him. He understood the tax system better than any other person in the state. And a lot of people could say if you did this, this would happen. Charlie could say, this would happen and then this, and then this, and this. He could take you down to about the fifth level. You thoroughly understood the ramifications of what you were doing so when you voted on it, something didn't jump up and bite you later on. He was that good. And I really relied on him.

Ms. Kilgannon: A real chess player.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh yeah. With him – plus the fact that I had the practical experience of actually being in there working that system and then wanting some changes and he could explain what the effect of those changes were better than I could understand.

Ms. Kilgannon: A powerful person to have on your side.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, I always thought so. He's probably the best state administrator they've ever had. Everyplace that he went, he did it well. Oh boy that mind. I'd give anything for it.

Ms. Kilgannon: You're kind of the front person on a lot of this issue. A lot of questions are directed to you.

Is this a new profile for you?

Mr. Sawyer: Um hmm, yeah. Well, I was the one mouthing off. It definitely was something that I was interested in and had a chance to get exposed to.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you consider passing that bill your main achievement of the session?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, that was one of the big ones, yeah. The other was just, we had a very strong minority and we were able to use it. We were only one vote short and we used it very well but I don't think we were obstructionists.

Ms. Kilgannon: No, people seemed to think that what you do was really positive. You were definitely credited with being what they called the "main architect" of the property tax relief bill. It seems that you weren't able to roll the taxes back immediately though – so there was a sort of – you achieved this but the impact was not immediate. But you still got lots of credit.

Governor Evans talked also about making school levies easier to pass. Not going for the super majority. Actually lots of people talked about that; it's never happened. If he's losing the income tax leg of his stool, and you're putting a lid on the property taxes, but he's still interested in supporting schools, would that have been another mechanism for giving money to schools without raising taxes somewhere else?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah. And I always was for – I think it's ridiculous if you have to have – what is it, sixty percent or something of voters?

Ms. Kilgannon: Sixty percent of the voters in the last election?

Mr. Sawyer: And, you know and a lot of these levy elections are held as special elections, and they don't have the turnout.

Ms. Kilgannon: You don't get the numbers – yeah.

Mr. Sawyer: Hell, if the people aren't interested enough to come out and vote, then that's tough. That was my attitude.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yeah, somewhere in here you say "Not voting shouldn't be considered a no vote."

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, you shouldn't get a benefit from not voting.

Ms. Kilgannon: So, there are all these revenue measures

happening, and then there's the appropriation stuff crafting the state budget. You're trying to straighten out how to bring in the money and there's a whole other group deciding how to spend it. The Republicans are having a lot of difficulty with this, crafting the state budget. They couldn't seem to agree with each other, let alone your minority.

An unusual event occurred quite close to the end of session where there was, I gather, a recalcitrant Republican on the Appropriations Committee who wouldn't go along with the majority caucus plan and they yanked that person off and put someone else on there who would go along. That seems highly unusual.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, they have the power to do that.

Ms. Kilgannon: They do, but it's not often done, I gather?

Mr. Sawyer: No, no.

Ms. Kilgannon: And there was just a lot of railing going on then. You, at one point, basically walk off the floor, I gather. Pull the Democrats out and just walk away.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, they needed our votes but they were hard balling us, so we just said – well...

The question for us was whether the whole caucus would do it or not – but they all did. They thought it was the only way to go.

Ms. Kilgannon: This is considered a real demonstration of your leadership.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, we were very close because we were on a crusade, you know. I mean we wanted to get back control of the House. But besides that, we worked very closely together and I had a fantastic caucus.

Ms. Kilgannon: I guess you wouldn't have pulled such a stunt if you thought they wouldn't follow you off the floor.

Mr. Sawyer: That's definitely the only way it works – you don't want to end up sitting in that caucus room all by yourself.

Ms. Kilgannon: That would not be a wise thing to do.

But, when you walk off the floor, and do certain things, some people charged the Democrats with shirking responsibility, whereas you say the Republicans have blocked you from any meaningful participation

and you're just dramatizing that.

Mr. Sawyer: It was a process by which we could express – it was a protection of our minority rights to be able to be listened to.

Ms. Kilgannon: Were they cutting you out of the discussion completely, then?

Mr. Sawyer: They were just rather rude you know; they're pretty tough people when they get control.

Ms. Kilgannon: Even though they have just a slim majority? They thought they could just roll over you?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, they did at times. And I don't even remember what the issue was now, but it was important to us and it was one that the Democrats could keep together so we stayed together. Said, "Jeez, if we're not going to talk about this and do something, there's no use us sitting out there." We didn't say any more than that. They needed our votes to move it up on the calendar.

Ms. Kilgannon: Were they having problems with their own party at this point?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh yeah, but even if they weren't, on this one they needed two-thirds vote because the calendar – I don't know how they fouled up on it, but we took advantage of it.

In the last couple days of session, bills would be on that calendar, including our bills. But what they'd do is, they'd just reach in and pull one of their bills off and move it up ahead. And you can do that with a majority vote.

Well, then we started delaying the process until they ran out of time and then all of a sudden whenever they wanted to do that, they couldn't without us. So we said, "Alright, you guys, if are going to do that, we want one of ours pulled, too. We at least want to have a vote." So that's what we were doing it for – we wanted to have a vote on our bills. And I remember that figure: there was seven bills passed in that time, and six of 'em were ours.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, when all was said and done, you are actually praised to the skies for your management of this session. Your leadership of your caucus, your work on property tax issue, your manner of doing things – a little more quiet and not so vociferous – you just get a lot of good press.

Mr. Sawyer: Things went pretty good. We had some tools to work with that sometimes the minority leaders don't have. And we had a great team. Bottiger was very good speaking on the floor, and he was my seat mate, and so he was up a lot. And we had Gary Grant – he was never a particular supporter of mine but he had a pretty sharp tongue so –

Ms. Kilgannon: So if you needed one -

Mr. Sawyer: Right. We figured out who best could do it right now. In other words, we were back to teamwork. I mean I don't want my center shooting three-pointers unless he can make them on the thing. You take the people that were there and use them. And we just used everybody. If you have your hands open for help, you'd be surprised who will step up. But you have to have an open mind. So I tried to keep an open mind. And it really worked that session.

Ms. Kilgannon: As promised, Gov. Evans called a special session in 1972. The Democrats weren't very happy, apparently, with this special session. They weren't necessarily against the special session but they were against the way it was framed and the way Evans set it up and what he said were the main issues. Your party disagreed with him?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, that was normal. I don't know why people were upset over that.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, more upset than usual, it seems. You stayed there, in session, until February 22. It was fairly intense.

According to your caucus reports, you thought the main high priority was the economic recession that the state was still suffering through, and the continued high unemployment. A large group of people were about to lose their unemployment benefits. You're also under a court order to redistrict. You get into February and then starts the whole jockeying and bargaining of redistricting while you've still got these other big issues to deal with.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, you know, people kind of belittle the fighting about redistricting, but you're really fighting for a philosophical form of government. I mean do you want Republicans or do you want Democrats and so forth and it was – I'll tell you it was awful boring sitting there sometimes, but I have to say that it was a bonafide issue and should have had a lot of

consideration.

Ms. Kilgannon: But you never get any praise for good redistricting. It's a sort of no-win situation. If you really take hold of redistricting and get the bill – it could take too much time, you really get slammed. On the other hand, if you don't do it, you get slammed anyway.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, you had Joe Davis and you had Bob Greive and quite a few other people get up in arms, yelling, you know, once the Federal Court was brought in. And it was all phony, in my mind, because what they were trying to do is preserve their little death hold on the thing. From our stand point, we knew that we had got the thing computerized and so we knew we had a better chance of it not being slanted with facts than we would have with any of those other guys involved. So, it didn't bother us at all.

Ms. Kilgannon: Just as an aside, your nickname in the papers now – they call you The Jeep. Is that because you ride over obstacles or? How does this describe you?

Mr. Sawyer: I don't know where it ties into the jeep and so forth, but when I was in high school, I told you that didn't I?

Ms. Kilgannon: I don't remember.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, when I played high school basketball, I was quite a dribbler. And I'd pound down that court. And it was my high school paper or maybe the local paper, started calling me the "dribbling jeep."

Ms. Kilgannon: And it stuck with you.

Mr. Sawyer: And from then on in, it did. One advantage of being small in athletics is that if you do prevail, you're noticed. And they are going to write you up a lot more than some six-foot guy that they expect that to be effective.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, if you're dribbling circles around that big six foot guy, he just looks awkward and you look fast.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, I could dribble.

Ms. Kilgannon: I was just curious if this style is what you brought into this session? Does this fit?

Mr. Sawyer: I go back to Coach Dalbert, my one high school coach that really drilled the stuff into us. You had to have good grades if you wanted to play for him and you had to be out there competing and you've got

to tire the other guy. But mostly, you've got to play as a team.

Ms. Kilgannon: So this is going to be your style.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, it is. It always has been. You know when you're five foot five and you're playing basketball, you sure as heck aren't going to be able to do it all. You've got to be working with other people and so it's just part of my philosophy. You're stronger as a team than you are as an individual.

Chapter 11

Finally, the Speakership

Ms. Kilgannon: The 1972 elections are big. Richard Nixon is running for re-election against the backdrop of the Vietnam War and college protests, and there's a Democratic primary battle for Governor. You had Martin Durkan who was aiming for the governor's seat?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes, he was.

Ms. Kilgannon: And it almost seemed out of the blue that former Governor Rosellini entered the race, apparently outraged at what had happened to his legacy under Governor Evans.

Mr. Sawyer: He was upset, yes. Martin looks like he's got the nomination; he was running against a couple of guys in Seattle, but Martin really looked like he had it wrapped up and then all of a sudden – bang – Rosellini files. He had run so many times, he'd served as governor, he had great name-familiarity, so he took the nomination. And then Evans beat him and we lost the governorship again.

Ms. Kilgannon: It was Evans' third term, but it was a very close race, he didn't win it by much.

Now, Rosellini came up really fast in the polls and he looked like he could pull it off but right near the end of that campaign there was a smear campaign that tied him to the mafia.

Mr. Sawyer: That was the Godfather movie era – people were very sensitive to that issue. He's Italian and that's all the facts they need for those kind of things. I know -

Ms. Kilgannon: I don't think you were involved in that campaign in any way but when you heard some of these things coming out, you're in the midst of your own campaign for the House, what did you think?

Mr. Sawyer: You just take it with a grain of salt because you know better. But you also know that not everybody has that privy of information. So those things are nasty.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did that nastiness stay on the gov-



Newly-elected Speaker of the House, Leonard A. Sawyer, with his wife Beverly and their children.

ernor's level or did it seep down into your campaign?

Mr. Sawyer: We didn't feel it. I mean – because we were so busy. You know worrying about our own. But I hate that kind of campaign. You know, if he's done something wrong, fine, he's got to pay the price. But I don't care if he's Italian, I don't care if he's Jewish, I don't care what he is, you know? You judge him on what he does, not what somebody might or might not know.

Ms. Kilgannon: At this time, you were very busy elsewhere.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah. We really worked hard to win the majority in the House. I mean, the whole caucus, it wasn't just me. We had about half the caucus, at least, out there helping other people. And we had a whole team work going, it was really beautiful. I was real proud to be the head of it.

Ms. Kilgannon: You win big. You have fifty-seven members at the end of the count. The Senate, of course, remained Democratic, with thirty-one to eighteen. Your own election was a landslide. Over 12,000 to just a little over 5,000 for your opponent.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, he – was just a nice guy.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you keep campaigning in your own district? Or did you let that slide just a little -

Mr. Sawyer: I didn't campaign much. I had a system – because I never did campaign as much as I should. I did the first few times – God I was a campaign nut, you know. But I got it worked out that I could come in and do a lot in hurry.

Ms. Kilgannon: As Minority Leader, you'd had a strong team around you, but a couple of those people left and went to the Senate. You lose Ted Bottiger, Gary Grant and Dan Marsh?

Mr. Sawyer: Gary Grant was our hatchet man, you know. But when you're in the majority you don't need a hatchet man. And we had Bob Charette come booming in there.

There's a few other people that left the House – either of their own volition or the voters decided they needed to be retired – Representatives Backstrom, Bozarth, Bradley, Richmond, Jim McDermott, Marzano. I was talking to (former staffer) Vito Chiechi the other day, and I said, “Vito, we always had at least a twenty-five percent turn around, I don't know why they were worrying about term limits.”

Ms. Kilgannon: So you have a huge group of freshmen.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, about eighty percent of those we had recruited ourselves.

Ms. Kilgannon: So when all this group comes in, do you have a special meeting with them and kind of bring them all aboard?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah. The one thing I remembered from my own first term is that it took me thirty days to just to find the bathroom, you know. So what we did is we had a big – and they do it now all the time, I guess – but at that time nobody else had done it – we had a Democratic meeting – a weekend. And we got all these freshmen in and oriented them as much as we could. They got to know each other and then we introduced them to all the lobbyists.

We actually brought them in and told them, “You better be working with these guys.” And then state department heads came in, and everything else. So, they at least thought they belonged. And it worked out real well. They caught on real fast, almost too fast. (Laughs)

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, there's quite a list of people. Within your group, you have five new women members, to make a total of ten in the Democratic caucus in the House, out of fifty seven. Does that make a difference? Are women starting to be a bit of a critical mass?

Mr. Sawyer: No. Because before we always had -

Ms. Kilgannon: One or two -

Mr. Sawyer: Two or three...

Ms. Kilgannon: But this is a little bit bigger. Well, the Republicans only had two women members at this point. They have Jeannette Hayner coming in and they have Lois North, who's been there a little bit longer.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, they were both very good legislators.

Ms. Kilgannon: But I was just wondering, you've got now, ten, did you do anything special to recruit women?

Mr. Sawyer: We were just out looking for good candidates.

Ms. Kilgannon: Now, this is going to be important, so I want to talk about it a little bit now, and then we're going to pick it up in a big way later. But over the Senate, there's a different kind of campaign going on. Senator Augie Mardesich is marshaling his forces and campaigning hard to defeat Senator Greive as majority leader. You had some ties to Mardesich, did you have some preferences?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, yeah. I preferred Mardesich.

Ms. Kilgannon: So was this something that you would be watching?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, yeah. Like a hawk. Because I had this legislative reform stuff in the back of my mind and I knew I would have troubles getting Grieve to do it. But there wasn't much I could do; I mean I was too busy in my own thing.

Ms. Kilgannon: So, your own plans depend a great deal on bringing the Senate along?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, yeah. You had to because of the standing committees and the joint committee meetings and all the thing. Because you can't organize just half the darn Legislature. Maybe we could have gotten around Greive, but I knew it would be a lot easier with a strong leader like Mardesich. Without him, I don't know if I could have done it, looking back.

Ms. Kilgannon: Okay, there's all this activity, the election is over, the dust begins to settle a little bit. How quickly after the election would you meet with your caucus and start organizing?

Mr. Sawyer: The next morning. (Laughs)

Ms. Kilgannon: No rest for the wicked?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, no, we were staying up all night to

find out the result – because the last time we thought we had it, but no. Of course, I'd been thinking about it in the back of my mind. I hadn't done anything but I sat down immediately and we went to work on the thing. By that time, I'm the minority leader so I had a running head start on everybody and so the main thing is to have the meeting as soon as possible. Because we had a lot of work to do.

Ms. Kilgannon: Judging from what I was reading in the papers, there never seemed to be any challenge to you being the next speaker; it seemed a foregone conclusion that if the Democrats won, that it was your turn. It's not always that easy, but in this case, you had it pretty wrapped up.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah.

Ms. Kilgannon: So, would you have a hand in choosing who the other leaders would be? Or would they emerge anyway?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, I mean, we didn't set up a slate, but we had people we wanted and so forth. But I always said, "Hey, we're not going to promise anything for our speakership [post]. This thing's all going to be done on merit." So I went in with that and nobody ever asked. I said, "Hey, the Committee on Committees will meet and I'm not promising anything." Because I wanted the best possible people in each position that I could find. And so that's the way that we did it. And it worked. It just naturally fell, I mean it wasn't any great thing, but that was to me it was something I really felt strong about, and it worked.

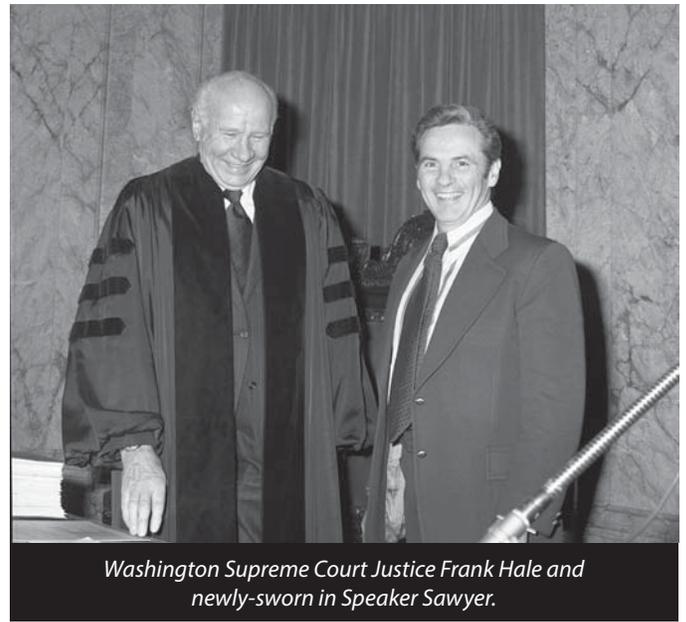
Ms. Kilgannon: Well, you certainly got a lot of accolades for your appointments.

Mr. Sawyer: And I've always chosen good people to help me because I've got so many deficiencies that – (Laughs)

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, I don't know about that. So it's the first day of session, and it's the nomination of the speakership, how much is already organized? Pretty much everything?

Mr. Sawyer: It was pretty well organized. I don't know about the committee chairs, they weren't announced until about three or four days later. We pretty well had it – we'd been working hard ever since the election.

Ms. Kilgannon: Now you – like we talked about



Washington Supreme Court Justice Frank Hale and newly-sworn in Speaker Sawyer.

earlier – you had challenged John O'Brien in '61 and then various things had happened. What was your relationship with him like now?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh great. We came together when I got to be minority leader. And then when I got to be speaker, I made sure that I got him as speaker pro tem, and I turned over most of the presiding – because this guy was a heck of a parliamentarian. And why not use him?

So then I could do other things. That's why I got the voting machine in my office. Everybody gave me a big thing about that – they had a really funny cartoon – "here's the speaker's vote coming in from his office," you know, but I could sit in there and work. I could be meeting with people and I could watch that thing and I'd know exactly what happened if something was wrong, and bang I was on the phone – or I was out there.

Ms. Kilgannon: He was perfectly happy with being the speaker pro tem?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh yeah, because – you know – he liked the floor work.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yeah, there's a certain amount of ceremoniousness.

Mr. Sawyer: I never was much for ceremony. I did it but I wasn't good – he was a lot better.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, he relished it.

Mr. Sawyer: He did. And he just did a good job. You can't take it away from him.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, your whole family appears to be in the gallery the day you're nominated for Speaker – or at least large numbers of them – because you thank them and they all appear to be there on the spot. What are you feeling? You're up there, you're hearing the nomination speeches, first Mr. Charette – who appears to have known you practically from birth – from what he said.

Mr. Sawyer: Law school. Yeah.

Ms. Kilgannon: I'm exaggerating. (Laughs) Each speech, of course, lauds you up and down as is the custom, and your due. But they also say how excited they are by the ideas you are bringing in and what's going to happen. They all allude to that. Charette calls it "a new era, these are exciting ideas with the election of Mr. Sawyer as speaker, that finally some of the old concepts will die a groaning death." He's quite dramatic. "Now with the new concepts Mr. Sawyer has proposed all are welcome, the gate is open." He's quite florid, saying what you're going to do, this revolution.

Mr. Sawyer: I'm not sure it qualified as a revolution. But...

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, he ends his nomination speech by saying, "With the election of Leonard Sawyer, we have the opportunity to take the first decisive step to become a citizen Legislature." So there it is in a nutshell.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, he stole my speech. (Laughs)

Ms. Kilgannon: Leaves you to just thank your family?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes.

Ms. Kilgannon: And then Bob Perry is the next to get up and of course, he's anxious to support you. An interesting thing happens – well of course the Republicans nominate their own – Tom Swayze and have good things to say about him.

Mr. Sawyer: They lie. (Laughs) No, no, he's a very good personal friend. A great guy.

Ms. Kilgannon: An interesting thing happens when they take the roll call. You end up with fifty-eight votes, not fifty-seven. Tom Swayze votes for you. Is that unusual?

Mr. Sawyer: I don't know.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, he steps over and votes for you which is some kind of magnanimous gesture. I was

surprised to see that. Then you are sworn in by Chief Justice Hale. What are you feeling?

Mr. Sawyer: Very elated. The germ had started way back when Bob [Schaefer, 1965] became speaker, you know, because I was his seat mate and I just had these feelings, and then when I got chairman of Highways, I put a lot of those kind of things in place, and so I was excited. Mainly because of what I thought we were going to be able to do.

Ms. Kilgannon: You, of course, get to give your maiden speech as speaker. You've got the gavel in your hand, you thank everyone...

Mr. Sawyer: In sight.

Ms. Kilgannon: In sight. (Laughs) You thank your family, you thank people who campaigned with you, you thank your caucus members, you thank, you know all the people. Then you say that you've seen many changes, "I think our state's needs have far outgrown our legislative ability to meet those needs. Therefore, I think it's long overdue that the Legislature make the proper changes to keep pace with the needs of our state." You talk about "becoming a full partner in government as our forefathers intended it."

Mr. Sawyer: We knew we weren't going to be able to do half of it but at least we were going to move that way.

Chapter 12

First Steps of the Reform Package

Ms. Kilgannon: Let's talk about some of the reforms you wanted to bring in as speaker, starting with some of the services you provided to the freshmen. You wanted to help new members coming in so they didn't have to do what you did, which was come in absolutely cold and try to figure it out for yourself. Did you, for instance, tell them the advice that Magnuson gave you about watching people and how to figure things out?

Mr. Sawyer: I don't think I shared that with them – that was just kind of my personal creed. The main thing we wanted to do was get them familiar with the legislative arena. Hell, I didn't even know where the lavatory was when I came in. We wanted to indoctrinate them into the legislative process, we wanted them to meet the people that they were going to be talking to and were going to get advice from – lobbyists, state officers and so forth. It was pretty comprehensive. And the lobbyists enjoyed it, I know, and so did the members.

Ms. Kilgannon: When you say "it" – your program. Can you describe that part?

Mr. Sawyer: I didn't go into the reorganization with them at that time. This was just a chance for them to gather and kind of get a feel for what it was like to be in the Legislature.

Ms. Kilgannon: Could you describe what it was you did do for them.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, we had a big dinner for them. (Laughter) It was a two-day event, if I remember right. So we came in and we sat up different subject matters that we thought would be coming up and then we had people on both sides of the issue for them so they get a feel of that.

And then mainly – what I really wanted to establish – the informal part of the legislative process. And I wanted them to get to know each other and we had the other members there too. So, it was a real opportunity to get to know people, get a feel. They got a

broad outlook at what the legislative process was all about. And then John O'Brien handled the portion about the rules and how the legislation passed to the floor, and all that.

Ms. Kilgannon: So he came in and he gave like a classroom type of activity? Was it both Republicans and Democrats?

Mr. Sawyer: No, no – we were just taking care of our own. We had worked hard to get them there and we wanted them to do the best they could. They weren't professional legislators, you know – none of us were – we mostly all had other jobs. We're a Citizen Legislature.

The states like California, and New York, you've got to have full-time legislators, but you lose something. You know, as I told you before – I first get there and I learn more law than I did in law school. And I really believe that. It's real easy to get your kings or queens while you were down there and it's euphoric, so you've got to be bumped back to reality by going home and going back to your job and working. I think it makes much better legislators.

Ms. Kilgannon: Senator Barry [sic], in a speech, talked about the changes you were trying to bring as "the most radical (procedural) change in eighty-two years in the Legislature."

Mr. Sawyer: Good.

Ms. Kilgannon: That seemed like quite a marker. The biggest one, of course, is continuing sessions. Where did that idea come from?

Mr. Sawyer: I always hated the deadlines. So, I was reading – believe it or not – a Supreme Court decision and it said in there that the legislative sessions – [Judge Rosellini] who wrote it, said that [our] Constitution sets forth a sixty-day session. You are bound by that. Special sessions are not. You can do whatever you want. They didn't say that -

Ms. Kilgannon: Once you're called – you're -

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah. Once you're called – you can't call yourselves – but once you're called – so I'm thinking, "Well, once he calls us in, we're home free."

Ms. Kilgannon: So quite a light bulb went on there.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, there it was.

Ms. Kilgannon: So, okay, you can stay in as long as you want, what did that mean for you?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, it meant that it got rid of deadlines,

if we wanted to. If we didn't want to, we didn't – but we had freedom to go ahead and do things like – because I thought the Legislature was the one that should determine when they meet and so forth. Why should the governor tell us when we can meet? We're an equal partner, we ought to have control of our own destiny.

So all of a sudden – and especially with the idea of standing committees, you could go and get something done. And so that's what we did.

Ms. Kilgannon: So what was it about deadlines that made the process more difficult for you?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, everybody jams it up to the deadlines and then the Mardesiches, and the Sawyers, and the Gissbergs, and everybody, start amending things at the last minute, and it doesn't go through the committee process. You can write a whole bill out there on the floor and people don't know what we're voting for. You're tired and it's a horrible way to run a shop.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, there were a lot of complaints that all the big bills came in at the end and nobody had any sense of what they were doing.

Mr. Sawyer: No, that was what it was. Why go through the committee process when you didn't have to? All you had to do was find a title. Augie was a genius at it. I learned it from him. But all you had to do was find a title and you could get up and tack it on, they wouldn't know.

Ms. Kilgannon: So you actually objected to continuing, even though it worked well for you?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, yeah. I mean anything that bad is going to hurt the overall process. And the overall process is what I was sold on. I really was dedicated on that.

I was taught by my basketball coach, "you follow the rules but you learn the rules and you take advantage of the rules."

Ms. Kilgannon: You make them work for you.

Mr. Sawyer: You make them work for you. And I always have done that.

Ms. Kilgannon: So if the rules – as they were – were actually hurting the institution – the process of representativeness of the Legislature -

Mr. Sawyer: Was weakened.

Ms. Kilgannon: – and you would want change those.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, they were weakened. And we were weak enough as it was (laughs).

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes, and the budget would often go through the grind and then go into a conference committee with closed doors and those few people would rewrite it.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, they're going to do a certain amount of that, no matter what. But what happened at the – I don't know if it was '73 or '74, we were so tight for money as the state level, so I sent (a staff member) to DC and he came back with oodles of money. But we had to wait until June when they passed their budget.

Ms. Kilgannon: Are you talking about the federal budget?

Mr. Sawyer: The feds! And I said, why should we sit around here and wait, we'll go home and then we'll just call them back when we know what we've got and work it then. And we did and it worked like a charm.

Ms. Kilgannon: So go into recess, but not adjourn.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, you recess. You're allowed to recess. If you adjourn, then you're caught.

Ms. Kilgannon: So part of the continuing session notion, is that these committees that needed to could go on working while the Legislature is in recess. And that was also part of changing the committee structure that these would be permanent committees, shall we say?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, just like the Legislative Council. Only they would spend all kinds of time and staff and they had a horrible record. So why not just have the same people that are going to vote work on it so they know what they're doing.

Ms. Kilgannon: Now, let's look at the continuing sessions and get a sense of what you're doing. You had the regular session from January 8 to March 8. Now, that's your sixty-day period. And then the very next day, Dan Evans calls you back for an extraordinary session, and you go from March 9 to April 15 – quite a long period of time. Then you go away for a little while and then you come back again, September 8 to September 15 – now that's your mini session. And then you come again, January 14 to February 13 -

Mr. Sawyer: That was the one he called in the regular

special session, that was just routine. That was in place of the yearly session.

Ms. Kilgannon: That was. But that one you recess and then you reconvene yourselves. Now is this sort of a modified mini session?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, it is a mini session.

Ms. Kilgannon: This is what you're doing here?

Mr. Sawyer: That's exactly what we wanted to do. Because as we talked before about the federal budget, we weren't getting any real information till in June.

Ms. Kilgannon: Then you come back in April and there's a phrase – that I had never seen before – instead of sine die, you say, “[at interim] until we come back on April 15.” So is that the Latin for recess?

Mr. Sawyer: I don't know. I never paid much attention to that sort of thing.

Ms. Kilgannon: Now when you came back March 9 to April 15, that's quite a long period of time after your long sixty-day session.

Mr. Sawyer: That's not long at all. We usually went all the way to June. No we did cut it back, I'm sure.

Ms. Kilgannon: I know in the end, you say you shave off something like seventeen days. Is this when you're working on the budget?

Mr. Sawyer: Mainly. See that's a dead period, an awful lot, because they have all the deadlines set up and we get down there and then they don't have the budget through; you've really got to really concentrate on the thing. So you're just sitting around playing cards and doing nothing – it's a waste of time, I always thought.

Ms. Kilgannon: So is this the period where most of the members didn't have to come down and just the Ways and Means were there?

Mr. Sawyer: Umm hmmm.

Ms. Kilgannon: So did you actually put that in place?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah.

Ms. Kilgannon: Those were your ideas?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, that was the continuing session idea. As you have your meetings along the way – and the Ways and Means didn't have to be around all that time because the staff could be working and then the

chairman could bring them down when they needed it. All we had to do was just authorize the meeting.

Ms. Kilgannon: And was there concern that the staff were getting too dominate in that setting and that only the leadership knew what was going on and there was some restlessness about that?

Mr. Sawyer: I guess there was, but the staff at that time didn't have that much control. I argued with a couple of them but we were on top of it.

Ms. Kilgannon: There is a lot of grumbling about only leadership knowing what's going on and other people not knowing.

Mr. Sawyer: That's what they said but who all's in leadership? The chairman of the committees we met with, we met with the leadership, we had people, they had more information than any freshman class had ever had before, all the way through.

Ms. Kilgannon: And they had nothing to compare it with.

Mr. Sawyer: And yeah, that's true. And that's the reason that experience is so important. You have something to compare it about. In my mind – they were upset about – things that they didn't even realize how good they had it. I was very sensitive about that. I just thought that wasn't a very good issue. But it was an effective issue; they got people upset, I guess, later on.

Ms. Kilgannon: When Bob Perry, who helped you spread the message about continuing sessions, shall we say, was describing this, he talked about the Citizen Legislature and he says, “Well, perhaps we'll evolve to be a full-time Legislature and maybe we're on the threshold, but we're not there yet.” Did you want to draw a pretty good line between what you call the “Citizen Legislature” and a full time?

Mr. Sawyer: That was the way Bob felt, which is fine, you know. The main thing is, I would take any help I could get on the thing, because we had to get it through. No, I thought this would delay it. I figured eventually you're going to have a full-time Legislature – but -

Ms. Kilgannon: But it wasn't your goal.

Mr. Sawyer: It wasn't my goal. No. It was just the opposite.

Ms. Kilgannon: I wanted to make sure that you said

that.

Mr. Sawyer: I thought this was saving the Citizen Legislature. And – you know – one of the big things, one of my biggest worries about the thing was – we were going to be asking more of the legislators, and they were pretty stretched pretty thin. I got a lot of heat for that. And we got a lot of heat from a lot of the senators. They didn't want to spend that extra time, they weren't being paid. You know. They've got their families to take care of.

Ms. Kilgannon: Certainly legislative pay is one of the things that is woven into this.

Mr. Sawyer: Sure. That's one thing I wanted to do, but.. things move slow...

Well, John O'Brien started with the voting machine. Now you think that isn't much, but can you imagine how much time they used to spend, voting aye and nay for ninety-nine people and every time somebody was maybe in the bathroom, somebody had to wait to get him back, you know. And boy with that voting machine, now that was a real something made us capable.

And then we had such lousy facilities, you know, you couldn't meet, you couldn't think, so then Republicans – especially Tom Copeland – gave us facility – well those were things that were important, but to me the guts of it was information.

The way it happens – it happened real good, you know. And then I wanted to raise salaries for legislators, and I thought – well, I think I've got my hands full as it is. And I wanted to hire representatives in the district for people because they have so much work to do but I just backed off of those. Because I figured if I get this much done, I'm going to be happy. Somebody else is going to have to do the rest, and they did it. And it's needed. It was needed.

Ms. Kilgannon: Even if you can see the big picture, you can't have it all at once.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, hey, I was told one time, by Si (Holcomb) – he told me so many good things – “Be careful about banquets, you can get sick. Have lots of little lunches.” (Laughs).

Ms. Kilgannon: So, then you have to set priorities, you have to decide what does matter and what's a little extra.

Mr. Sawyer: Right.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, you're doing a lot. How did you set your priorities? Did you feel that you had to have all the pieces in place to start to with or could you go ahead with some pieces of it and then work in more as you came along?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, a lot of it was pretty well intertwined, you know. I could have just put a permanent staff in place and forgot it. But if you're really going to do a job, you've got to split up the political on that – in my mind – and so we split the staff up. And they could see it was always easy to change it if it doesn't work. But I don't remember changing very much of it.

Ms. Kilgannon: I was just wondering if for some reason you weren't able to push through your whole program of reform, were there pieces that could have come in more gradually? This is a lot of change all at once. Just wondered what you thought was essential to get into place right away.

Mr. Sawyer: The most important thing was the staff, in my mind. After that the computers and the information. Then the standing committees, these are the basics of what we were talking about. The idea of coming back -

Ms. Kilgannon: The continuing sessions -

Mr. Sawyer: The continuing session thing, was more controversial and there was a lot more difference of opinion – and a lot of that was based on convenience to people: lobbyists, state budget writers, etc. But the first people I worried about were the legislators; they were the only ones not getting paid! I mean, when you get \$100 a month – we got up to \$300 I guess – yeah, these are the people that really had the right to bitch about it, and that was why it was such a concern of mine. But otherwise there's probably no way of getting around having to have a permanent Legislature. And I didn't like that. I wanted people making these decisions who were actually out doing the real thing; they understood what was going on.

Ms. Kilgannon: Still members part of their own community.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, and members of their own profession and their business and all that. So those are the people I wanted making the decisions.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, when I was looking at this, I

was thinking, it's often hard – sometimes even impossible – to push through a whole group of reforms in one go. Sometimes people just kind of gag when they get to a certain level. So I was wondering if you started with the things that were the most palatable and easy and then built up or if you could have abandoned any part of your program without real loss.

Mr. Sawyer: I could have abandoned the continuing session part. It's one that we could have postponed, and we could have got the other, but I wasn't going to be around there that much longer. As soon as this was done, I was out of the Legislature, and so I was just going to go ahead and do as much as I could. And I was surprised we got as much done as we were able to. As I said, the time was right. We couldn't have done it a few year earlier.

Ms. Kilgannon: No. So, I'm hearing you say you had a sort of sense of urgency about this because for you – you could see the window and you were going to take advantage of it?

Mr. Sawyer: It's against that basic principle, you know, of eating small lunches rather than a banquet, because you can get sick on a banquet. But I figured this was too important, I was willing to get sick if I had to. I was going to do as much as I could.

Ms. Kilgannon: There's a comment in this study on the Forty-third Legislature – kind of a wrap-up piece – that actually touches on that. And it says, out of the paragraph – “Reforms instituted during the Forty-third Legislature” – “More often than not, those individuals who lead the reform movement, have had to pay a high political price, especially if what they propose costs money while the returns from the investment are not immediately subject to financial analysis. The severe criticisms aimed at legislative reform in this state, have at times, been discouraging but they've served a useful purpose in calling the people's attention to our efforts to find a better way.” Do you think you paid this high political price?

Mr. Sawyer: Maybe. I think it was because in doing this, I was kind of the focal point and so therefore it looked to some like I had all this power – I was a power broker – and so forth. Well, I was in a place to get that program through – we worked on the thing. I mean I don't think I was ever particularly known as a power-mad person before. But, you know, maybe I

was because I wanted to get this program through.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you go into this knowing that there might be some price that you might pay?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh yes. I've been well indoctrinated by – the price of success -

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, just keeping that in mind, I don't really want to get into that right now, but I was just wondering how you went about persuading people to buy the whole program – not bits and pieces – not incrementally, but the whole “banquet.”

Mr. Sawyer: Well, basically I had more knowledge than the rest of them. Because I'd been working on the thing so I had a real advantage. And there wasn't anybody else that had really gone into it like I did. So, as I said, “Who wins the battles? The person with the most knowledge and the most information.” And I had the most information. And I had a lot of experience and I pretty well knew – I didn't know all the pitfalls – but I knew most of them. And pitfalls are the people's personality. So you have to work around those. And so we did a pretty good job on that because we were well experienced. That's why I say, term limits really bum me.

Ms. Kilgannon: Would you take your caucus and meet individually with members or do it as a whole group – or how would you break this down, and bring people onboard?

Mr. Sawyer: I sold it to the caucus as a whole. I never saw the legislators I couldn't sell this program to. I don't know why we hadn't done it sooner, but we didn't.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, you might not have had all the pieces, yet. We're going to see in the next few years that not all your caucus members stayed onboard. They may have started there but then they go off on their own issues. Did you also make presentations to the minority party to bring them into the picture?

Mr. Sawyer: Just their leadership.

Ms. Kilgannon: And then it would be their responsibility?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, because I didn't think -

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, it would be unusual, I imagine.

Mr. Sawyer: I would have done it if they would have asked. But I just told them, here's what I want to do. And they'd read it in the press, they'd seen it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, I understand that Rep. Perry was also involved in talking about this and building it up and he gave presentations to the Democratic Senate members.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, he was sold on the thing and he was very instrumental because the Highway Committee has a third of the House members on it.

Ms. Kilgannon: A big chunk. Now your caucus leadership: O'Brien, Charette, Paul Connor, Dan Van Dyk, Lorraine Wojahn – would they have been your inner circle that would have really helped you with this?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, basically – we didn't use the procedure much. You meet with your caucus leaders and most of it is informal. But what we did do, that I don't think had been done before, we had regular meetings of the committee chairmen. And we'd do that over dinner, out at the Tyee. We got a room and then we'd have a meeting and talk about different problems the chairmen had or different issues. That's when they could get up and make a pitch for something.

Ms. Kilgannon: So did they become like your cabinet, in that sense?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I guess I never considered them -

Ms. Kilgannon: It just struck me that way.

Mr. Sawyer: Well yeah, they would be – basically. I think. But we used them as committee chairmen. I was trying to build up the committee chairmen as much as possible. I wanted individual legislators built up and with giving them more information, I didn't get involved in a lot of issues. Some I had to but I figured they were my members and I had to give my members the ability to do it!

Ms. Kilgannon: I guess I always thought that committee chairmen were fairly powerful.

Mr. Sawyer: They are.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you want to see them more powerful? Or just better informed?

Mr. Sawyer: Basically, a lot of them, well, they needed staff and that, to me, is making them more powerful. And we also had them come over and explain the bills to us in the Rules Committee. They never had to do that before. They didn't like that – a lot of them. But it was good for them; they had to come in ready to

explain it and it was helpful for the Rules Committee. But we had a lot of grumbling over that.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, they had to do more homework, I suppose.

Mr. Sawyer: That's right.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yet you were giving them more help, so...

Mr. Sawyer: So I thought that was a real important thing. I'd sat in Rules for a long time and I knew how half the time we didn't know what we were voting on. Everybody made a little pitch, "Well, this is my favorite bill." Like that (laughs) – like that. Well, they couldn't do that if the press was there and it was an open meeting.

Ms. Kilgannon: That's right, it was open now, so you've got to be a little more on the ball here.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, I thought so.

Ms. Kilgannon: More professional, shall we say. Correct me if I'm wrong, but I got the impression that there was more legislation passed – that the volume of legislation was growing in these years.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, boy. Huge! But that's what made this thing so vital. We either had to go full time or we had to upgrade everything we did and try to make ourselves more efficient and better able to do a larger volume.

Ms. Kilgannon: Is there more legislation because government's getting into more things, or are there more frivolous bills?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, both. Both. The main thing that really makes the Legislature grow is not frivolous bills, it's people's lives. And you might think it's frivolous, but a certain group out there think that it's the most important thing going. And I think they should be heard. Whether or not I agree with them, that's something else.

Ms. Kilgannon: Certainly, all the studies say that life is getting more complex and that the role of government – people's expectations are higher. I'd still like to talk a little bit about the Democratic caucus. How often would you meet with your caucus, your leadership group? Just the leadership.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh with the leadership people? Oh, I met with them all the time.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you feel pretty connected to them?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I felt really connected with most of the caucus; maybe there's four or five that we never got in step together, but most of them. I just had so much confidence in the caucus! If I didn't have that much confidence, and if the caucus hadn't bought the reform program like they did, I don't know. But, hey bought it – I mean we were in there, and this was what we were going to do. And by golly, we did it.

And I think that's what made the Senate or different other people realize, hey, this was something that we were dedicated to. It was our goal. And I guess I did a good job of selling the caucus because I sure as heck talked to a lot who were enthusiastic about it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Even the people that were, perhaps, nervous about all the changes – mostly in the press accounts – the Democratic caucus seems to be solidly behind you – at least in the beginning.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I think they were all the way as far as this program. I don't think that my problems that happened later was due to the program. In fact, the only way it might have been due to the program, these people had more information than they could handle. (Laughs)

Ms. Kilgannon: Okay, again, I can't remember quite where I read it but one of the little perks or the – I'm not sure of the strategy – what it means – but for the chairmen – you talk about having the dinners, there's a little note about you giving them monogrammed briefcases so that they have a place for their papers.

Me. Sawyer: I think we did give briefcases, they weren't monogrammed, as I remember. Well, maybe they did have their initials on them – I forgot all about that.

Ms. Kilgannon: Were there other little things like that that you found to help kind of bring people in and make them feel a part of the team?

Mr. Sawyer: I'd forgotten that. Because, you know, those chairmen, they had a lot of responsibilities and now they are walking around with all the information in their hand.

Ms. Kilgannon: You had given information, now a carrying case.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, that's what I thought. And they deserved it.

Ms. Kilgannon: It just seemed like a very different

idea – I don't I've ever run across that before.

Mr. Sawyer: If we weren't trying to skimp on the money, I would have given it to every legislator, but we were skimping on money. There are lots of things I would like to have done but I didn't think we had the finances – it was going to kill something else.

Ms. Kilgannon: Now, there is this other story that I've come across that has a kind of a different feeling to it. I understand in your speaker's office, you had a big fish tank with piranhas in it. Now what was the story behind that?

Mr. Sawyer: I had a friend that had two piranhas and he brought the fish tank down to me.

Ms. Kilgannon: There's a lot of jokes and remarks about that.

Mr. Sawyer: And so you feed little fish to those things. And it became kind of stupid thing to do. But it had completely innocent thoughts behind it. I'd never seen a piranha before.

Ms. Kilgannon: Pretty flashy!

Mr. Sawyer: So this friend of mine gave me these two piranha. And the press, I always remember the one reporter from Tacoma area. He was mad at me for some reason, and a story had me throwing in a fish with his name on it or something.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yeah, somehow saying, "Well this is so and so –"

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, well that didn't really happen...

Ms. Kilgannon: I was just curious about that.

Mr. Sawyer: I don't know if he even thought about – but it ended up being kind of a joke. Not a very – classy joke, but a lot of people were laughing at it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, it kind of had a different kind of feeling to it. Now, one of the ways, of course, that you got people to you, and gained their support, is of course you'd helped so many of these people get elected. And I think it was probably understood that you would help them again. That this wasn't a one-shot deal. That you were there as the head – not to say of the party – but you were the most active leader on the campaign field and certainly people counted on you, or seemed to, for that help.

Mr. Sawyer: Our campaign, we got the heck beat out

of us by Evans and his group and so I just got tired of being in the minority after two sets. So, a group of us just got together and said, “Hey, we want to be in the majority again.” We weren’t trying to build up any one person at that time on the thing.

It’s just human nature, if you get out and people meet you, and you are working on a project that they are really interested in, like getting elected, they are going to have real nice thoughts about you. And you’re also going to get a chance to show that you know what’s going on so you don’t have to go say, “Well, vote for me (for leadership), I know this, I know that...” – you show them. You don’t even have to say anything to them, you just show them and that’s my theory.

Sure, I helped some people that ended up stabbing me in the back, and so forth, that’s the risk. Anybody who wanted help, in our sign shop, they got help. And then those that needed help and didn’t know it, we went down and talked to them. We were after the people that were marginal – have trouble getting elected. And we did a good job.

Ms. Kilgannon: You got a lot of people elected.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, we wrote their campaign brochures for them, we did everything.

Ms. Kilgannon: One, perhaps difference between you and the Senate, Senator Greive did it to maintain the status quo, he didn’t actually have a legislative program; it was strictly that he wanted to be majority leader. You’re actually promoting change. You’re campaign-hopping to promote reform, which is a very different thing. You end up in the leadership position deliberately – or however you want to look at that – but you have a different motive, shall we say.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, we had a different approach. See, at that time, that was just all floating around in my mind. And so I didn’t really talk about it to any great extent. Because I hadn’t thought the whole process through. I hadn’t written it down and so forth. And so it was there, but I never pitched that out in the campaign. That wasn’t going to get them elected.

Our program then was “get these guys elected.” I told them not to get involved in too many issues. Pick maybe three and at the most four – and they’d be able to speak very well on those. And get people helping you – writing letters, doing envelopes, anything. Give

me a sign location. Just meeting – and if they want to give you money – that’s good too because then they will work on their relatives and all their friends. And so, it’s a snowball thing.

Ms. Kilgannon: I think this first election and this first effort – it seems to be widely recognized that you’re not necessarily just trying to build up yourself, you’re trying to bring up the whole party. That comes into question a little bit later as to – I don’t want to call it your motives – but your means to an end – some people thought the end result changed. Your means were always the same but some people started to wonder what your motive was. That’s where the sort of – “he’s a power broker” kind of stories start to come in. But at this early stage, I’m just not hearing much of that at all.

Mr. Sawyer: No, that’s when I knew that I would have a little bit of trouble – when they started writing me to be so powerful. I was no more powerful than the caucus would let me be. But no, I was planning on – I wanted to try this plan, and I wanted to give that a shot and that’s the reason I wanted to be speaker. Otherwise, I would have quit and gone out and practiced law and made a lot more money. You don’t make money being speaker. You lose money.

Ms. Kilgannon: And it’s not usually a route to anything else.

Mr. Sawyer: No. And I considered it wasn’t. So that’s why I really wanted to get the reform package passed in the first two – I wanted to be speaker for four years. I wanted to get the thing passed the first two years and then work on things like the LEAP Program and things like that the last two years. And I did that.

Chapter 13

Professionalizing the Legislative Staff

Ms. Kilgannon: Now, let's go back to outlining your program. You wanted to start continuing sessions, change the committee structure and hire non-partisan, year-round staff for new standing committees as well as more staff for the legislators.

Mr. Sawyer: Among other things, yes.

Ms. Kilgannon: When the new people came in – and I'm talking about the non-partisan committee staff right now – let's separate the non-partisan staff from the caucus staff. What happened to the patronage staff?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, some of them were absorbed into the non-partisan, but basically the patronage staff ended up being in the partisan side.

Ms. Kilgannon: So they would be the caucus staff?

Mr. Sawyer: Most. But people that had been working for the Highway Committee, for example, even though they were patronage staff, had built up a lot of expertise and experience that we didn't want to lose, so they stayed with the committees.

Ms. Kilgannon: But when patronage positions are taken away from legislators, that is a real loss of power. So how did you handle that issue? Did they still have these positions but then you just added numbers?

Mr. Sawyer: No, that was one of the problems. That's the main problem we were getting out of the Senate, I think, in my mind. Maybe I'm being too harsh on them.

Ms. Kilgannon: That was just something that I was wondering about because staff were so closely tied to legislators, if there was some resistance to losing those patronage positions. But perhaps they just shifted them to caucus staff.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I think that was more of a problem in the Senate than in the House. But there were only a few committees at that time that the kind of staff that

was permanent – most of them would just come in part time and do it. And that was one of the problems.

If we had people that had been working on the issue a long time, why change them? If they were partisan, we lectured them on it – we laid out the ground rules. They were accountable to the chairman, he was their boss, but they were to do any research at all that was requested of them. If it got out of hand; they would have to go to the chairman, he'd have to take care of it. But basically, they were made thoroughly aware that every member on the committee should have access to them if they need them.

Ms. Kilgannon: Would they be asked to supply pro and con positions for different issues to show the different points of view? Would that be something that would happen?

Mr. Sawyer: Usually that happens, yes. I'm sure they did at times, whatever the chairman and the members thought were necessary, it's purely up to them. We didn't set any criteria other than just that they were independent, that they were responsible mainly to the chairman but they also were responsible to help any of the members that requested it.

Now, I was a little worried that maybe they would overdo it, but it worked out fine. The chairmen were able to just take care of it.

Ms. Kilgannon: I was thinking, you can train staff and direct them to do certain things, but it would take some orientation for legislators to get used to this new service too.

Mr. Sawyer: Definitely.

Ms. Kilgannon: So did you have talks about how this staff was supposed to be used?

Mr. Sawyer: No, I don't think we did. We kind of just threw it out there. That was the job of the chairs. We assigned them a staff, but we didn't take the responsibility of training them. That was up to them.

Ms. Kilgannon: No, I mean training your people. Your caucus people. Your chairmen, how to use the staff or not misuse them – shall we say?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, most of the chairmen had experience being a chair of something – and so they had some experience directing staff. We didn't seem to run into that. It's a good question, though,

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, it's just such a new approach.

Mr. Sawyer: I was so worried about the members that maybe I forgot the staff. But it worked out fine.

Ms. Kilgannon: Now, did the non-partisan staff relate at all to the caucus staff? Or were they kept pretty separate.

Mr. Sawyer: No, no, no, they were working back and forth together. Everybody was so, I think, overjoyed with the idea that they were going to have a chance, a job they liked and everything so they were easily motivated to make it work. Didn't have to motivate them much, that's the beautiful part.

Ms. Kilgannon: I know that there were different levels of concern about that – some people really questioned whether you could have non-partisan staff and if they would maintain that independence and there was even a vote by Republican members to have some kind of constitutional amendment defining their role.

Mr. Sawyer: They were so worried that we were just setting up a power base, but we weren't. I have to say my intentions were pretty pure because I was so frustrated myself, and most of the other legislators were frustrated and that's why it went well. It was time to do it. It was long overdue.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did these suspicions die down after a while, after people saw how well it worked?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, I think it did. I think the Republican leadership once they realized that hey, we were trying to actually improve things, we didn't run into any problems.

Ms. Kilgannon: They realized it would benefit them too.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, yeah. It was a win/win situation for everyone, I thought.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did this new program cost quite a bit? Was it noticeable in your budget?

Mr. Sawyer: No. They said it was a good idea but it was going to be awfully costly. That's what the governor hit us on. But it ended up, it cost us less because the sessions went faster. After the initial session. In ten days we did what it took us a couple months to do before – basically. And so the work that was done, was used. It was much more efficient. I know (Chief Clerk) Dean Foster came to me and told me, "Hey, we're spending less money than we did."

Ms. Kilgannon: Did that surprise you?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I thought we might spend a little more, but I didn't think it would be that much money. And basically, we should have been paying the staff more, but they were so eager to get into something like this that we could get really good people a lot cheaper than on the outside.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well hopefully their wages grew [after a certain time].

Mr. Sawyer: Oh they did. I know (John) Bagnariol and (Duane) Berentson were both for increasing wages and I think they did it when they got in there.

I was so convinced that this thing was so long overdue but I thought it was going to have more problems than it ended up having. Everybody seemed to agree, once we got through the political wrangling, that it was a good thing. But after that they were also talking about how much power I had. (Small laugh).

Ms. Kilgannon: I was wondering, of the reforms you brought in – the continuing session, changing the committee structure, is this the most popular and easily-accepted piece right here? The creation of the support staff?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, yeah. I would think so.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, this is the piece that's lasted possibly the longest and been now institutionalized. It's hard to even imagine the Legislature without it.

Mr. Sawyer: No, I've talked to different people down there and they all say, "Well, Len, that really stuck!"

Ms. Kilgannon: How long into the session before they are coming to you and saying, "This is a good idea; this is working?"

Mr. Sawyer: I don't remember that ever! (laughs) No, they just didn't say anything much but you could tell they were happy because they were working with it. After about a month, we didn't get much criticism on most things because we had hired the people and they were basically satisfied with the hires. And we worked hard on it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, that's the stamp of approval then.

Mr. Sawyer: We probably should have thought more about the training programs. I was more interested in the quality of the people we were hiring. I guess I

just figured that would take care of it. But I probably should have had them.

Ms. Kilgannon: Many of those people that were there in the first year stayed for the rest of their careers. That's another kind of astonishing fact.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, that's why we looked for the most dedicated and qualified – and why we had to get the salaries up so dedicated people could stay. And they did do that later and I'm real pleased about that.

Ms. Kilgannon: Some people, after a while, became concerned that the staff were so institutionalized and so dedicated that they would overwhelm legislators – especially new legislators – with their knowledge and expertise. That they would become too dominate and people would rely on them, perhaps too much. Is that a different issue?

Mr. Sawyer: No, that was a real worry of mine because I don't like the tail wagging the dog. And that was real predominant in a lot of local governments and in full-time legislatures, which I always worried about. Would the members be strong enough people that they could say, "Hey, this is how I'm going to go do it, now you go show me what I have to do."

So it was a worry, but what the heck. Are you just going to sit back and not do anything just because the staff might take over? And that to me – I was very supportive of staff but I was also fine with reminding they that the legislators were making the decisions.

Ms. Kilgannon: Every once in a while, that fear that it's really the staff running the place kind of rises up still. Nobody can say exactly what they mean by that, but there's just that notion that staff, especially long-time, very expert staff, might overshadow the legislators.

Mr. Sawyer: I don't think we ran into that as much because we had a lot of new members and they were learning the ropes too. But I did think it might become more of a problem than I've heard that it is. They might grumble, but no system's perfect. I devised a perfect system, but then people got involved. (Chuckle)

Ms. Kilgannon: Is there anything more that you want to say about your creation of the Office of Program Research or the reorganization of the staff in general?

Mr. Sawyer: I had some real good people around me to help institute OPR. (Chief Clerk) Dean Foster was

very organizational-minded and he was very instrumental. And there were others, too. All I had to do was sit down and we'd plan out something, sketch out the framework of it, and then say, "Bring it back." And they'd put in the meat and potatoes and then we'd go over it again. We were all pretty experienced legislators so we knew what we needed.

Ms. Kilgannon: When I was thinking about this, I was just wondering if... There's a lot of little bubbles going on and if they kind of come together. I was also curious about if there'd be a group of legislators who wouldn't be bubbling at all. They would like the way it was, and how much of a drag or resistance they would be on change?

Mr. Sawyer: If I hadn't had Augie over there in the Senate, because he was strong, I don't know what would have happened. Because, yeah, there were those people. They had their little niches, you know. They had their interim committees and their staff and different things. That was the main thing I was worried about getting around. We didn't completely destroy that because we made them standing committees. And we made it so everybody had staff, not just a few. But the ones who had staff before, they were still staffed, so I wasn't crucifying them.

Ms. Kilgannon: You can't take away everything.

Mr. Sawyer: I didn't take much away from them except the Legislative Council, and I killed that.

Chapter 14

Replacing the Legislative Council

Ms. Kilgannon: That's a good segue into another reform you instituted while Speaker. Prior to 1973, the standing committees and committee staff existed only during legislative sessions, dissolving during each interim. The Legislature relied only on joint committees and the Legislative Council during the interim.

We've already talked about how you hired permanent, professional staff for the new standing committees, but we need to discuss what the Legislative Council was, how it worked, and why you wanted to replace it.

Mr. Sawyer: Right. The Legislative Council was a joint House-Senate committee that worked during the interim. The other committees, except Highways and Budget, didn't work at all between sessions.

Ms. Kilgannon: So before the big change, the Legislative Council was a group of members appointed by the Governor at the end of session. They might be on all these various committees during session, and then be on the Legislative Council during the interim. And the work of the Legislative Council would not necessarily have any relationship to the committees that the members would have been on, or would be on the next session?

Mr. Sawyer: Many times, yes. It (the Legislative Council) wasn't tied in.

Ms. Kilgannon: Right, there's no continuity. Now, you weren't appointed to the Legislative Council?

Mr. Sawyer: I never even applied because I just didn't have time.

Ms. Kilgannon: Those appointments were also kind of plums for senior members, right?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. They were. The Council was able to take junkets and stuff – do a lot of travelling.

Ms. Kilgannon: There was some discussion from time to time about the makeup of the Legislative Council. A sort of jockeying back and forth between the House

and the Senate because the House actually had eleven members and the Senate ten. And the president of the Council was always the Speaker of the House, so the House has this built in edge.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, sure! (Chuckle)

Ms. Kilgannon: Should be that way, huh, as a loyal House member? (Laugh) Eventually, they settled their differences. Even if you weren't on it, did you think it played an important role in studying issues and putting forth legislation?

Mr. Sawyer: Theoretically, it should have been good, but it didn't work. It doesn't work. You can argue with the theory and all that, but you can't argue with the results.

Ms. Kilgannon: So you say it doesn't work, I...

Mr. Sawyer: They would go out and study and study and study and study and study, and very seldom pass anything.

Ms. Kilgannon: So the bills that would then come through the next session by Legislative Council request, they wouldn't necessarily receive better attention than any other kind of bills?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, maybe with some people, but I never was particularly impressed by them.

Ms. Kilgannon: It's not something that really jumped off the page for you. I don't know if anyone has ever made a study of all those bills and what percentage passed as compared to other bills or what their track record was.

Mr. Sawyer: I don't remember any study. But I know that when I was running (for Speaker), I wanted to get rid of the Legislative Council because it wasn't doing the job, and nobody argued too much. It was a good point when I was talking to legislators anyway. I didn't talk to the people outside. When you're running for the speakership or something you talk to the legislators.

Ms. Kilgannon: That's an insider thing. Other people wouldn't necessarily know about it. So the Council had hearings and all that, but could they actually pass bills?

Mr. Sawyer: They couldn't, no.

Ms. Kilgannon: They could propose bills, though? Right?

Mr. Sawyer: They were an advisory committee; they could propose them just like anybody else.

Ms. Kilgannon: And their record of passing those bills wasn't so good?

Mr. Sawyer: No. I don't know why.

Ms. Kilgannon: So maybe they did all that work, and it didn't actually go anywhere?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, some of it did. I'm not saying it was all bad. But the standing committees proved to be so much more effective, you know. They don't have to start and stop. And if something comes up and somebody proposes something, you say, "Hey, I'm not sure on that, let's set that over." Well, you set it over and work on it again – and with the same group of people.

Ms. Kilgannon: Not starting over.

Mr. Sawyer: You don't have to run back and have the hearings over again; if you do, you just do the part you are concerned about. It's a time saver and much more effective.

Ms. Kilgannon: Ever since, oh I don't know, at least the 1940s, there had been a Legislative Council of varying degrees of effectiveness. Some years, it was somewhat controversial.

Once, the Republicans seized the Legislative Council as an investigative arm and they were going to investigate various activities of the governor, the Democratic governor.

Mr. Sawyer: I remember something about that. Didn't get very far.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, he, Governor Rosellini, for different reasons that he's talked about over the years, vetoed the appropriation for the Council and stopped it right there. In his veto message, he said it was an inappropriate use of the Council, but that primarily it was a budget measure that he needed to save money and that was where he was going to save it.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, we were tight that session, come to think of it.

Ms. Kilgannon: So there was no Legislative Council that year. The whole issue of who's going to be appointed, who's going to serve; they tried to meet but they had no per diems, they had no money for staff – the whole thing kind of fell apart. Was that a loss? Or was that a problem?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, as I said, I was never very active

at all in the Legislative Council. I had no particular interest in it because they made these studies and all that and then so many of them just died. And that's one of the things that I tried to correct. I wanted the same people acting on legislation (during session) as the ones studying in the interim – and it worked a lot better. But I was never active in the Legislative Council nor had any desire about it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, okay. For some people, I think it probably was very important and other people less so.

Mr. Sawyer: And I'm not saying that I shouldn't have been more interested in it but it just – I've never seen it be all that effective.

Ms. Kilgannon: So the fact that the Legislative Council could be shut down, is that an inherent weakness of that approach to interim studies?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I guess it would be. I mean if they're not doing a job, why should you keep them going? You know, that's my pragmatic reaction. And there wasn't a heck of a lot of flack when he did it. I remember everybody made big deal, but then it all settled down and I don't remember even hearing anything more about it. In fact, I had forgotten about it until you mentioned it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Was it more a political outcry then a loss of information for the Legislature?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, it was as far as I was concerned, because I never got a lot of information out of it.

Ms. Kilgannon: So did you get kind of a chuckle when the governor vetoed this or you were somewhat indifferent?

Mr. Sawyer: I was pretty much indifferent because I wasn't aware of the consequences on it. I should have probably, as a member of the Legislature, been more aware of what they were doing but I was so darned busy.

Ms. Kilgannon: Now the Legislative Council is one thing and then the Interim Committees are another vehicle. I know, say in the early '60s, there was a really big one on reorganizing education and thinking about education issues. Were those kinds of studies a little more useful?

Mr. Sawyer: There's no general rule on them. Some of them were – it all depended on the people involved in the thing and how much respect and so forth they had

in the Legislature. Some of them did get things done.

On the Highway Committee, I think they did a lot because they had good staff and the same staff was working right during the interim [as] during the legislative session. And they usually had pretty strong leaders and basically it's the same person as chairman and the same subject matter.

Ms. Kilgannon: Would it be a way of building expertise?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh yeah. I don't know. I didn't even get on very many – I really enjoyed the World's Fair Commission and yes, I gained a lot of information and expertise. If they were all as good as the World's Fair Commission then I would say, "Yeah, it would have been good."

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, I guess it's sort of "a grain of salt" about some of these things. About how to view them? We talked a little bit about the Legislative Council. Maybe we should finish with that, before we go onto the next thing.

Mr. Sawyer: Okay.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you abolish the Legislative Council?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. And we abolished all interim committees except Highways. Budget too..

Ms. Kilgannon: Were people upset? Or did they understand this change?

Mr. Sawyer: I thought they would be more upset than they were. I think everybody was kind of tired of the Legislative Council.

Ms. Kilgannon: They had some staff. Did you absorb that staff into the regular staff?

Mr. Sawyer: Some.

Ms. Kilgannon: So at least those people found a place?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, there were plenty of jobs. I don't know about the director, what he did. But I'm sure he landed some place. One guy went to work for the counties, no, two of them went to work for the counties – and different people like that because they knew the process. They were valuable employees.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well the Legislative Council had been around since – I think it's 1947.

Mr. Sawyer: They were pretty independent. They weren't partisan and that's the one thing that was very

good about them. They had a pretty good mix that way. And their staff – I don't know – I never worked with their staff.

Ms. Kilgannon: No, you never wanted to be on the Legislative Council.

Mr. Sawyer: No, no a guy had to make a living. That's one reason I was so sensitive about making the standing committees take up any more of their time than I had to to make this work.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, you have the same issue for yourself. It's interesting – if you look at these big changes – previous to 1947 – you really had nothing, no staff and then there was a need to have more information and so the Legislative Council was invented and there was some staff there and there was some help there. And then by now, 1973, you're ready for the next phase, I guess.

Mr. Sawyer: I don't know why people weren't as cognizant of the value of information, or maybe they were but that really was bugging me because I hate to make decisions – by then I was making a lot of them.

Ms. Kilgannon: Of course, some people think that you can have all the information in the world, but the decisions are still political.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, that's true. But you can make lot less mistakes, if you know what you're doing. You know emotions are going to get in the thing – but at least you've got a chance then. You don't have any chance at all if you don't know anything.

Ms. Kilgannon: True.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, fifty-fifty, maybe.... (laughs)

Ms. Kilgannon: But that's sheer luck and that's a little nerve wracking to think about. Were legislators – did they – this is a new way for them to work. Did you have to kind of retrain them to use information of this magnitude?

Mr. Sawyer: I think they were all hungry for it. People are down there – they're not down there for the money – maybe their egos a little bit, but they're down there because they want to do something. And we gave them the wherewithal to do things, that's all.

Ms. Kilgannon: Are there any stories of legislators coming to you – you know after this change and say-

ing, “today I made a better decision on this bill, or this issue, thanks to this system you brought in.”

Mr. Sawyer: No, not right at the time. It was so controversial, but I got a lot of that afterwards.

Ms. Kilgannon: So there was some recognition that you had transformed the process?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, right even during the process, they ran a poll – somebody polled the legislators – and seventy percent of them said they thought it was good, and that amazed me! And so we had people – about five or six senators were trying to sandbag it and everything, but overall that’s not many to lose. So, really I think the legislators were hungry for a change – I just happened to put it out there – I don’t why – and so I think it was the time.

Politics is all timing. O’Brien taught me that. I mean, for John, he’s great in timing. What you can’t do today, you can do tomorrow, and what you can do today sometimes, you can’t do tomorrow. So you have to know when you can – I think we just arrived at the right time. And we had a good program.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, there’s lots of [facets] to it and it seemed like you got most of it going and I’m not so sure if it would have worked if it had been more piecemeal.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I don’t think so either. Maybe. It could have gone together but it would have gone so slowly and they wouldn’t have the effect of the thing. I said, it wasn’t an overnight venture. I started thinking about this probably for ten years.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, pieces falling into place.

Mr. Sawyer: When I sat down with (Dean) Morgan after I got nominated for speaker, I met with him and said, “Dean, I want to do something for the legislative process.” And he said, “What do you want to do?”

So I took a napkin and I wrote out the legislative process on the napkin. And I gave it to him. And a month later he came back with all these diagrams -

Ms. Kilgannon: It was more elaborate?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, yeah. And another month later we made a presentation to the press and we had the whole thing. But to me it was easy to explain to somebody that had been there because everybody knew it; outside

people have a hard time really understanding how you have to get something like that done. They can tell you the way you should be doing it, but then you get into the practicalities of how. You’re better to have been there and got burned and everything else.

Ms. Kilgannon: So did you have a kind of running list of things that bugged you over the years that didn’t work well?

Mr. Sawyer: I had been in the Rules part of it – in the administrative side for so long and then the little bit we did in the Highway committee went over so well that I started thinking – and that gets dangerous sometimes. You just start thinking – and it all fell in place – it was just natural, to me – when I got done. And it wasn’t any great brain storm, it was just something should have been done a long time ago.

I remember talking to Augie – back in the summer and I said, “Are you going to run for Senate leader?” And he said, “Well, everybody wants me to.” I said, “Well, I’m going to encourage you to do it because, I’ve got this...” I just told him briefly, and he looked at me and said, “Yeah, [that’d] be kind of fun” – type of attitude. So that’s the only time I talked to him, that one time until – you know we both got elected and we had to sit down and I laid it out to him. He knew exactly what I was talking about.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, he’d been there.

Mr. Sawyer: So it was easy. It was just so obvious that we should be doing it, in my mind.

Chapter 15

Making the Legislature An Equal Branch of Government

Ms. Kilgannon: Professionalizing the staff, abolishing the Legislative Council and creating standing committees with year-round staff – these are parts of your reform program. Another one was new ways to track information, particularly budget information, using computers. That’s what Rep. Charette was really referring to in his speech, right? Your plan to modernize the legislature – to put it on more equal footing, if you will, with the Executive Branch?

Mr. Sawyer: That’s something I was always working on, to some degree, and we were able to really make progress when I became Speaker.

Ms. Kilgannon: Let’s talk a bit about why you felt change was needed. You have said that there weren’t as many committee hearings in your early days as say, now. That there weren’t as many ways for the public to know what was going on.

Mr. Sawyer: Right. We opened that up a lot in my term as Speaker.

Ms. Kilgannon: Maybe you could draw a picture of what it was like, say, in 1959. Where’s the public in legislation? I’ve heard in other places that hearings were not well publicized, so if you cared about a piece of legislation you might never know when the hearing was because there was no mechanism.

Mr. Sawyer: Lobbyists knew because they were down there working.

Ms. Kilgannon: But the general public would be pretty much shut out.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes.

Ms. Kilgannon: Were lobbyists at this point still your main source of information for things?

Mr. Sawyer: No. The governor. The executive branch. And that became a real sticking point for me, early on

and especially when I ran for Speaker. I said, “I don’t want any more Pablum. I want raw vegetables in my information.”

Ms. Kilgannon: You’re going for the broccoli.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. Because all we ever got... The Governor’s staff took all the information, digested it, and then spit out to us what they wanted us to hear. It was so unfair. My crusade was to give the Legislature equal access to information with the executive branch. And I worked hard at that.

Ms. Kilgannon: That is a perfect segue into what I want to talk about next. One of the big things that happened earlier in your career is the creation of the budget and accounting act. We should back up a bit and explore how budgets were written before the budget and accounting act of 1959, in which I gather—and I want you to chime in here—agencies would submit their lists of appropriations they wanted.

Mr. Sawyer: To the governor. And he would have a big, thick book. But there wouldn’t be really any way for anybody else to check the details. Then, year after year, agencies would come back and ask for more money because maybe they didn’t guess right.

But there would still be no way of checking on what was happening. Even the governor, let alone the Legislature, could say, well, I want you to do x and y, but still have no way to know whether they really were doing it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Whether the money was going where the policy makers wanted it to go?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. That’s what LEAP (the Legislative Evaluation and Accountability Program) fixed.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes. But we’ll get to that in a little bit.

Mr. Sawyer: I wasn’t particularly involved in the Budget and Accounting Act because I was just a member of the committee, but I was for it, and that’s all I can say.

Ms. Kilgannon: It was highly contested for lots of reasons, I guess. It was an executive request bill sponsored by Representative Mardesich and Representative Edwards. One of Rosellini’s big issues – House Bill 373.

Mr. Sawyer: That’s right. That was one of his programs.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes. The bill went into committee and had lots of amendments. It was transformed by amendments over and over. Hotly debated. This is one of those really interesting bills where everybody’s just

all over the map. It does come up on the floor and is read section by section under a special order of business, and Mr. Mardesich puts forth a lot of amendments. He's the chief mover on this bill, but he's got many amendments, and most of his passed.

There's people trying to postpone the discussion, but he pushes it along. Finally, it gets to the final passage and you're not present at this point. You're doing something else, so I don't know—there's no record here—how you feel about this bill, but you're not present. There's a couple times where there's critical votes on this bill and you're doing something else. Then it goes to the Senate and they amend it.

Mr. Sawyer: I don't remember that particular vote, but I had such great respect for Augie that if he'd needed my vote, he'd have had it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Perhaps one of the things that was an issue in this bill is that it contained a provision for balanced budgets. To mandate them. It's an interesting thing to note that it wasn't there before. How did you feel about that?

Mr. Sawyer: I thought it was a good idea, but I know I'd have reservations as to how you'd do it because it's a fictitious demand, since we didn't have the real numbers. How do you tell? You're working with just estimates and so forth, so really, it's throwing smoke.

Ms. Kilgannon: So you're voting, but you're crossing your fingers under the table.

Mr. Sawyer: All we were dealing off was the information the governor was giving us, whether it was Rosellini or whatever governor. So that's why I had reservations about it.

Ms. Kilgannon: It gives the governor quite a tool, but it does nothing for the Legislature. The Republicans had wanted a constitutional amendment mandating a balanced budget, but that, of course, with their small minority, didn't go anywhere. Would that have made that even more rigid?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. That was just plain bullshit, really.

Ms. Kilgannon: Was that grandstanding?

Mr. Sawyer: They thought it was a good issue.

Ms. Kilgannon: It sounds responsible.

Mr. Sawyer: It is responsible. But then you've got to

figure out how you're going to make it work. With the tools we had at hand at that time, even the governor didn't have enough information to do that.

Ms. Kilgannon: Kind of a premature idea here?

Mr. Sawyer: They used to talk about it, "Hey, we're going to balance this. Oh, yeah. But I want my project in there and I don't want to vote for any more taxes, now you guys go figure it out." (chuckles)

Ms. Kilgannon: It does strengthen the governor's hand, somewhat, though? Does the Legislature's position in comparison weaken in that sense, or is it that you're still kind of stumbling along? As the executive strengthens and gets more totals, what happens to the Legislature?

Mr. Sawyer: The Legislature wasn't getting more tools, so it made the gap bigger.

Ms. Kilgannon: One thing I was interested in, John O'Brien is really noted for being a legislator's legislator. He's very involved in the institution itself. I was wondering if he would start to look at the Legislature and say hey, we need something here to bolster our position?

Mr. Sawyer: I don't remember John in that role. He went to all the legislative national programs and the group was pretty progressive, but I don't remember if we ever got that far in discussions. John was great for facilities. He's the one who came in with the voting machines.

Ms. Kilgannon: So he's looking at some things, but maybe not the informational part?

Mr. Sawyer: No. I don't think so.

Ms. Kilgannon: What about lobbyists? A lot of legislators seemed to get a great deal of their information from lobbyists because they had ways of getting it that legislators didn't. The governor had his sources and he's getting some more resources.

Mr. Sawyer: And, he has good staff, another thing we don't have yet. Basically, one of the keys of being a good legislator then was to study the lobbyists and find out which ones are dependable. The lobbyists were a main source of information. Now, a good lobbyist wouldn't volunteer some stuff, but they would never lie to you when you hit them with a direct question. We knew how weak we were in that area, so yes, we did rely on them and they had a lot of influence.

Ms. Kilgannon: Sure. You'd have to treat that carefully.

Mr. Sawyer: I'd say on the whole they were pretty honest. Every bit as honest as the directors and stuff.

Ms. Kilgannon: When these measures went through, how long before discussions about strengthening the Legislature started to come up? Would you, as you'd be passing these and giving the governor more tools, start a discussion about this being something that you might need for yourselves as well, or does that come a little later?

Mr. Sawyer: I never felt that the governor shouldn't have all the tools he could have. I wanted the government to have good, solid information, because we had all kinds of people giving us information. But where I really got in a battle with the governor was when I said, "That's fine. You can have the information, but we want our source too."

Ms. Kilgannon: I was wondering at what point that would occur to people?

Mr. Sawyer: That was starting to bubble in me even the first time I ran for Speaker. That was one of the things, but it wasn't as defined and I didn't have a chance then to refine it.

Ms. Kilgannon: It's even new for the executive branch. So I was just wondering how long it would take before you'd think, well, he's really strengthening the executive, what about us? And you might feel even more out of balance.

Mr. Sawyer: It was a gradual thing. When I was building this plan and getting people to support me for Speaker and stuff, I would say, "Look at the governor. He's got this. He's got that."

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes. That's the kind of thing I was wondering. When does that start to be an issue, and how appealing was that?

Mr. Sawyer: I really started hard on it in '72, but I didn't...we didn't have computers.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes. First you need the tools.

Mr. Sawyer: I mean, I started this in the '60s when I first ran, but then all of a sudden there was the computer and the tools and then I got a staff member who knew how to do it.

Ms. Kilgannon: All the pieces.

Mr. Sawyer: I knew what I wanted to do, but I had to have people to help me do it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Of course. I was wondering if somewhere in here if there starts to be a recognizable younger forward-looking group? Not necessarily younger in age, but a different perspective. Looking at strengthening the Legislature, and if there's a sort of old guard that says, no, no, we've done it this way for years, we're fine? If there starts to be a little bit of that?

Mr. Sawyer: That's the position that O'Brien got into, he was the old guard. He was trying different things like...

Ms. Kilgannon: He's considered to be in both camps, depending on how you look at it.

Mr. Sawyer: The Legislature was in such bad shape that he couldn't do it all at once. If I have any criticism for what we did when I was Speaker, maybe we did too much. I was worried about that but it didn't seem to hurt us too much.

But there were all kinds of people who did little bits around the issue for years. I think what I did was I figured out what I thought was really wrong and I focused on that. I think it was a more significant step than the rest of them.

Ms. Kilgannon: It certainly is credited that way.

Mr. Sawyer: Because I feel that if I've got the information you're going to have a hard time beating me. That was my whole theory and that's what I was preaching to our members. I think they felt it but nobody was stating it, so it was a wide open field for me.

Ms. Kilgannon: What about the fiscal note issue?

Mr. Sawyer: Well the fiscal notes. The trouble is that we as legislators had no way of checking them.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, yeah that's one thing I wanted to ask you. Did you even have the means of finding fiscal notes?

Mr. Sawyer: No, no way. We had to take whatever the department told us was the fiscal note. It was good in that it made the department come out and say what it was, so legislative-wise it was good cover, but it was a real burden on us that we couldn't do.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, it would certainly be an issue. Do you remember – it was certainly possible to pass

bills without addressing the costs, but did at least some legislators bring that up? You know – say when you’ve got different programs going – you’d want some kind of ballpark number?

Mr. Sawyer: Nobody had real hard figures. That’s one of the things we really tried to address in my plan – it was all directed towards a lot of those things.

Ms. Kilgannon: I would think that budget building would be quite a headache with new programs coming on with no numbers attached.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, a favorite trick of the departments and they’re probably still doing it – you’d give them a budget and that budget was based on man hours, right? So what they would do, they would save those man hours until the last six months and then they would go out and hire a bunch of people. Then when they came back to the Legislature, they just wanted to stay where they’re at.

Ms. Kilgannon: Oh, so always a little bit up.

Mr. Sawyer: Not a little bit. It was really quite large. And that was one sneaky little thing that went on – oh, probably the Democrats are doing it too, I don’t really know. But I do know that the executive branch was – those are some of the things we were screaming about.

Later on when we set up our computer system and our own budget, we fixed it so that the expenditure rate in the budget, much they were authorized and how much they were spending were drawn together so all we had to do was look at it and we could tell. We could call on our director and say, “Hey, you’re not spending your money, why not? Don’t you need those programs?”

Ms. Kilgannon: So it was turned around the other way?

Mr. Sawyer: If you weren’t spending your money, you didn’t need it. Not that you were saving it to get a new program going that wasn’t authorized. See a simple little thing like that you think, that’s the way it should be done, but we didn’t have the means to do anything like that. Computers help a lot. They can cause a lot of headaches but they do help a lot.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well they help you track data in a way that wasn’t so easy before.

Mr. Sawyer: To track was impossible for us before that. That’s when I said to (staff) Dean Morgan, “There are

these new computers now; there must be some way we can use those.” And he said, “Well, let me look into it.” And then he came back and he said, “Well, I think we could do something.” And I said, “Well, how?”

And he told me that there were two young guys at Boeing doing research for the space program who had developed this computer idea, and they were using it to do all this real complex work for space.

And so we hired one of those guys, and we told him, “We want it simple, simplified. All we want is management tools.” We don’t need administration tools, that’s somebody else’s thing and we’re supposed to keep our nose out of it anyway. And Dean Morgan worked with him because he knew what we needed too.

We knew what we needed and we didn’t want anything but what we needed.

Ms. Kilgannon: How much did it cost?

Mr. Sawyer: Around \$250,000. And we saved that much and more and more and more in the first year of the budget. I’ve got some figures on that, I’ll remember how much money we saved on the budget just because we knew what we were doing. See this program identified the money that would be federal money, the money that would be state money, the money that would be local money on any program. And all of a sudden, and like Bud Shinpoch said in one of his speeches, “We found out how to spend money and at the same time save it.”

I always remember the time after we established LEAP I appeared in front a Seattle power group one morning, and I demonstrated where the University of Washington was spending their money. Everybody is kind of amazed and I said, “Well, why don’t you come on down (to Olympia) and we’ll show you what this thing will do.” So a bunch show up, including the Boeing lobbyist, and he says, “Where did you get those programs from?” I said, “We got it from your company sir.” “What?” “Yeah from the aerospace.” You know, he didn’t say anything more.

Chapter 16

Founding the Legislative Evaluation and Accountability Program



Speaker Sawyer and Dean Morgan.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well let's walk through the development of LEAP now. You and Dean Morgan and other people got your heads together and you worked out these computer programs and you put them in a format that legislators could understand. The materials you've shown me are very visual, very user-friendly: pie charts, grids, graphs of one kind or another. So when you first pulled this material together and started using it in the Legislature, how did it work?

Mr. Sawyer: First thing we said to legislators was, "Hey, you don't have to be an expert." We told them, "As far as the budget is concerned, you have complete access to that."

Ms. Kilgannon: How would they go about getting access?

Mr. Sawyer: Just go over to – we had this room. And the guy there would pump it in and he'd do it so fast. And they weren't used to using it that much anyway. So it wasn't any overload. But anyway, once when I was back home, I happened to run into a freshman legislator and I said, "Say, you ever use LEAP?" "Yeah, yeah," he said. I said, "Well, what did you think of it?" And he said, "Great! I had a constituent come up and ask me a question and I didn't know the answer, so we went over there and –"

Ms. Kilgannon: Bang!

Mr. Sawyer: Bang! The guy said, "We came out and the constituent walked off knowing what it was all about, and I did too." (Laughs) And I said to myself, here I am up talking about appropriations and I never served on the Appropriation Committee. So I'm the type of legislator that needs this!

Ms. Kilgannon: So it was well-received, then?

Mr. Sawyer: It was one of those kind of things that when we presented it to other legislators, they were like – I don't know – excited. I guess part of it was I was so sold on it, I think basically because I lived for twenty-two years, you know, pretty much in the dark. And here's the thing – every legislator had that problem! So I think I got all kinds of compliments from other people in regards to the presentation.

Ms. Kilgannon: You shared their experiences.

Mr. Sawyer: And not just in our state. When I was talking to legislators from other states, they jumped on it, too. One good thing was, if I was in an area I could always get in the speaker's office. And so, like in California, I went to the speaker and at first he didn't think much of it. But once he got into it a little bit, he ended up sending his group to see our presentation.

Ms. Kilgannon: So at first you tried it in Washington State and worked out some of the bugs and you saw how much potential it had, and then I understand that you went around the country to different states?

Mr. Sawyer: It all started outside the state with my presentation in New York.

Ms. Kilgannon: Was that the governor's conference or the legislative conference?

Mr. Sawyer: It was in the late spring or early summer of '75. So we were so all engrossed in it, I was anyway. I was on a joint presentation with the Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives at a thing in Philadelphia. And I talked to him a little bit about the program and got him excited too, and so then we had another governmental affairs meeting in New York.

We talked about the things we all worry about and in that program was the budgetary discussion. I kind of stole the show on them because my presentation was so visual. They all had reams and reams of paper – they had to go through all this paper. We didn't have time for that. (Laugh) Our program gave us better information than the governor had at that time. Or even his directors, as far as that goes, because they weren't working with the daily numbers and we could get to those numbers any time we wanted.

Ms. Kilgannon: You were saying earlier that people had this data but they didn't have ways to connect the data and get these pictures. They had, you know, the street data over here and then over here and then over here and you couldn't put it together. The programs are rather isolated, shall we say.

Mr. Sawyer: Right. The means of being able to connect all those dots so quickly was developed by Boeing in their space program, if you can believe it, because they had to do multiple programming all the time and they didn't want to have to go back and program each separate thing. So they developed this -

Ms. Kilgannon: Integrated material -

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah. In the brochure we used to put out it was a big box with a hundred little boxes on it and what it's saying is that each one of those boxes were interrelated, we could go back and forth between them. So all you had to do was, just ask the machine a question and it would go to the proper boxes and put it altogether for you and you'd get it back. You didn't have to go through reams of paper. And, since we're all using the same data, we can really argue apples against apples.

Now, the other thing that was really great – we had some salary problems. Well, we didn't know what effect we were having on all the various salary things. The computer laid out the percentages for us, told us exactly what was happening. So you knew when you were giving such and such a group of people a raise, what it meant. And of course, raises are tied to pensions, they're tied to all kinds of benefits.

Ms. Kilgannon: The ripple effect.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes, it is.

Ms. Kilgannon: So that's the other piece? It's not just what you want to do, but then what happens afterwards?

Where the money goes?

Mr. Sawyer: That was the second thing.

Ms. Kilgannon: That's what the A stands for in LEAP, isn't it? Accountability?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, that's right.

Ms. Kilgannon: So does that mean for the first time the Legislature knew what's happening at the agency levels?

Mr. Sawyer: We can't truly see it all, but we can do a lot better job than we were before. Because when you're dealing with 4,000 agencies and all the programs they have and all the personnel they have and so forth, yeah, we were doing a hundred percent better job – there wasn't even a comparison. We were capable of it. I left in '76 so I don't know what they did after that but the capabilities were there that they could really do the job and I hope they did.

Ms. Kilgannon: It sounds like were you able to rival the executive branch all of a sudden? Get right down to the bricks and mortar?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, we had the same information he had and we think it was in better shape to use. They were still using reams of paper, and whereas they had the staff to go through it, we didn't.

I think we had – in our mind, we had better. They had reams and reams of paper that they could dig out all this same information from, but it took them days to find what we did in minutes.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did they adopt your system after a while?

Mr. Sawyer: I don't know. We didn't particularly care if they did or not; it was their problem. But that would have happened after I left.

Ms. Kilgannon: I was just wondering how you got the word out to your own legislators. I mean you're going around the country giving presentations, but what did you do in Washington State to teach people how to use the system's potential?

Mr. Sawyer: Baggie and Bud (Shinpoch) were doing most of that and yeah, I was bragging about it all the time so what the heck, we were getting the word out.

Ms. Kilgannon: And it was a bipartisan thing, everybody could use this tool?

Mr. Sawyer: I used to tease them, “we even let the minority come in and use this.” But it was for all legislators. How much they used it, I can’t tell you but I know some people were using it. I know Baggie and Bud (Shinpoch) used it extensively and I used it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well certainly it would spread – the influence of it, I mean. people would be in committee meetings, knowing good material would be coming out.

Mr. Sawyer: It didn’t cure all our legislative problems but it sure helped in the budget and the budget’s probably the number one matter that the Legislature takes up. We moved the budget faster too because people knew what was in it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Always when a change comes in, there’s the people that get onboard and understand it and then there’s the people who resist. How did you handle the latter?

Mr. Sawyer: I didn’t do anything. I didn’t have time. That might be part of my reason to say I wasn’t communicating, but we were doing so much in this and I was completely engrossed with the whole legislative reform package and this was just one of them. We talked about these things in caucus all the time.

Ms. Kilgannon: So was your enthusiasm contagious in the caucus?

Mr. Sawyer: I think so. Yeah, I’m sure Baggie and Bud were excited – hell, it made their job so much more meaningful.

Ms. Kilgannon: When the budget came out, did you feel it was a better document? A better – a truer picture of the state and the economy?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh yeah. I took one look at that thing and I was no budgetary person, I knew more about taxes, you know; Buster Brouillet, my seat mate, did the budgetary thing. And I just took one look at that and, bang, it’s just a red light flashing at me. It helped me and I’m no genius.

Anybody that ever wanted to sit down and use that thing, could. And if they don’t want to use it, all you can do is put the water there and if the horse doesn’t want to go to water, you can only do so much. But it definitely made a lot of people excited that we were down there working hard.

Ms. Kilgannon: Now LEAP stands Legislative Evalu-

ation and Accountability Program, is that right? So you could evaluate, in other words, analyze programs? And check the legislative intent was followed?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes. In the budget, in fact, we were doing more of that, directing agencies to do this, this and this with the money.

Ms. Kilgannon: So with this new accountability, we hear so much of that word now in legislative circles, you could track if that really happened? We told you to do x and y did you really do it? Did that change the way people legislated?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I don’t know. We put out the ’75 budget and we worked on the ’76 budget and so forth, but then I left. I hope it turned out that way. That’s the way it was intended and if it wasn’t used that way, I criticize the legislative body for not making it happen. Because I can’t think of anything that could be more helpful than information.

Now, I’m talking thirty years ago when there was one big computer and that was Boeing’s and we all were running off of it. That was just the infancy, and I’m sure the Legislature now has got more tools than that down there. And they can run their own database. Compared to modern day, what we did probably isn’t that revolutionary, but it was then. After everything was going and we were getting such fantastic responses, of course, various companies were interested in it. And we weren’t interested in the profit basics of it, we wanted it someplace that we could envision the program being extended out to municipalities and counties. And you could tie it all in together, the state, and the counties, the municipalities with this kind of management tool.

I’m not saying that we would be running it, we would just have the facilities available for them. And so we thought that was a good thing. When we first started, we were thinking about a board of directors of some sort. Well, we’ve got to get this businessman and that and I don’t know, and some prominent legislator said, “No, you should have a board of political people to run that because it’s for political purposes.” But it wasn’t really necessary, it’s just that we were getting such fantastic results out there. People so eager for it and we didn’t want it commercialized too much.

Ms. Kilgannon: It’s always interesting that the federal government is so far behind what the states are doing,

even though they probably have much greater resources available to them.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, they do, but they also have much bigger problems.

Ms. Kilgannon: So the states really were the laboratories for this.

Mr. Sawyer: They were.

Ms. Kilgannon: And eventually the federal government caught up?

Mr. Sawyer: On a lot of things.

Ms. Kilgannon: Progress can be slow.

Mr. Sawyer: Because you've got people involved. It would be easy to be efficient if you didn't have people involved. I was reading one of my old speeches recently and I joked that Democracies are a very slow and plodding at times. In a dictatorship or something, you could put ships at sea more quickly and they might be faster and all, but when they hit an iceberg, they'd sink. The raft that we float around on has never sunk, but you get your feet wet a lot.

Ms. Kilgannon: Interesting analogy.

Mr. Sawyer: See that's why I always figured that politics is the art of the possible. You don't often get what you completely want, but it's the art of the possible. You do what you can, when you can.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well certainly having information impacted what you could do, getting back to LEAP.

Mr. Sawyer: Sure seemed like it to us.

Ms. Kilgannon: I think legislators now would be surprised at how in the dark you were back then.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, yeah, our younger people coming in, they had no idea – even in the primitive form LEAP was then. Nowadays, they couldn't even imagine.

Ms. Kilgannon: There are comments from you in a letter that you sent to Congress, talking about LEAP, while you're still creating it. You envision it as a body, an agency, shall we say, and I quote, "... that will assist the Legislature with their development and efficient, effective and sensitive ways in which to monitor government system changes within its jurisdiction and control."

So this was a big step in your quest to make the legislative branch equal to the governor?

Mr. Sawyer: To the executive branch, definitely. Equal branches of government.

Ms. Kilgannon: When John O'Brien seconded your nomination for your second term as Speaker (in 1974,) he said that you have "envisioned a new time of the legislature as something that will do us all well in the years to come because we all well know," (like you said) "that our legislative processes at the present time, are a little bit outmoded. We have seen a proliferation of our legislative interim committees and so it is time to streamline and strengthen the legislative branch of this great state of Washington. And through this strengthening and accrument of our legislative processes, the legislative branch will attain an equal status with our executive and judicial branches of state government."

Mr. Sawyer: I didn't know all that.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, they (nominating speakers) clearly understand your hopes and dreams. And O'Brien brings in another level; he says, "I know the National Conference of State Legislative Leaders is dedicated to the process of strengthening our legislative process. Mr. Sawyer in his wisdom, has seen fit to take the initiative and attempt to do something about it."

So, he recognizes that you are part of this reform movement, and that you're in the forefront of it.

Mr. Sawyer: Good thing I wasn't probably listening to those speeches; my head would be.... (laugh) Our whole caucus was – I don't know whether I sold them – but the idea was so solid, people then in the Legislature knew every one of those things needed to be done.

Ms. Kilgannon: There's certainly a sense of "we're going to take over this."

Mr. Sawyer: And you know, we were right. That caucus – it was really fun to represent a caucus like that. We'd been very effective as a minority – you know we got lucky there – because of a lot of things and we were pretty effective. So they believed and it was easy to lead them.

I read some of those articles now and they say I'm "powerful here" – "powerful there" – well, I wasn't powerful, my caucus was powerful. Because why? We had a goal, we had a program, and we were willing to

work for it. And that's tough to beat. And so it wasn't me, it was the caucus.

Chapter 17

Controversies Arise

Ms. Kilgannon: As Speaker, you stayed involved in campaign issues. You had something that you called a “Speaker’s Fun Night” – to help raise money. You planned to stay active in that area. Can you tell me about that? Did you start that right away?

Mr. Sawyer: I think I did, yeah. It was more of a spur of the moment thing to start with, you know. But anyway, I never handed out money when I was doing it. I put people together; I thought we needed some money. And the caucus, I could have done it through the caucus but this way I had more control over the expenditures. So I went ahead and we had a “Speaker’s Fun Night” and we just had a ball.

Ms. Kilgannon: So tell me what it looked like. What does a “Speaker’s Fun Night” look like?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I had some entertainment come down.

Ms. Kilgannon: Like singing?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah. I had Gil Conte who was the number one entertainment in Seattle at that time.

Ms. Kilgannon: Like a nightclub type of thing?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah. And he brought his little group down. I met Gil when he started at the World’s Fair and I was working there right close to him. And he’s such a fun little guy, you know, you’ve got to love Gil Conte. So we used him and we danced and it was just basically a relaxed evening and we invited people to come in and donate.

Ms. Kilgannon: Where did you hold it?

Mr. Sawyer: We held it, I don’t know – I think at the Evergreen.

Ms. Kilgannon: The ballroom?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah. We just had a lot of fun. It was a fun night. And we did pretty well on the money. A lot of the Seattle people were mad because they were



*Speaker Leonard Sawyer and
newly-elected Representative Helen Sommers*

afraid they weren’t going to get any of it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Why would they think that?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I don’t know, they were always the ones – five or six people that were edgy with the thing.

Ms. Kilgannon: Is it a sort of old rivalry between Pierce and King County?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, I don’t know what it was. I think we just thought differently. But I guess the main thing is they thought I should do it in the caucus’s name – the caucus, though, they could only do it in the caucus, and this gave us an extra event is the way that I looked at it. And it did, it worked out fine. We didn’t make any great money but we made a few thousand dollars.

Ms. Kilgannon: I was wondering about the scale of it.

Mr. Sawyer: Those few thousand dollars meant a lot.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, you can spread that around.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, give ten, fifteen guys a thousand bucks you know, could make the difference in their races. The money it was going to be spent on the elections, and it was.

Ms. Kilgannon: So if the money came in and it was within your control, is that the part that made people a little nervous? That it was sort of a little too – say personal?

Mr. Sawyer: Probably. But we made signs for people, there was a lot of ways we could spend money and that’s what the money went into.

Ms. Kilgannon: So when you handed it out, was it your

personal decision who got it and what they used it for?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, we had our little campaign committee. But basically, I'm the way ahead of most information and I was the one going around doing the most. Yeah, my influence was strong in that area, but it was just because they knew I'd been there, they knew what I was doing and so forth, so basically, yeah, we discussed it.

Ms. Kilgannon: So the Seattle group was a little uneasy. Did you go out of your way to give them some help to allay their concerns?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, most of them didn't need it. They came from very Democratic districts. And we were concentrating on marginal districts and people that weren't good campaigners. They were all pretty damn good campaigners, you know.

Ms. Kilgannon: So did they understand that?

Mr. Sawyer: No, I never took to the time to explain it to them. They didn't want an explanation. They were looking for things to be mad about – so unfortunately, I gave them one. They made a big fuss over it but I can't see how anybody dug into it. I mean – I don't know who would – well, Helen Sommers – is one that I would have given money to, but she never wanted it, she could raise money. They were in a position to raise money more.

Ms. Kilgannon: I just wondered if – even if they didn't need the money, it would have helped calm their suspiciousness.

Mr. Sawyer: But basically, I don't remember particularly giving a lot of money. What I did is I paid for things. I know the money I collected from political sources – I told you I had a list and I brought them together – and my theory was, I've got to hit three times. And it worked.

Ms. Kilgannon: But it becomes an issue.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, yeah.

Ms. Kilgannon: Was there any controversy about lobbyists, staff members, media people coming to the "Speaker's Fun night?" Who came and who gave money? Was that any – it's the new era of the PDC, so I'm wondering if there's some kind of question there?

Mr. Sawyer: I don't think the PDC was in then, was it?

Ms. Kilgannon: Um hmm.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, were they? Okay. Well, if it was, then we had to qualify for all that.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, it's called an "unprecedented entity" in state politics, this new fundraising function.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, just the name was. I mean, President Bush comes out and does it and he raises money and everything else...

Ms. Kilgannon: But were you the first Speaker to really take hold of fund raising in this way?

Mr. Sawyer: In that way, yeah. It's the first -

Ms. Kilgannon: Did John O'Brien do that?

Mr. Sawyer: No, John didn't hardly help anybody that way. Maybe he helped people – but I don't think he did. He never helped me when I was running. I just look back on the people that helped me, nobody did except Si Holcomb.

Ms. Kilgannon: So, you're redefining the role of the Speaker when you do this?

Mr. Sawyer: We encouraged among our group – or anybody that would listen – if they were in an area where they didn't have to spend a lot of money – but they collected money – to give it to people. And we'd tell them which people needed it. And a lot of our group were out having fund raisers for themselves and if they had excess, they'd think about that. I had a bad title, I guess, on the thing – it was just not a good thing to call it the "Speaker's fund" – we never thought through the ramifications of it. I never even worried about it. It was to me so....

Ms. Kilgannon: Sure. It's just a continuation or another step of what you have been doing.

Mr. Sawyer: I'll tell you one thing, we had a lot of fun. Fun Night was a good description of it. Everybody looked forward to going to it.

Ms. Kilgannon: How many times did you hold it? Two? Three?

Mr. Sawyer: I know I held it at least twice, maybe three times is all.

Ms. Kilgannon: Were they all similar or did you evolve?

Mr. Sawyer: No, they were all the same. I think we had Conte every time I could get him to come down

because he's such a good little entertainer – he still entertains. He's seventy some years old. But I remember him jumping up on tables when he was at the Cloud Club in Seattle and he didn't have a stage. He just had a little corner in the thing – right by where people walked in. He'd be singing and some lady would walk over and he'd grab her and take her and sit her down and then sit on her lap, things like that. He was that kind of an entertainer. Real agile, jumping around. And he still has lots of energy but not that much.

Ms. Kilgannon: Wow. Well that would be a night to remember. I don't recall ever hearing about this other than when you did it. Is this something that didn't carry on?

Mr. Sawyer: What's that?

Ms. Kilgannon: "The Speaker's Fun Night." I never heard of it again.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, maybe it got more heat than I thought, but the Republicans did Fun Nights.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did they?

Mr. Sawyer: They just didn't call it Fun Night. Hell, I could have just had a party and done the same thing but we wanted to have a little fun really. The fun part of it was as important to us as gathering the money, because we didn't gather that much.

Ms. Kilgannon: The comradery and that?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh yeah! See that's in the old days you used to do those things – you get out and fight like mad, but instead of going mad home, you'd go someplace and you'd probably end up having a party or talking to somebody, having dinner with somebody. Legislators used to be like lawyers, you fight like heck and you try to leave it afterwards.

Ms. Kilgannon: So would Republicans have come to this?

Mr. Sawyer: No, because they knew I was going to use it for! (Laugh)

Ms. Kilgannon: Now, as part all your efforts, one of the things that you tried to push through was larger salaries for legislators because you were asking more of them, for starters.

Mr. Sawyer: Yes, I was.

Ms. Kilgannon: You did manage to raise it. It was

pretty low, it was what? \$300 a month? And then there was an effort to raise it that ran into a bit of a buzz saw. Was that to help keep people without totally using them up and -

Mr. Sawyer: No, that was the whole thing. As I told you, that was something I was worried about. I didn't take (the pay) issue on because mainly that's always a hot issue and it's going to foul up stuff we're going to have to live with for a long time. So I didn't get into it too much. I don't even remember us trying it, tell you the truth. But we might have – at the tail end of it.

Ms. Kilgannon: You did. And in fact, what happened is – let's see, what is his name? There's a man who sets an initiative drive to overturn that.

Mr. Sawyer: You're kidding me. I don't even remember. You mean we've actually passed this?

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes. It was filed in 1973, so it's after this session. Let's see if I can find his name – Bruce Helm. There it is.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, Bruce, yeah, I remember the name now. Isn't he like a furniture salesman? Yeah. He made a big name for himself.

Ms. Kilgannon: Anyway, he's angered by this idea that you are raising your pay, he found it scandalous and he started an initiative drive and got the signatures, put it on the ballot. November 6, 1973, the state general election there's a whopping victory: 798,338 against the idea that you should get these raises to 197,795 supporting legislators. The actual wording was: "Shall state elected officials' salary increases be limited to 5.5 percent over 1965 levels and judges the same over 1972 levels?"

This was a real blow to your morale, to your pocketbook, to the whole notion that you're doing valuable work for the state and that you should be paid, not lavishly, but at least not poverty level.

Mr. Sawyer: The voters, that's an easy thing to stir up.

Ms. Kilgannon: They really slapped you down. I've heard other legislators say they almost quit over this, they were so downhearted that the public thought so little of them. How would you deal with this?

Mr. Sawyer: You've got to wake up to reality. Car salesmen and politicians – I think politicians are even lower – for some reason we always really rate our poli-

ticians low, we are suspicious of them. And lawyers come in there pretty close too, you know.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, you've got a lot of strikes against you. (Laughs)

Mr. Sawyer: I just accept it. I just know it's there and that's one of the prices you pay. "Oh, you're a politician..." they say with a laugh. But you know, they say it enough that you hope there's some thought behind it. We're just not a trusted bunch because we just get hammered.

Ms. Kilgannon: Is there anything the Legislature can do?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, same thing the Bar Association does, they always try to do this and try to do that to raise their profile, but they are in a position of controversy and somebody's going to be mad at you every time because you're going to be on the other side. And the Legislature's the same way. There's too many – like Magnuson, what did he say? "Your friends will forget but your enemies will always remember."

Ms. Kilgannon: So, you're philosophical about that issue. Periodically, there's a lot of stuff in the newspaper about raising the image of the Legislature and bringing the Legislature into people's good graces and that sort of thing. Did your reforms have any – were they all internal – or were any of them means to help the public think better of you?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, that wasn't my goal because -

Ms. Kilgannon: But could it have happened?

Mr. Sawyer: I thought if we did a better job, yes, we'd have a little better image. But still I think the press and everybody likes to pick on us somewhat. I don't care if we were Jesus Christ being crucified, I think we would probably still be looked down on. So I just have accepted that as one of the bad things about being a politician. Yet people invite you to their home, they say, "Oh, yeah, Representative so and so is going to be there." Like it's an honor, so it's a funny.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, I've often read that people think their own representative is just fine, it's the institution they don't trust. Which is an odd thing in a democratic society.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, it's not particularly, somebody says something bad about you, and I know you, what do I

do? Do I believe it?

Ms. Kilgannon: I hope not.

Mr. Sawyer: Now, the guy in the next legislative district they might cuss. And they cuss us, too, but when people know you, you can withstand a lot of garbage and that's what most of it is.

Ms. Kilgannon: You're taking this with pretty good grace. Did you need to work with some of your caucus member to help them over this hump? I mean people really talked about leaving the Legislature, that was it, why should I bother? You know there's quite a bit of that. They were stung by this. Did you have to do anything to respond to this?

Mr. Sawyer: I didn't. Maybe I should have. I didn't. I just figured it was a fact of life and I'm a realist and I'm a pragmatic person, what could I do about it?

Ms. Kilgannon: I don't know. It's just a morale issue.

Mr. Sawyer: It wasn't a big morale issue in our caucus as a whole, I'm sure. A few people grunted and you know, it's insulting, but boy, if you can't take insults, you better not be in the Legislature. That's the way I think. You've got to have tough skin or you shouldn't be there.

Ms. Kilgannon: This one just seemed to hit below the belt for a lot of people. Probably complicating the whole issue is right through 1973, you've got the Watergate issue breaking practically daily in the news. It starts off small and then it just unravels – pretty steadily from there on in. The story just gets bigger and bigger. That's the federal level, but are people just looking at the global picture of politicians and saying, "they're all, you know, crooks"?"

Mr. Sawyer: Like Bush has problems now, but it's a different problem. This isn't against Bush as a person, it's against his judgment and stubbornness and all that sort of stuff. But Nixon was actually doing a bad act.

Ms. Kilgannon: A criminal act.

Mr. Sawyer: So it's a different thing. But it didn't help us any. Have you ever heard anybody get up and say, "Oh, how great the politicians are." But there wasn't anything you can do. You do the job the best you can and if you get defeated.... That's one of the reasons I never wanted to run for a higher office because, I would hate to have my livelihood – my family's livelihood

and welfare – tied to public opinion.

Ms. Kilgannon: Ooh, that would be a little precarious. So, were you watching the Watergate story? What do you think of it all?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I never liked Nixon. (laughs) I wasn't very sympathetic toward him, because -

Ms. Kilgannon: I mean this is one of his big political stories of the century.

Mr. Sawyer: He abused his power, in my thinking, and so no, I was glad to get rid of him.

Ms. Kilgannon: Do you remember your thoughts as it's dribbled out in the newspapers? Were you watching this?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, yes, we were watching it. We're Democrats, we're all rooting because we hated the guy. Well, I did anyway. I think a lot of Democrats – he was a hard-nosed politician you know. He dished it out, he could take it pretty well, too. He came through that stuff pretty darn good, even made some bad decisions but who can say what they would do if they had that much pressure on them?

Ms. Kilgannon: Did any of this sort of bad news wash over you? Did people become more suspicious of legislators on the state level?

Mr. Sawyer: I don't know. I didn't feel it but then again, we had so much of this stuff out there. It's just another bump in the road.

Ms. Kilgannon: Some people think that Watergate tainted all levels of government for quite a while. That there was this whole new attitude that people are much more suspicious, much more willing to believe the worst; it's not quite like the Vietnam syndrome where the whole country is in this quagmire, but it has that feeling about it – the way it's written about and analyzed is that everyone gets tainted to some degree.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, sure, but you get tainted in life. And there's no doubt that it certainly didn't help.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did your relationship with the press change over this time? Some people think that the press – shall we say – became very impressed with their own role in bringing down a President and became much more aggressive and even individualistic in how they treated legislative news. Did that filter

into the state level?

Mr. Sawyer: Um hmm.

Ms. Kilgannon: Reporters out to make their name?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, it's just bound to. All of a sudden, the rules change. And before that, the Supreme Court came down and said that if you're a public figure, they can say anything they want about you. You have to show intent. And so all you have to do is say, "Well, somebody told me that." And you're home free. Well, that was the most devastating opinion, I think, maybe public people shouldn't have the same protections as you and I but they do need some protection from people saying these horrible things.

Ms. Kilgannon: Early in your second term as Speaker, Sen. Mardesich was indicted and charged with extortion and filing false income tax returns. He's appearing before a Grand Jury, he's under quite a cloud. How much does that impact decision-making, strategizing, getting anything to happen?

Mr. Sawyer: His supporters were pretty loyal to him but his opponents were really just whacking away at him hard. And it flushed over on our side too – to a certain extent.

Ms. Kilgannon: It does have a sort of a pall that extends to you as well.

Mr. Sawyer: Guilt by association, it's called.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yeah, they're ready to tar everybody in sight. Didn't you have to meet with the Grand Jury yourself on this?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes.

Ms. Kilgannon: Were you able to help Mardesich at all?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, they never asked me any questions about Augie. I went in there. They had come to me earlier, the FBI agent and assistant attorney general, and I told them what I knew, and they sent me a statement, I signed it. My knowledge of the thing. And then they were going to call me up in front of the Grand Jury. Well, wouldn't you think you were going to be asked about this? They never once mentioned it. All they asked me were questions, in my mind, that were trying to get me to say that there was graft in the Legislature so they could have a valid basis to have a Grand Jury on the Legislature.

Ms. Kilgannon: More than Mardesich

Mr. Sawyer: Well, didn't I ever tell you the question they asked me? They asked me, "You're Speaker of the House," Yes, I'm Speaker of the House." "And you know what's going on there?" I said, "Well, I have a pretty good idea."

Ms. Kilgannon: (Laughs)

Mr. Sawyer: I hope so, you know. And then more leading questions, you know trying to make me the big hoop de do. And then they ask me, "Do you have any knowledge or have you ever heard or da da da – a long bunch of adjectives – of money being exchanged for votes?"

Jeez I'm sitting there, that question, you've got people all looking at you, so I knew right then. I knew what it was, it was a political game and the District Attorney himself was there. Normally, they'd just have their assistant, but he was there asking these questions so I knew right then it was a big political deal. They were using the Grand Jury for political purpose in my mind.

Ms. Kilgannon: Who would "they" be in this case?

Mr. Sawyer: The Republicans. That's when Nixon was in control. He did that all the time.

Ms. Kilgannon: Why would he want to reach down to a state Legislature?

Mr. Sawyer: They attacked any place they could. And they wanted control of the state. To keep the control of the state. I guess, I don't know.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well I know that Mardesich had been involved in national elections working for Sen. Scoop Jackson.

Mr. Sawyer: I don't know, that's what they did. That was just – they used the IRS and all this stuff for political purposes. So that was just one time. So, what do I answer? There had just been a Supreme Court decision come down about a sheriff or something up in King County; they asked him a question, and he said, "I have no personal knowledge." "We didn't ask you that, what did you heard?" And the guy said, "I hadn't heard anything." So this case said that if you "should have heard," you were guilty. It was a horrible case you know.

Ms. Kilgannon: Kind of innuendo.

Mr. Sawyer: Jeez, I'm sitting there thinking now, what do I say? Because if I say anything then they come up with some damn thing, you never know. So I sat there for – seemed like an hour – but it was probably only two or three minutes thinking, and finally my answer was real simple. I said, "Well, (whatever his name was,) do you read the papers?" The guy said, "I'm asking the questions."

"Yes, but you read the papers." This is a statement from me. "I read the papers and everything you read in the papers, I've read probably, too. So I've read all of that and I have checked out a few things and never found any of it had much merit, enough merit for me to do anything."

And I said, "For instance, let's take two bills in which the papers said the money was flowing – wine, women, song, money was flowing down the legislative aisles..." I said, "One was a wine bill. I've been there a long time, and I've been on Rules Committee and nobody ever offered me any money. I've heard people getting rich but nobody ever offered me any money."

Ms. Kilgannon: Darned, you're just out of the loop. (Laugh)

Mr. Sawyer: And I said, "And you know I was on Rules, and I checked around a little bit, and I'm Speaker now, and I'm not personally aware of any of this. I've just read it all."

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, you're covering yourself pretty well.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I didn't know what else to do. And their face showed that they didn't like my answer at all.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, they had laid the trap.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh yeah. They kept me in there a long time.

Ms. Kilgannon: So even though, in the end, Mardesich was found not guilty, what impact does this have on the Legislature?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, there were a lot of rumors, the rumors didn't go away in that time. I think that was one of the main things they were using against me the next session, though I don't know why. I wasn't involved.

Chapter 18

Distracted by New Guinea

Ms. Kilgannon: We've talked pretty extensively and very interestingly about your time in New Guinea and all you learned there and your activities there. We discussed to some extent how exciting it was for you but also, it was a distraction from what you would normally be doing, shall we say. You were in and out of the country. And you were absorbed in learning all the new people and industries of that area.

And at the same time you were Speaker of the House which is probably not the easiest mix of activities. So there was a sort of toll being paid there on your speaker activities?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I only – excuse me – went to New Guinea maybe twice or three times a year.

Ms. Kilgannon: But still -

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, it was an issue.

Ms. Kilgannon: Let's back up a little – Tell me about how you first got interested in a place not many people even know about.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I knew a former legislator by the name of Paul Stocker (Everett, LD38) – he was a trial lawyer, we were both lawyers – and we kind of bounced around together when we were young. So after he quit the Legislature, I hadn't heard too much about him and one day – before I was speaker – I got a call from him, he says "Hey, I'm in town." I said, "Oh, you going to come home for Christmas?" "No, no," he says, "I'm just home for a while. But I've got this guy down in Papua, New Guinea..." I said, "Where's that?"

Ms. Kilgannon: Yeah, for starters.

Mr. Sawyer: I should have known. And he said, "This young man has got a personality like you can't believe, you're going to love him. Why don't you come on down and meet him." I said "Well, Paul – " He said, "Well, it's going to be exciting, they're going to be doing new things down there. They are just starting



Speaker Sawyer and Rep. Ted Bottiger with a legislative page.

their government.”

Ms. Kilgannon: A whole new nation.

Mr. Sawyer: I said, “I wish you wouldn't tell me those things, now you're starting to get my interest up...” So anyway, to make a long story short, with nothing more than that, I picked up my bag and went down to New Guinea.

It's just a weakness of mine that somebody presents a unique situation, and it has a lots of challenge – I'm a sucker for it, you know. And Paul said, “Come on down Len, you'll really like this guy.” Paul was living in Australia, then, developing land down there or something. That's my problem, I had a hard time saying no to so many things. I tried an awful lot of things in my life and I always wanted that when I get done with my life I didn't want to say, “Oh I wish I'd done that.”

Ms. Kilgannon: Oh, I wish I'd gone to New Guinea. But did you have some kind of idea about what you were getting into?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, we didn't know. Paul just said, “You know Len, with your experience and my experience and so forth – they're building a new nation, we don't know what will happen.” And I said, “I don't know, I'm just interested – I'll go.”

Ms. Kilgannon: You're the minority leader of the House then?

Mr. Sawyer: It was just before I was Speaker of the House. So, anyway, I go to New Guinea and I meet Michael Somare who was the Chief Minister at that time. Before he ran for office, he was the local radio broadcaster there.

Ms. Kilgannon: Maybe at the time you first went there, you didn't know a lot about the country, but subsequently, you studied up. Why don't you give me a little background on New Guinea. Wasn't it just forming as a new nation, coming out of colonial status?

Mr. Sawyer: In fact, that's about the time that I first got involved. Michael got elected the first time in 1968 or something like that. And he became the minority leader. There were a hundred seats, and his minority only consisted of thirteen people or so.

Ms. Kilgannon: Pretty tiny.

Mr. Sawyer: But nobody else had stepped forward before; they didn't have any parties in their Legislature, as such, all they had was individual interests. And so parties kind of drew these people together. And their party was kind of all college kids that had gotten together when they were in school. And they became really active in the thing – very liberal types – you know. And so they were pounding around their ideas and so forth. And then in 1968, several of them ran for the Legislature. There was a group of about twenty of them or so had formed a group and then they decided to form a political party. And they got about nine of them elected.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, that's pretty good on your first try.

Mr. Sawyer: And then they decided, well we're going to form a party within the Parliament, so they refused to take any ministerial positions in their group because they were the party of the opposition. In the British system, that's the way it works, you know. The administration and the head of the Legislature are tied into one rather than a separation like we have it. So they became the opposition party.

So Michael relates to me, they got beat up most of the time. They didn't win very often but they were learning. And he was appointed as the opposition leader. So he said he didn't know much at the time, but he learned a lot by getting beat up.

Ms. Kilgannon: Do you mean literally? Or just figuratively.

Mr. Sawyer: No, politically. But they made their stand and by being a recognized minority like that, they could at least -

Ms. Kilgannon: It gave them a platform.

Mr. Sawyer: They developed a platform. And then in the next election, it would be 1970, I think, 1970 or '72, right in there, they had another election. They had six-year terms. When I first met Michael, he was the Chief Minister, so it must have been about 1970 that they took over.

So I got to know him very well. He was interested in finding somebody to help him find people interested in investing in New Guinea and Paul had recommended me.

He wanted somebody that had some contacts around and so forth to spread the word on New Guinea. I think he had somebody back East, or his envoy there, but they didn't have anybody or an office out in the West Coast. And so he wanted somebody and he was going to appoint me as the commercial envoy; you know, if somebody made an inquiry, they could contact me and then I would tell them where to go and brief them.

Ms. Kilgannon: So you would have been the trade representative?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, that's basically it, and it would really be fun to get involved in all that, so I was looking forward to it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, I imagine there were not that many people around that could do this. Now, I can see what you're getting out of this, it's a great adventure. I'm curious what you would bring to the table for him?

Mr. Sawyer: He had no contacts over here and my main job was to go ahead and develop contacts. And a lot of mine – I knew legislators all over the United States and especially up and down the Coast, and they are good contacts. At least, that's the one thing that I always thought was an advantage if you were a legislator, you usually could get to the top dog, you didn't have to go to the bottom and work up.

Ms. Kilgannon: You had said that you had been interested in geothermal things for a while but we never actually talked about that. I was curious -

Mr. Sawyer: Well, it didn't go anywhere. There was a lot of geothermal here in the state of Washington but then just because it's here, the practicalities of where it was, was another thing and so -

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, this is about the time of the energy crisis. A lot of people are looking around for alternative sources.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh yeah. And so, I got a lot of appointments every place I could for him. And sat through them myself because it was interesting. And then I met him one time down in – was he there or did he just tell me to go down there – in the southeast part of Oregon, there's a college town down there that is on geo thermal. And it's really interesting. And then north of San Francisco is a big geo thermal production place – not production but they actually heated that whole area from geothermal. And all their power came from it and it was really – couldn't believe it.

Ms. Kilgannon: So that was something that New Guinea had a lot of sources for, with that kind of active volcano area?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, they thought they would. And I happened to know these guys and got them interested.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, let's look at this list that you gave me, you've got lumber so that's a big Washington State industry, would you be thinking of the Weyerhaeuser level of lumber or smaller?

Mr. Sawyer: I would think smaller, because there were a lot of people that are pretty good-sized, but the next step down and they're more accessible. That's what we were trying anyway. Weyerhaeuser is a fine company and all that but they are awful big.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did they have environmental controls in New Guinea? I was thinking about some areas there where the lumber companies came in and really just stripped the place.

Mr. Sawyer: No, see, not when the Australians were there, they didn't. They were going to be trying to put them in – that was in their program, but they hadn't got started on that.

Ms. Kilgannon: Was that something that you would be able to help them with?

Mr. Sawyer: Some. I was more trying to help them in the merchandising and getting somebody to come down and join as a partner with them on lumber and so forth. You know, what the heck, you can make contacts if you can – you just bounce from one to the other until you get to somebody. I've done that all my life.

Ms. Kilgannon: Then there's the oil and gas. Not knowing the resources there, but the possibilities. Shipping, of course, fishing. Now I understand that you

got Augie Mardesich interested in the fishing aspect.

Mr. Sawyer: No, I didn't, Paul Stocker got him interested in it. But you can see, it was so varied. I would have had a ball. Now, I'm not saying I could have done all these things, but....

Ms. Kilgannon: No, but I think you've got to be thinking about them -

Mr. Sawyer: And I had worked it out – I'd worked out a program of who I was going to contact and what I was going to do – like in labor and different things – somebody had to go out there and make contacts for them. They didn't have anybody that could do it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Start the ball, yeah. Tourism, of course, is big; there's all the attraction of the beaches, the whole island life, the climate and then the things that are needed: hotels, of course the infrastructure and promotion.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, and they needed transportation, because if you want to get tourists from one place to the other on the island, you had to either go by air, or by ship. And -

Ms. Kilgannon: Road building?

Mr. Sawyer: It's unlimited on the thing. Those are just the start and I'm sure I wouldn't have gotten all that done, but those were the areas that he was really interested in getting some help with.

Ms. Kilgannon: Then there's of course, agriculture. You talked about the rich fertile valleys in the different areas.

Mr. Sawyer: What they could grow, you couldn't believe.

Ms. Kilgannon: And different from here. You've got pineapples, rice, sugar cane, cattle, vegetables, coffee, tea, cocoa, and all that.

Mr. Sawyer: They were in the midst of trying to bring in dairy and beef cattle because right then everything had to be imported. Do you realize that here they've got all that potential and they were importing vegetables? Michael uses that as an example. It's so ridiculous; here they've got the best growing area – probably as good as any place in the world – and they're importing. Mainly because there was no infrastructure. See it was that simple.

Ms. Kilgannon: Figuring out where the holes are.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, I mean I knew one guy who had a great big farm down in Yuma. And he knew every bit of it (what was needed) – all they had to do was get him interested. And he had the money to do it. And he was just the right size. If you go to people with something exciting – if you're excited about it, you have good vibes. That's where Michael was so darned good. He was excited about it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, he's full of vision for his people.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah.

Ms. Kilgannon: Now would he be trying to avoid the plantation culture kind of development?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, that's what had been done down there before. I mean the Australians had rubber plantations. I didn't realize that until I got down there and I never went out to see any of those. I was busy doing other things and I was always on a limited time schedule. I should have gone down there and stayed for two or three months. But I didn't. I was speaker by then.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yeah, you were kind of involved in a few things. I don't think you had that kind of time.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, I really feel sorry that I didn't have the time to follow up on that.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, it didn't quite mesh with the rest of your life very well. You've got electrical power, hydro, and geothermal, we talked about that a little bit. And then there's some airline interest?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, Paul was more interested in the airline thing on it.

Ms. Kilgannon: I understand that Boeing was interested in making contact with the government there.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, by the time Paul got up here and talked – I don't know when – he found out they already had a contact down there doing it, so what the heck. Why should we get involved?

Ms. Kilgannon: Well there are newspaper accounts of you being a little bit of a middle man and introducing oil officials to Paul Stocker, who then, of course, introduces them to Michael.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, I did. If you've got the right people, you're going to have a hundred introductions. And I knew an awful lot of people at one time.

It fit my personality. And it's just my idea of being creative, rather than just a caretaker. There was plenty to create there.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yeah, it's pretty wide open.

Mr. Sawyer: But I was so wrapped up in the Legislature at the time, I didn't really spend as much time as I should have because you've got to really go in there and get some people – a lot of people are just waiting to do something new.

Ms. Kilgannon: There's one little newspaper article about you leading a business tour there in 1975 around a Christmas, it looks like. It says you were going to take about sixty businessmen the following year. You gave a press conference announcing that you were going to take these people over and just have them look around. You were talking about tourism, you were talking about, you know all the different things that would work for them. So did this happen?

Mr. Sawyer: No.

Ms. Kilgannon: It just didn't quite come together?

Mr. Sawyer: That's when my speakership thing erupted. It was going to happen in '76.

Ms. Kilgannon: So Michael was thinking of appointing you an envoy; did that ever actually happen?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, we never formalized it. We pretty well agreed on what he wanted me to do, but we didn't formalize it and just about then, I ran into my problems in the Legislature.

Ms. Kilgannon: So at first you were distracted from the Legislature by New Guinea, and then you were distracted from New Guinea by the Legislature? (Laughs)

Mr. Sawyer: And they were both very dear to me.

Ms. Kilgannon: But they don't mesh very well, do they?

Mr. Sawyer: No, but they were both very dear to me.

Ms. Kilgannon: So we won't talk yet about the legislative piece, but did you continue to go there over the years?

Mr. Sawyer: No. It was during the legislative session that I took my last trip. That was the one that created all the furor.

Ms. Kilgannon: Not everyone thought that was okay for you to leave in the middle of the session.

Mr. Sawyer: I know but you can see why when you look at -

Ms. Kilgannon: Sure, you were deeply involved -

Mr. Sawyer: We were deeply involved. The Legislature was in a helpless morass and I wasn't going to be able to do anything about it. So what better time to go? And I went down and talked it over with the speaker pro tem and got excused properly and people did those business trips all the time, but when I left then they made me a fugitive from justice or something.

Ms. Kilgannon: What?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, yeah. Oh, they claimed I was – the stories were just so wild you couldn't believe it. And the phone calls my wife got, you know? They thought for sure I was pulling a Bob Perry, I guess or something.

Ms. Kilgannon: Had he already absconded?

Mr. Sawyer: I don't know. I don't think so. No, his was later. His was almost a year later. But, they always try to pull you down you know. And so when that thing started to get out of control, you know, I wasn't going to go to New Guinea and get Michael involved in something like that. Because he had people there waiting to shoot at him too, you know, because he was upsetting a lot of apple carts down there.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, perhaps he's moving pretty quickly and -

Mr. Sawyer: Well, he was. These people, some of them, had locked-in kingdoms down there, you know. And he was unlocking the key, just like I did to a certain degree. So basically that was too precious to me down there to in any way disturb it, And so I just didn't.

Ms. Kilgannon: I'm not clear about this. The Stone and Associates, I know they were involved in the West Seattle Bridge fiasco, but were they trying to get involved in Guinea, too? They are a big engineering firm, would there be projects over there that would interest them?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, yeah. There's all kinds of projects over there because they've got a lot of infrastructure to build and yes, they would be extremely interested. And they're the biggest firm I knew and the best, though there were some local ones that I probably got involved with on the thing, too. But basically, no, people ask me about them, I always to this day give them good

recommendations. Because they did a heck of a job for us and they built a hell of a bridge.

Ms. Kilgannon: I'm confused. You did some legal work for them and so was it for New Guinea? Or was it for something totally unrelated?

Mr. Sawyer: They wanted an attorney to go to Boeing for some kind of air tunnel thing on the bridge that they had discussed verbally. And they didn't want to send an attorney out so they asked me if I would go. And I don't know, it wasn't a thousand dollar job, it was probably a couple hundred in those days. All I did was go up and talk to the engineers and clarify some of the language and get it cleared back there. And that was it for them.

Then the other thing, they did send me – pay my expenses – down to – not Indonesia – well they wanted to go into Indonesia but I didn't go there. I had a contact over there and they wanted to see if they could do anything with them. It didn't work out.

Ms. Kilgannon: Part of the discussion – the controversy – it's actually you filling out your Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) form. Some people thought that you should have listed your connection to them on your PDC forms. But you said that your fees from them were so low that they were below the threshold.

Mr. Sawyer: I can't understand them saying that I didn't comply with the thing. If you ever looked at my form, it's like a book. And I'm sure I thought I was doing everything the way I was supposed to. And if I didn't, it was a mistake. But it was a pain doing all that. Especially when you hadn't done it before, we were just starting you know -

Ms. Kilgannon: The PDC is still pretty new then.

Mr. Sawyer: And there hadn't been any interpretations on the thing. But I did have other clients outside that I listed – in fact they got listed in the P.I. They went around and called on each one of them.

Ms. Kilgannon: What were they trying to say?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, did you give him any money on the side?

Ms. Kilgannon: For what? Like political purposes, I guess?

Mr. Sawyer: I guess.

Ms. Kilgannon: Would that be different from say, campaign contributions? Or what are they...?

Mr. Sawyer: I don't know what they – they were on a witch hunt and they were going every place and everything. And they got that list from – the only place they could have gotten that list at that time I think would be from the IRS because I was in a battle with them over – they wanted – we were fighting over a very technical thing. And so I gave them a list of every client – every receipt. And then all of a sudden, those people are being contacted. They started calling me. There weren't that many of them, but enough to make me really upset.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, yeah.

Mr. Sawyer: It was very vicious. But at least they went from top to bottom.

Ms. Kilgannon: You never were convicted or even charged with anything, but they were always looking – it's true.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, sure. Once they start the rumors and you're in a position that people are unhappy with you – one way or another – you're going to get it. You know that's the price you pay.

Ms. Kilgannon: And it seemed more that it was Bob Perry that was more involved and you were sort of by association, assumed to be in the same boat with him.

Mr. Sawyer: I think that assumption was made, yeah.

Ms. Kilgannon: That's where the strings seem to go.

Mr. Sawyer: They tried to tie them and they just weren't there.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, it is interesting these newspaper articles bring up the fact that you testify on the grand jury for Jerry Buckley investigation, again for the West Seattle Bridge. Then they tie you to Paul Stocker and Boeing gets into a bit of trouble there.

Mr. Sawyer: Boeing did?

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, let's see in here it says, "We (the Boeing person) we were introduced to Stocker by Sawyer and that was the end of any association between Sawyer and Boeing in connection with anything to do with the airplane sale to Air New Guinea." And then, let's see then there's some kind of issue there where it says: "Boeing is now under investigation by the

Securities and Exchange Commission in connection with possible political contributions and payments to foreign governments." So were they getting a little more involved in New Guinea and politics than they really should have been? Is that what the problem was?

Mr. Sawyer: I don't know. You just read exactly what my input on the thing was. They also said I was the most powerful man. I was a headline getter.

Ms. Kilgannon: Once you get into the spotlight...

Mr. Sawyer: That's how they attack you. You know when they take somebody down they start by telling people how powerful they are. I know I fought – I was the subject of so many shadowy things, I don't even – their imagination was a hell of a lot better than mine. I always thought mine was pretty good.

Ms. Kilgannon: And then there's this article you showed me about basically Michael saying that no, he didn't have business arrangements with you...

Mr. Sawyer: No, he didn't.

Ms. Kilgannon: So is he needing to draw some kind of line here too?

Mr. Sawyer: We never even talked about any business of the thing. We did talk about the government's participation and he's the minister, he'd be signing the contract.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes.

Mr. Sawyer: So I don't know what – if there was ever any inference. I don't think there was any inference at all. But they take everything else so far out of proportion.

Ms. Kilgannon: So let's finish the New Guinea issue. Did you gradually sort of get busy on other things or did you keep up this connection?

Mr. Sawyer: No, no, I said as soon as I found out that they were trying to connect me – connect down there with Michael and so forth, I knew that they'd end up saying nasty things for no reason because was that pathetic.

Ms. Kilgannon: So you would end up being a liability to him rather than a help?

Mr. Sawyer: He'd worked too hard and he had that dream and I wasn't going to be helpful.

Ms. Kilgannon: Were you able to tell that to him?

Mr. Sawyer: No, no. I would like to go down and talk to him one of these days -

Ms. Kilgannon: I wonder what he thought happened to you?

Mr. Sawyer: I didn't tell him, no. I just did it.

Ms. Kilgannon: So was it hard for you to just give that up?

Mr. Sawyer: Umm hmm. I tell you, that was my biggest disappointment.

Chapter 19

Unrest in the Democratic Caucus

Ms. Kilgannon: I don't know whether it's because you pushed through so many changes so quickly, or the outside distractions, or it's just time period where a whole new generation's coming in, but although your caucus is strong in some ways, it's also fracturing in other ways. There's a fair amount of tension there.

When you have your caucus meetings to organize for the 1975 session, it kind of bubbles over. The King County group, in the center of the contention, has been challenging you since the previous session – sort of sporadically is what I gather. They had approached both John O'Brien and Joe Haussler to see if they would challenge you for the speakership. Both of these men declined to do so for their own reasons. It gets into the newspapers and there is speculation – although John O'Brien never says anything himself – that he might be like a dark horse candidate. If there's a split in the party, people will turn to him.

Mr. Sawyer: I think that was kind of a – well it's a strategy any of us in that position would – if I was in his position, I would be sitting back and you know...

Ms. Kilgannon: Watching?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, you know because that's the way a lot of these things happen.

Ms. Kilgannon: It's interesting. I mean, of course, you had a history of challenging him, but he does not turn the tables and challenge you.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I only challenged him the one time. And we could have really ripped him – Augie and I and we didn't because I respected the Democratic caucus. So I stayed within the Democratic philosophy.

Ms. Kilgannon: Certainly during the time of the coalition in 1963, you were pretty loyal to him. It just seems somewhat ironic that they are coming to him.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, they're desperately looking. They know they, themselves, can't do it.



Speaker Sawyer with Sen. Booth Gardner.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, they did give it a try. Who is Joe Haussler in the caucus? How does he relate to the group?

Mr. Sawyer: Well Joe was just – he was a pretty well-liked guy and he was from eastern Washington.

Ms. Kilgannon: And a senior member – he'd been there awhile. Is he a person that was respected by many?

Mr. Sawyer: I think he wanted to be speaker too. We had a whole bunch of guys there that wanted to be speaker. But he never got active out helping people or anything. And so, he was never a challenge, except for something like this.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, this is – if I'm reading this correctly – the second time they've come to him and he just doesn't seem to have any interest in doing this. So for whatever reason, they, he and O'Brien, were saying no to this group of chiefly King County people.

So Al Williams, he's one of the prime movers, he decides that even though it's a long-shot, he'll challenge you himself. Now he had not been in the caucus for a long time. He's not very senior. But he does get together and agitate and foment a group that had various issues with your leadership. King Lysen, Jeff Douthwaite, Donn Charnley, I'm not sure who all belongs to this group, but at least those names, you know, get into the press and they are quoted.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah. They called themselves liberals and I didn't think they were any more liberal than a lot of other people. But they accepted that label and that's what they were trying to run under.

Ms. Kilgannon: That's pretty consistent with what's

the label given to them, both by themselves and then everybody else. So when you came to this organization meeting, were you aware that Al Williams was working towards this challenge?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah.

Ms. Kilgannon: How does that work in the group. Is that the first thing up on the agenda, who's going to be speaker?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah.

Ms. Kilgannon: And so right away, it's on the table and do you each give a little speech or – I mean, how does it happen? How does he get up and challenge you.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, somebody gets up and then nominates them. Other people make the speeches. I don't remember ever making a speech for myself on it. But that's basically – people get up and nominate you and then they have a vote.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you know going into this that you were pretty strong? That you had the backing of most of your caucus?

Mr. Sawyer: I thought I did. Yeah.

Ms. Kilgannon: But is there any way that – you know – you count noses before you actually get down to the wire here?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, yeah, I knew who was going to be for me – I was working out there in the field with them. I mean Al and these guys were sitting up in Seattle talking to themselves, I was out talking to everybody else. So, who's going to win? I mean, there's no doubt.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did they ever reach out beyond Seattle?

Mr. Sawyer: I don't think so. I don't know. I never could quite understand why they – other than it was just – I don't know....

Ms. Kilgannon: Did anyone ever come to you and say, "Look these are the things we want."

Mr. Sawyer: I don't remember it.

Ms. Kilgannon: So they were assuming a broken connection where there would not have been one had they come to you?

Mr. Sawyer: I think they were looking for issues so that they could get control of the caucus or something and they never did get control of the caucus.

Ms. Kilgannon: Apparently, Al Williams had this idea that if he could get thirteen people to vote for him, that he would have kind of a bargaining chip with you and that he would win some concessions from you for things that he thought were important, but did he ever communicate what those things were?

Mr. Sawyer: No.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did he at that meeting state what they were?

Mr. Sawyer: No. Not that I know of. But he knew he didn't have the votes by the time the meeting came. I don't know how many he did have, it wasn't very many.

Ms. Kilgannon: In the end he had nine. And you had fifty. So you had a clear majority; he didn't have quite as many when it came right down to it as he wanted to.

Now there was one person that I was not aware took this role, but the press notes that Helen Sommers actively supported you for speaker. That she worked around the Seattle group and other people to stand solidly with you. They speculate – and I don't know – what she would say or what you would say – that she wanted the chairmanship of Revenue. Did you have any sense of that?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I'm sure. Helen was very active in Revenue and she was very active in the timber tax. I think we talked about the timber tax type of thing. I didn't pull it out when she first asked, I said, "Look, the Legislature is so much timing – you know. You've got to do it at the right time." So I kept saying no and she was pretty mad at me because she thought I was in the hands of – I don't know – the timber people.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, she was a freshman. I mean she had been a freshman in '73.

Mr. Sawyer: This is her second term.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yeah, by this time, it's her second term. So she wouldn't have that long experience of knowing about the timing.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, I know. So those are the kind of things you learn. That's why experience is so important.

Ms. Kilgannon: She's with you. You don't, of course, give her the chairmanship of Revenue, perhaps because she's just a second-termer [run]. Is that too big of a leap?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah.

Ms. Kilgannon: Now in the press accounts of this, you're quoted as saying that you don't plan to retaliate against Al Williams – that you don't believe in that. That you believe that caucus members should be given positions that suit their talents and their district and whatnot. It is noted, however, that he had been chair of State Government and that then he's not. And, in fact, Helen Sommers becomes the chair of State Government. How did that come about?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, basically we had certain programs that we were working together and he was always against us. And I don't want a chairman that I know is going to try to cause me problems. Not that he ran against me, it was his past history that bothered me.

Ms. Kilgannon: So you didn't think he was the best chair for that time and that committee?

Mr. Sawyer: No, I didn't think he was. And so I think – well, I'm not going to say that – but basically I didn't think he was a great chair, and Helen was – I always called her kind of a little tiger – and she did a better job than he did, let's face it.

Ms. Kilgannon: It's on the face of it, it seems – you know – he didn't support you and she did. And it's a little bald, shall we say, but maybe there's other reasons.

Mr. Sawyer: You told me she supported me, it wasn't that – formed it in my mind. I wasn't really worried much about who was supporting me and who wasn't, because I had a very firm leadership and I thought that I could go ahead and do what I wanted to in regards to picking people by their ability rather than buy favors.

Ms. Kilgannon: Is this – dangerous would be too strong a word – but by not giving him the chairmanship, are you creating a sort of open sore within the caucus that can't heal? He's doing well in his district, so he's going to be continued to be elected and he's got a core group that side with him. Is it dangerous to have a group within the caucus that are unhappy?

Mr. Sawyer: If he was really the leader of the group, maybe, but I don't think the people were behind him particularly, they just wanted a candidate. I don't think Al was ever that strong on the thing. And yeah, if he was a real strong person, I'd had to think about it, probably. But I didn't think he was that strong an influence in the caucus and I didn't think he was that strong a chairman, so that's why we made the change.

Ms. Kilgannon: So when you've got somebody like that that's so unhappy, is there anything you can do, or do you just hope they get over it?

Mr. Sawyer: Most people you try to go ahead – but he had the bit in his mouth, so to speak, and so there wasn't much I could do.

Ms. Kilgannon: I just wondered, you know you're watching this on the sidelines, and I wondered whether there's anything you can do to kind of smooth things over? Or get him to be a little less unhappy? He was, perhaps, determined to be unhappy so maybe there's nothing you can do.

Mr. Sawyer: Bob Perry's the one on the Committee on Committees that wanted to put him in State Government. He ran with him, he knew him, and he said he was qualified. I didn't know Al that well.

Ms. Kilgannon: So, when you're asked about who will get what appointments, you say, "Well, we'll have the Committee on Committees." Who in '74, do you recall, was on Committee of the Committees? Bob Perry would be one?

Mr. Sawyer: I think Charette was on, Alan Thompson was on it....

Ms. Kilgannon: Your normal leadership group? Would that be who it was?

Mr. Sawyer: Somewhat. We had others on it too.

Ms. Kilgannon: How does that work? Are they people that represent different parts of the state and different parts of the caucus?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, normally the speaker appointed them.

Ms. Kilgannon: But would you try to get a good mix?

Mr. Sawyer: Normally you would, yeah. And I think we had a good mix.

Ms. Kilgannon: Would that be another tool that you could use to get people onboard?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, certainly. You wanted to expand out and have as many people as possible involved. But you know, the Committee on Committees had always, in my experience, been guided strongly by the speaker. He's the one that was going to be responsible. But there was no doubt that if you had any problems there, you could go lobby the various members and if

enough of them talked to the speaker, I'm sure he'd change his mind.

Ms. Kilgannon: Conversely, if this Committee on Committees wanted to put somebody somewhere that you disagreed, could you override their suggestions?

Mr. Sawyer: No. No, I couldn't – I'd have to go to a caucus and it would have to be a pretty strong issue before you go to a caucus and get in a fight over something like that.

Ms. Kilgannon: It's curious to know where the power stops and starts.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, to me, the power started and stopped with the caucus. I mean, when the caucus was for me, I could do things, when they weren't, I wasn't going to be able to do things so what's the use of being a leader if you can't do anything?

Ms. Kilgannon: The one specific that does come up that this group, the dissident group, was unhappy about was the very thing that you have said you didn't want to do, which was make a lot of pronouncements on issues. They seem to want you to do that. They complain that the caucus had no program. It comes up again and again – they want a legislative program, they want almost like a platform, I guess, would be one of the ways of putting it. They want to have a united voice on budget issues, land use issues, the timber tax, the small loan issue. They have kind of list of things that they want the caucus to have a voice on. Did you specifically want to avoid making statements of that kind? Did you think it was inappropriate for the caucus to do that?

Mr. Sawyer: No, no, but....all they had to do was get up and convince the caucus to accept the program. We had programs. We went to the Senate and we got together and we had programs. The first time they had ever done that was when we did it in my first term.

No, I had that group together where everybody got to talk. The caucus had all kinds of input. They could have got up, but they didn't have the votes in the caucus, that was the problem. If they had the votes, fine, we would have done it. But they didn't have the votes on the thing.

Ms. Kilgannon: So, it's not really true to say that you don't have a program?

Mr. Sawyer: No, we had our program.

Ms. Kilgannon: They go on about it quite a bit.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, sure they do because these are some of their pet issues. So, get up and sell them to the caucus! I don't remember them ever getting up and hammering that they wanted a program in caucus, and you darned rights I would have reacted if the caucus wanted a program. But the thing is I didn't feel I was going to be lobbying for these various groups. Environmental issues and things like that, those are different issues to me. The budget thing, we were fighting all the time for more budget – you know we were the spenders.

Ms. Kilgannon: How is that handled within the caucus? There's certain issues, of course, that rise up each session as being the hot issues. Would there be times when you would get together and really advocate for say, education; we're going to do this and this and this? Or we're not going to let go on this line in Institutions or how does that work?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, it isn't as systematic as everybody on the outside thinks it should be. Basically, we're jammed in there with so many bills, we're lucky to be able to handle the bills in our own committees. But basically, the Budget Committee does most the budget work and if you're interested in budget thing, you better get on the Budget Committee. And they are the ones that had the most input.

Then, they bring it to the caucus and they go through it and then that's when you are supposed to challenge it, if you want and so forth. So it's systematic that way. That's when we discuss the various issues. So they had plenty of opportunity, if they had this great program, to come up with it. They didn't have a program, all they had was a bunch of – I don't know what you'd call it – but I never sensed they had a program.

Ms. Kilgannon: I've got a quote here in this Seattle Times article that seems to capture what you're saying. I'm quoting you, "Rather from the leadership down, we work from the caucus up." They just don't seem to hear that. You want the caucus to bring in the issues up from themselves to everyone, whereas they seem to think that you should bring it down to them.

Mr. Sawyer: And, at the same time, they didn't want strong leadership.

Ms. Kilgannon: That's why I was puzzled by it.

Mr. Sawyer: So I could never understand all this criticism about that, because I did everything I could, I thought, to get information to people to make the decisions. But I didn't try to make it for them. That's the way we used to do it, yeah.

But our theory was get the information to the legislators so they can make good judgments. They had staff, they could go to staff, they had things that no freshmen and no caucus had ever had before. So, the caucus was the place if you wanted a policy thing. Fine, they could come talk to me, and they probably should. But they never came and talked about these issues to me.

Ms. Kilgannon: It seems really deeply ironic that they are complaining about leadership but it's both ways. They both demand it and chafe against it at the same time.

Mr. Sawyer: You just have to settle down and realize that's people. And I didn't expect anything more from some of them.

Ms. Kilgannon: I was wondering if you were still so focused on restructuring the Legislature and reforming how it worked that issues were less important to you than the actual mechanics?

Mr. Sawyer: That is a valid criticism in my mind. But I really didn't want to say, "Hey, these are the issues you guys are going to pass." I wanted to find out – I thought the speaker should facilitate what the members wanted. And that was my whole thing. My speakership was – hey, if the caucus wanted to – if the caucus had told me to go lobby for dear old Joe Davis, I would have felt compelled to go lobby for Joe Davis. I think the speaker should be – he's got to be powerful and he's got to use his power, but he shouldn't be using the power just for certain issues he likes. And I don't know any of those that they ever accused me of. They say "Oh, special interest" – well there are a lot of special interest, my main ones were institutions and education and those were special interests. And local government, I was very close to the county commissioners and so they had my ear, easily.

Ms. Kilgannon: The press accounts are a lot of heat, and very little light, you might say.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, they always are – just like poor old Bush now – the press is giving him a pretty tough time,

you know. I think he deserves it but people probably thought I deserved it too at the time because they are on the other side.

Ms. Kilgannon: So, you come through all of this, you are definitely going to be the speaker again.

Chapter 20

A bad economy and strained relationships

Ms. Kilgannon: Let's talk more about the 1975 session. It's your eleventh session; you've been in the Legislature 20 years – a long time. This is an unusually complicated session. You come down to your regular one January 13 to March 13, but there's a lot of things that you can't work through during that period, so you begin an extraordinary session the very next day, March 14, and go to June 9. A long time. Half a year, you're down there. You leave and go home for only a short time and the governor calls you back July 18 for just a couple of days but then things don't go so well and you recess, you come back early August for a day. You recess again, you come back in September for two days, you recess again and then you come back the following January – '76 and you stay until March 26.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, okay, yeah. Kind of all blends together.

Ms. Kilgannon: Of course, the opening business is the nomination for speakers and you are duly nominated and the nomination speeches recall all your reforms in staffing committee structure and the new openness, the whole strengthening of the legislative branch. There's a lot of good remarks along those lines and then finally the vote takes place and King Lysen and Al Williams abstain from voting – which is unusual.

The Republicans have nominated Irv Newhouse, and of course, they vote for him. But those two Democrats don't vote at all. And the Republicans try to make an issue out of that. They say that the two really aren't allowed to abstain. But then, at that point, it's Dean Foster as the chief clerk who is presiding, and he kind of skates over that and says he doesn't have the authority to deal with that and soon you'll be sworn in as speaker and then it will be your problem and he just kind of moves it along. Did you know that they would do that?

Mr. Sawyer: No, I didn't care whether they did it.



US Senator Warren G. Magnuson on the House Rostrum with Speaker Sawyer.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, I don't think I've ever seen that before.

Mr. Sawyer: That's a perfect example, they just were out to do everything they could to cause a problem. And there isn't much you can do with those kind of people, they were just out to create problems. Well, luckily, they didn't have enough power to create them, and I'm a great believer, if you don't have fifty votes – you know –

Ms. Kilgannon: Sit down.

Mr. Sawyer: Sit down.

Ms. Kilgannon: Anyway, the Republicans fuss about it and there's just this little exchange and then Dean Foster finesses it and things move on.

Mr. Sawyer: I wish they would have been forced to vote. I think they might have voted Republican and that would....

Ms. Kilgannon:....that would have been interesting.

Mr. Sawyer:... that would have been fine with me.

Ms. Kilgannon: Anyway, it was this little thing that happened. And then, the votes get really interesting to me. John O'Brien is now nominated for speaker pro tem and Republicans stand up and say, "Let's make the vote unanimous." I don't think I've ever seen that before. Is it because you had such a clear majority they just thought they would have a "feel good moment" here?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah -

Ms. Kilgannon: They do it again. Dean Foster, the chief clerk, he's nominated, and it's again a unanimous vote.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, Si Holcomb used to get unanimous votes.

Ms. Kilgannon: The sergeant at arms also unanimous. The Republicans don't even go through the pro forma exercise of nominating anyone.

Mr. Sawyer: It wasn't any negotiations that we did. As far as we were concerned, we had the votes to do it, we were going to go do it – and so...

Ms. Kilgannon: Well you certainly do. Is there any advantage in the Republicans doing this? Or what does this mean?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, it might mean that they want to cooperate. I don't know.

Ms. Kilgannon: These are symbolic movements, I was trying to figure out what –

Mr. Sawyer: I think you're trying to read too much into that – I don't know myself. I'm not much for symbolism.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, somebody was. Anyway, after that happened everything went pretty quickly. The caucus leadership – we talked about this a little bit – you have pretty much the same people as before. You have Bob Charette as floor leader, Bill Chatalas as caucus chair, Paul Conner as whip, Alan Thompson as assistant floor leader. Mark Gaspard moves into the assistant whip position, Dan Van Dyk, who had been in that position, is not even in the House.

Mr. Sawyer: He didn't run again.

Ms. Kilgannon: So, are you bringing Mark Gaspard into the leadership? He's pretty new, but he's given a position.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, no, that's his second term and yeah, I definitely was interested in bringing him along.

Ms. Kilgannon: He shows promise, shall we say?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, yeah. He was one of the bright spots of the whole thing. He was very popular. Nobody ever criticized me for doing it; if they did, that's okay because I knew he could do the job. And it proved that he should have had the job, because he became a very powerful person down there.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, he of course, you know, eventually moves to the Senate, he becomes the Senate majority leader.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, and a very good one too.

Ms. Kilgannon: The assistant whip is Rick Bender, and that's a new position. Are you expanding the leadership so you can bring more people?

Mr. Sawyer: To bring more of the younger people.

Ms. Kilgannon: And Lorraine Wojahn is again the secretary, the sole woman in your group here. What does she -

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I needed women in the Legislature.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, there's more than one... What does she bring to the leadership?

Mr. Sawyer: She had just been there a long time and everybody knew Lorraine, they liked Lorraine. Lorraine was a very likeable – very stubborn and all that and principled, but everybody liked her because she had a big heart. No, she did that all by herself – see that's another thing. She went out and got elected.

Ms. Kilgannon: Does this group have a characteristic? Are you all moderates? Are you all one thing or the other – or were you looking for a variety here?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, the thing is, as I think back on it, Chatalas went out and got the job his own, I certainly didn't object to him, and he had some caucus strength, so what the heck? Lorraine went out and got her own. Most the people that got those positions -

Ms. Kilgannon: They wanted them.

Mr. Sawyer: They wanted them. Now, when it came to the floor leadership and things like that, that was more in my domain. Getting the procedure and then isolate – I selected them. Well, they went out and got elected themselves, and that's the way it should be. I mean – I did not put any dictations down.

Ms. Kilgannon: So if they've got their own areas of support, does that strengthen them within the Legislature?

Mr. Sawyer: I think so because it shows that they've got support.

Ms. Kilgannon: You don't make a lot of changes in the committee chairmanships except for putting Helen Sommers on State Government instead of Al Williams, and putting Frank Warnke on Commerce instead of Lorraine Wojahn. But Wojahn goes onto Rules, and is it the protocol that if you're on Rules, you shouldn't be a chairman?

Mr. Sawyer: In the House it is; I think in the Senate to some degree. But you've only got so many positions and these positions help people when they run for re-election – if we really wanted to concentrate on power, we would have put the chairman of the thing, but we didn't. We spread it out as much as we could. As it should be and it normally was.

Ms. Kilgannon: It doesn't look to me like any of the dissident members make it onto Rules.

Mr. Sawyer: Not many of them had experience.

Ms. Kilgannon: You've got John Bagnariol as the overall chairman of Ways and Means and then under him, Shinpoch is the Appropriations chairman and Randall as Revenue. So how does that work? So John Bagnariol is kind of like the head person that puts it all together?

Mr. Sawyer: He's more the policy maker. They've done it several ways. Sometimes you just have the chairman of the thing and the chairman does it all. But I thought we had – Shinpoch had definite strengths, and Bagnariol had definite strengths, so I thought by putting them together, it would make a better combination and it did. It worked like a charm. I know Shinpoch wasn't very happy with it, he thought he should be chairman of Ways and Means. But Baggie could get along better with people. Baggie was a people person.

Ms. Kilgannon: So you're looking for different skills here. That's a huge committee – with both subcommittees, there's forty-one people.

Mr. Sawyer: Highways is the only other committee that challenges those numbers.

Ms. Kilgannon: Twenty-nine. So, it seems to be a fairly stable group – the leadership group, the chairmen are not changing very much – is that a sort of building on what you've already accomplished from the session before?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, I thought we did real well. I couldn't see any reason for many changes.

Ms. Kilgannon: Okay, so let's talk about the issues. It's a difficult time, there's the after effects of the oil embargo and a lot of things. There's still power issues, some emergency issues there. It's not a fun year.

Mr. Sawyer: No, it was a real turbulent time. It was about as bad as I can remember.

Ms. Kilgannon: There's unemployment, of course. So when you first come in – there's a kind of a promise – statement that you're not going to raise taxes; you're going to try to stick with the income you've got. Which is not easy in a time of inflation. But the public employees are very unhappy and they threaten to strike. Do you remember?

Mr. Sawyer: Um hmm.

Ms. Kilgannon: I gather they hadn't had any raises for a while and you know with inflation, they felt that their real income was really going down.

Mr. Sawyer: They were right one hundred percent. They should have been getting more money, there just wasn't more money to get. And there wasn't the votes to get it. You know you can say we're going to try to raise taxes and get more income – well, you're not going to raise taxes unless you got the votes. And too many people were getting pressure on that – the conservative Republicans has really done a job out there.

Ms. Kilgannon: How would you handle this then? That's a big group that supports your caucus.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, well, there isn't much you can do. You just do the best you can. And a lot of times it isn't enough, but that's all you can do. I had the same problem with education, you know. And also at that time, education had a change in leadership and their head director never bothered coming to the Legislature like they had before.

Ms. Kilgannon: Are you talking about the WEA?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, WEA. Before that the head guy was down there running the political show. And this new guy, he didn't believe it, he set up a different organization. So it was a little tougher to deal with it.

Ms. Kilgannon: So, the WEA, which of course is the main lobbying arm of educators, takes a different approach – so were they more – kind of off from the Legislature? They weren't down there as much?

Mr. Sawyer: No, he had people down there – they had good lobbyists. But before, you had the driving force down there and this new guy was more organizational minded. He wasn't legislative minded.

Ms. Kilgannon: So that just made it a little harder -

Mr. Sawyer: Made it a little harder, yes, and we just

weren't in a position where we could do what we wanted to do. That's the reality of fifty votes.

Ms. Kilgannon: That's the reality of the economy as well.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah.

Ms. Kilgannon: I see you do manage to get the public employees a little raise and get them a little less unhappy, shall we say. That kind of set the tone of the session. There's going to be a lot of fights over things of that nature. Certainly school funding – you've been talking about it for a while but it hits a sort of crescendo. During the election, several major levies fail, including the Seattle levy; that's a lot of school kids.

Mr. Sawyer: Well that was just the feeling of the voters out there, and we, as legislators, are supposed to react to that.

Ms. Kilgannon: Right: no more taxes.

Mr. Sawyer: Generally, I wasn't much of "no more tax person" but I was then because that was political suicide if you were any other way.

Ms. Kilgannon: That was a fairly clear message, but the other side of the message, of course, is that schools are really hurting. So, they've taken away one of your tools in, but not the problem.

Mr. Sawyer: Um hmm.

Ms. Kilgannon: The public, perhaps felt one way; the teachers felt quite a different way. They marched on Olympia. Massive numbers of teachers came down and protested and direct lobbying efforts flooding the Capitol, flooding the galleries and your offices. Teachers are one of those sort of "motherhood and apple pie" kind of issues, aren't they?

Mr. Sawyer: Yes.

Ms. Kilgannon: If you've got the halls full of teachers, what happens? What does that do? Is that an enormous pressure that everyone feels?

Mr. Sawyer: Well yeah, I don't know what you do. All you can do is go out and say you're fighting for them and you are.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, they don't seem to be buying that.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, no they don't, because we had treated them real well through the years. Very well. Compared

to when I first got in the Legislature, teachers had done real well, but they had a real active organization then. They went out and they worked hard. But all of a sudden the environment wasn't there. The special levies were going down all over.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yeah, what happened there? Why did all the levies fail?

Mr. Sawyer: The economy was just dead. People were out of money. I mean, they practically closed down Boeing in our area. You know, it was just like, "The last one out, turn out the lights."

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, it's a little bit later but you're still hurting.

Mr. Sawyer: Really hurting. And the gas shortage was in there. So the whole economy was -

Ms. Kilgannon: – kind of grinding along.

Mr. Sawyer: People weren't very generous with their money. They couldn't be.

Ms. Kilgannon: So, you're sort of at cross purposes here. After a lot of fierce negotiating and work all throughout the session -

Mr. Sawyer: That's why that session went so long. It was just the budget -

Ms. Kilgannon: You did pass a package of \$65 million to augment the school funding to take care of some of the issues that the levies would have taken care of, that's my understanding. Governor Evans vetoes that. He wanted a lot more money, in the neighborhood of \$80 million. I can't remember the exact number.

Mr. Sawyer: He wanted more than that, I think.

Ms. Kilgannon: Maybe it was \$90 million. But it was a much bigger number, not at all close to what you passed.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, we'd come up with \$65 (million).

Ms. Kilgannon: And the House actually had a higher number, like \$71 million.

Mr. Sawyer: We tried to split the difference, but the Senate wouldn't do it.

Ms. Kilgannon: The Senate is holding pretty firm under Augie Mardesich's leadership – they stick to \$65 million, and that's as high as they'll go.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, they wanted to kind of show the House a little bit that they had power too, you know. (Laughs) They started believing those articles they read about my power that were over-exaggerated.

Ms. Kilgannon: They do take a more conservative approach. Mardesich talks about some of the other issues, like accountability and he's trying to hold them to the line.

Mr. Sawyer: Augie and I were close and I really had a lot of respect for him. But we didn't agree on all the issues.

Ms. Kilgannon: No, you certainly are not agreeing here.

Mr. Sawyer: No, we were just philosophically a little different. But overall, I'm not going to argue when somebody's with me ninety-five percent, or ninety percent. Why fight about the five percent? And so many people do that. You better try to build the ninety up to ninety-two or ninety-three or something but keep the guy onboard with you.

Ms. Kilgannon: He takes a lot of heat. When the teachers are rallying at the Capitol, he does go up and speak to them but there's a guard, literally, around him. People were worried about his safety. I don't know if he was but,

Mr. Sawyer: Knowing him, I don't think he was.

Ms. Kilgannon: He doesn't strike me as the kind that would worry. But they boo him; they're not happy with him. But he just goes out and says, "We haven't got the money. This is as good as we can do." But in the end, you know, you do come down to the Senate position, but then the governor vetoes it. Did you know that he would do that?

Mr. Sawyer: I don't remember. I doubt it.

Ms. Kilgannon: So then the finger-pointing starts going around. The Senate, the House, the governor – nobody knows how to solve this and nobody seems to know how to come out of this.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah.

Ms. Kilgannon: And there isn't more money. You recess and reconvene a couple of times trying to jump start this and you're looking for more money. And a little bit more revenue comes in. The economy is starting to turn around but you can never agree on a

number of what to do here. And you keep returning back to the \$65 million, because you have agreed on that. I've never been able to find the end of the story here. I think it drags into the next session. You have some piecemeal things that you put together but -

Mr. Sawyer: I'd have to read back on them. Now, education is an issue that I think the speaker should be involved in. I have no problem with that because that's government and so forth; it's special interest but it's a different specialist interest.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, it's a very big special interest....

Mr. Sawyer: But no, we had a head of the Public Instruction – Buster Brouillet who was very engaged.

Ms. Kilgannon: So did he come down a lot?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, yeah. He was lobbying all the time. Heck yes. And because he was well thought of in the Legislature, especially in the House, among the younger people he was really good. He was very helpful.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did he have any solutions for you? Was he able to help out? Or did he have to be solidly on the WEA's side?

Mr. Sawyer: He wanted to work on the problem, but he wasn't in any position to come down and say, "OK, we'll take a lot less." He would come in and said he needed more. And they did. I never argued that they didn't need it. In fact, I wanted to give it to them. And I'd rather have gone the tax route, even though it was against what we were talking about, but -

Ms. Kilgannon: Would that have just been impossible? To raise taxes?

Mr. Sawyer: We were never able to get the fifty.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you ever try that route? Did you ever talk about, "Well, okay, we need to try this?"

Mr. Sawyer: Well, yes, in our caucus, when the budget and all that sort of stuff was discussed in there. Yeah, that was a big issue. But there were certain members weren't going to vote for it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, that certainly makes it cut and dry, then, if you haven't got your fifty.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, see the thing is, if you're going to have to get fifty in situation like that, you better be out there real early working on those people at home. Having district people work on them and so forth.

It's fine to come down to the Legislature in en mass, you know, that's effective. But it's more effective to take that same effort and apply it during campaigns or meeting the member, or getting to know him so that they know who they are talking to. Then it's just not an issue of education, it's "this is – Mary Jones, and she's got four kids in school," and so forth.

Ms. Kilgannon: Put a face on it.

Mr. Sawyer: Put a face on it, yeah. And that's my theory how you get fifty votes. You've got to go get them one at a time.

Ms. Kilgannon: Was it also a case of, if you had given the schools this money, too many other popular programs would have to cut to get the money? Was it a competition – you've got x number of dollars, where is it going to go?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, yeah, it's always a competition, but schools are getting the major portion of it and so are the state employees. The other ones we couldn't cut much, and we could cut them but it wouldn't have saved us that much money. Percentage wise it's small.

Ms. Kilgannon: When you give to schools, do you say institutions suffer? Where does the money come from?

Mr. Sawyer: I don't know – I was never in the inside of the Appropriation Committee – but yeah, you've only got so much and everybody is in there asking. So, it's a decision, a priority decision by the people on the committee.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, Chair Bagnariol came out in support of more than \$65 million, although not as high as Dan Evans wanted to go, he didn't seem to think he could get there.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, Baggie was always – he wasn't afraid to vote for taxes. He was from a very strong district.

Ms. Kilgannon: Like I said, you are convening and recessing and back and forth and fighting and hoping for a solution. At one point, when you convene in July, it gets to such a point that the Senate just walks out and goes home. That's a little unprecedented. The House was left a little high and dry.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, they showed us!

Ms. Kilgannon: You had to go home, too, because you can't operate in a one-chamber Legislature. Was there

any notice? Did you know that was going to happen?

Mr. Sawyer: Ahead of time? No. But when they got down there they said, "We're going to go home because they don't have the votes to solve it." What are you going to say? "You know you shouldn't do that!"

But it's their house, and if I decide I wanted to go home then the Senate couldn't do much to persuade me – unless you wanted to make concessions. And nobody wanted to do that – they were real hard heads at that time.

Ms. Kilgannon: You were pretty stuck.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, we were in a bad spot.

Chapter 21

An Abrupt Ending

Ms. Kilgannon: So, in 1976, you reconvene after a recess of some time. And you stay in session from January 12 till March 26.

The press quotes you, just as you're beginning that session, as predicting a very quick session. You've got a lot of business that you want to see in maybe thirty, maybe forty days, not sixty. You're anticipating a very smooth process; you ask your members to have all their bills ready for floor action within the first ten days, maybe the first fifteen days. So you kind of hit the decks running, shall we say.

But there's, unbeknownst to you, I suppose, I'm not sure, there's a lot of grumbling in the caucus and it finally erupts. I don't have the actual date here for some reason. In January, I think it's still January – your speakership again becomes a question.

Mr. Sawyer: That's true, um hmm.

Ms. Kilgannon: When you went into that session, were you aware that there was a building of unhappiness?

Mr. Sawyer: I think that just shortly before, one of the lobbyists mentioned something, but no legislator ever came to me. I mean none of my leadership reported it either. So, no, I was not aware of it.

Ms. Kilgannon: That's interesting. From comments that some other people in your leadership have made, it seemed like they also were unaware?

Mr. Sawyer: No, it was done on purpose. The dissidents, or whatever you want to call them, they pledged each other to secrecy. I guess it was smart because that way, I think they knew that if I knew about it, I could probably easily set it aside. Because they really didn't have very good grounds to do anything other than that they were discontent. Well, that's their privilege.

Ms. Kilgannon: So on their side, they had already given up on you. They weren't coming to you looking for solutions. They were busy counting noses, and



Dawne Friesen coordinates legislature.

Canadian coordinates Washington legislature

By JACK MORGAN
Staff Writer

If the so-called continuing session concept is approved for the legislature, coordination between standing committee chairmen strewn throughout the state will be an important task.

Key to much of this coordination will fall to a pretty Canadian-born woman named Dawne Friesen.

With the title of legislative coordinator, Miss Friesen has tried her wings in the newly created job during the regular session. The function appears to have worked in scheduling more joint committee hearings — time savers — and keeping tabs of the status of 2,000 bills.

Miss Friesen attends meetings of the powerful rules committee and would be the key to implementing decisions of the proposed super-rules committee under the continuing session concept.

A hard worker, Miss Friesen has worked at the legislature as a docket clerk, committee clerk for the transportation committee and committee clerk to Sen. August

Mardesich's banking and insurance committee.

A graduate of the University of Washington, her favorite off-duty things are travel, skiing, reading, classical and jazz music, watersports, beachcombing and opera.

Although not a trinket collector, she tries to bring something back from foreign nations she visits.

Her most recent trip was to the Bahamas. At the beginning of this legislative session she sported a deep suntan, to the envy of fellow workers.

About her job, Miss Friesen says, "one of the problems is getting the chairmen together to work out which bills they want to pass."

This relates mainly to so-called companion bills. These are nearly identical bills introduced into both houses.

"We've tried to let only one bill pass one house," she says.

With about 35 standing committees being proposed to remain on active duty during the continuing session, she will have her hands full keeping tabs on events.

But she's certain she can handle things.

Profile article for Dawne Friesen, used with permission,
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recruiting people to their side. So it's as if they had already made up their mind that there was no solutions to the issues that they were concerned about.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, definitely that was the way they acted. But in my mind, that's a lack of experience. If they had as many people in the caucus as they ended up having, then why not come and start working on the program and getting together, because otherwise, I mean we had most of the people with experience and leadership qualities on our side.

And it really showed when they got the thing — they just thought everything was going to [sound of snapping fingers]. Well everything doesn't just go like that. You have to plan it and you have to know where you're going and they had no idea where they were going, other than they were going to get rid of me.

But nowhere during that whole time did they ever come and talk to me about the thing. And whenever somebody came, like Helen Sommers came to me about

the tax thing and we worked on that. I stalled her off a long time because it wasn't right. The timing wasn't right. It was just one of those situations.

So, they did it in secrecy and they probably had to do it in secrecy to be successful. But then the other side of that, which they didn't think of, the boom! Everything's just going to fall apart.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, we'll see that. They waited until they had thirty-three members....

Mr. Sawyer: Thirty-two, thirty-three...

Ms. Kilgannon:... on their side. And as you said, they swore each other to secrecy. It sounds like there was a small group of leaders and only they knew who the other people were.

Mr. Sawyer: Um hmm. Probably.

Ms. Kilgannon: It must have made for a strange caucus meetings. People looking over their shoulder or whatever.

Mr. Sawyer: Here they are professing freedom – you know, communication and openness – and their whole package is put together through secrecy and closed sessions. They were all supposedly for open sessions. And we had opened up the sessions. But, from a practical matter, I can't blame them for that because they wouldn't have been able to do it if I knew about it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, interesting tactic. The leaders that are identified in the press, and I'm not sure how you feel about this, one is Bud Shinpoch, who you had put in Ways and Means as a chair. Charles Moon, Dick King, Al Williams, Al Bauer. Wayne Ehlers is sometimes listed. Helen Sommers is sometimes listed. For the most part, Seattle area, not entirely, but Seattle area, younger Democrats. Did they finally come to you or was it done in a caucus meeting or -

Mr. Sawyer: It was done in a caucus meeting, yeah.

Ms. Kilgannon: I understand there was some kind of letter or some kind of ultimatum.

Mr. Sawyer: I think after the meeting. I can't remember the details of it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Can you recall the setting? How it was brought up? Did someone just make a motion?

Mr. Sawyer: I think it was brought up by a motion at caucus.

Ms. Kilgannon: So suddenly, "We move to have you step down?"

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah. And it caught me unaware, you know. And a couple of them spoke and I was quite irritated that they at least hadn't communicated with me. If they had a problem, these problems are solvable. We had solved a lot tougher problems than this.

Ms. Kilgannon: There's several discussions about you arm-twisting and trying to get to final votes in 1975. Some of your members would peel off and vote against the budget or vote against different measures, and you'd have to really work it to get your measures passed. How would you do that? How would you get people to change their vote, change their mind and come onboard?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, we didn't have as much problem on that, because I said we had a very united caucus. I can remember a couple of instances, I called people up to the podium because on those kind of issues, O'Brian wasn't on the podium (laughs) – I was.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you know when those hot spots were and you wanted to be presiding?

Mr. Sawyer: You knew the bills. I only spent, I probably could have spent another fifty percent of my time on the podium, but I didn't. I felt I was doing better otherwise. But on the hot issues, no, then it's fun.

And as far as twisting arms, I probably twisted less arms than anybody else that I know of. I don't know what twisting arm is; you get the person up there and you say, "Hey, this is important to the caucus, this is important to us. Can't you see your way..." Now if they'd say, "No." Now the only one thing that would turn me off, I would never – if they told me, : "No, this is a bad issue in my district," I would shut up and tell them, "Well, we want you re-elected." And I told people those things. So, I guess Representative Eng's is the only one...: On Eng's vote, we needed his vote. But I don't know what – I didn't twist his arm.

One time, I remember one of my members, one of my most loyal members, as far as – he always voted for every revenue and against every tax issue. And so, he's sitting there talking away, and I'm not paying much attention – and I'm up there at the rostrum and we're passing a tax bill. We have a couple of votes extra, and we'd told people to peel off if we had the

votes. All we wanted were fifty votes, we didn't care.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yeah, that'll do the trick.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, I was a big fifty-vote man. And I looked down and all of a sudden here's this big red light on his desk. And this vote was on a portion that was going to help his people.

Ms. Kilgannon: He missed that detail?

Mr. Sawyer: This tax had something to do with people that he was really – he was their leader – you know. And I looked at that, and I just stood there and looked at him. I wouldn't push the button, the thing was rolling over and you know it was the changing votes – I just kept looking at him. Finally, he looked up and saw me. And he immediately turned around. And I just let it go. Then he turned around again and he looked at me and I made a gesture – he pushed the button. He changed his vote and he didn't have a chance to change it again.

But we both laughed about it. And that's probably the biggest time I can remember twisting anybody's arm, because it was a bill that was really going to help his area.

Ms. Kilgannon: The tax money?

Mr. Sawyer: The money, yeah. To this day, I still laugh. I tease him every time I see him.

Ms. Kilgannon: Was this budget harder to get than other budgets?

Mr. Sawyer: No.

Ms. Kilgannon: Or are they all hard?

Mr. Sawyer: The idea is... the old way you used to do it, you'd put (the budget) in a conference committee and then you'd come out – "If you want see it before vote for it, you have to stay around." Well, that was a concept we were trying to cut down a little bit. And so there's always people -

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you get any credit for actually democratizing the budget and then spreading it out?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I don't remember. Probably not. I couldn't care, that wasn't what we were doing. All I know, it was working. All of our reforms were working better than I had hoped they would. And I think everybody basically agrees – there were a few people that no matter what you did, they were going to be

against it, but you didn't hear the Republican leadership hammering away too hard.

See one of the things I learned in life is when you're working, you've got a goal and you're working on a project and you've got a group of people, it's "We're all together, we're tight and it's fun. We've got a thing." Then you pass it or you put it together, then everybody starts fighting over the goodies. Oh, really. It's happened practically eighty percent of the time. And it ruins all the pleasure you had doing it.

Ms. Kilgannon: You can only hold together for so long and then people start to -

Mr. Sawyer: And I had a pretty good ride for over five years. And for five years, I couldn't ask for a better caucus and I was proud of my caucus.

Ms. Kilgannon: (Journalist) Richard Larsen, in an article, calls you Captain Sawyer and he uses a metaphor that that refers to your ship of state, basically. And I'm going to read you this paragraph and ask what you think of it. He says, "Like a tough, unblinking captain, Speaker of the House Leonard Sawyer steered the House of Representatives through a stormy weekend and delivered a budget. But he was so relentless about it, he crunched over so many Republican and Democratic rocks, the continuing session vessel, which he'd launched personally with such great pride last year, now is discolored, battered, leaking and perhaps sinking."

Is this poetic license, or is this – is he onto something here? He talks about you really pounding this budget out and forcing the issue and conferring and pulling people behind closed doors and getting the votes. He talks about Dick King finally coming over and giving you a vote you needed and all the scrapping that was going on.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, I'd go ask somebody for their vote. Every speaker I ever knew did!

Ms. Kilgannon: Is this somehow on a different scale than that, or is this just colorful language?

Mr. Sawyer: It's pretty colorful. This is the idea of the all-powerful Speaker, and I wasn't all-powerful. I had a strong caucus. And that was it.

Ms. Kilgannon: So this doesn't really help you when journalists write like this?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, no, no, no. This kind of stuff, it doesn't

usually hurt you among the legislators because they know what's happening. The Senate – they are harder on their people because they are more conservative and they – Oh, I've seen some real donnybrooks, trying to get the last few vote here and there and trading back and forth. And I can't remember any of it being too much – I remember the one that I mentioned to you, and even then I didn't need his vote but I just thought he should vote for it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Let's look at the tax issue. Now this is the era when school levies are low and you have teachers marching on Olympia and it's not a great situation. You've got a pretty hot issue here. Like you said, you couldn't just give them what they wanted. You didn't have the money. You had talked at one time about some splits happening in the education world, how the WEA was changing, how your ties to it were not what they had been. Is that one of the things that's at the bottom of this?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, it could be. I don't know. My ties with WEA were very, very close in the '60s. And I don't know the early '70s, but after their director – see they got another director who was not politically oriented. So I didn't have the inside connection. But they did have some excellent lobbyists and I worked with them on the issue. But I don't know if they knew anything about the dissidents – if they did, they didn't tell me either. Which really makes me upset because I'd done – at least they should have had the courtesy to inform me.

But, at that time, we had a horrible environment for trying to pass taxes. The Senate had said, "No." My people in my district had definitely told me not to. And the Republicans weren't going to be giving away any votes. So we weren't going to be able to get fifty votes for taxes. And I think you had to look at that. You had to accept it and you had to chip at it. And I don't think – I actually said there would be no new taxes. I said there would be no large taxes. You've always got to leave room that you can chip away – but there weren't going to be any major taxes. The Senate had told us that and I knew the Senate well. And I knew when they would move and when they wouldn't. They weren't going to move on this.

And in my district it would have been political suicide to do it but then I was quitting anyway, so I

probably would have gone ahead, if I thought it was possible. It just wasn't.

But we still could have worked it. There's something we could have done. We could have gotten Dean Morgan – probably he could have got us some money back – but they never went to Morgan to get any money or anything. There were all kinds of ways that we would have worked it. It wouldn't have been good. It would not have been a banquet; it would have just been a little snack type of thing.

And the trouble with it is, our caucus had been very strongly identified with state workers and teachers and so forth, and that was probably the biggest shock I had: when I saw some of the people that were so strong on education that I had worked with so much on the list.

I read one article about Al Bauer and a bill; I don't even remember that bill. But Al always had my ear. I respected Al – Wayne Ehlers is another one – he was from my district. They could have talked to me. They never did. I think the word kind of got out that I wasn't going to probably run again and they were wanting to become speaker without having to go out and elect a bunch of people. There were several of them – but when I was in caucus, I made the challenge. "Hey, if you're really unhappy, get one person and have that person or any of you guys challenge me, one on one. I won't be running against the perfect speaker. The speaker that does everything like everybody wanted to."

"But," I said, "I don't know anybody like that. I know I'm not (perfect) and I don't think there's anybody out here. Now quite frankly if any of you want to run on- on-one, I'm going to whip you." I was mad!

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, certainly.

Mr. Sawyer: And the thing is, it was true. They didn't have anybody and nobody ever emerged. But there were several of them that would have liked to have done it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Is it one of those cases of not what have you done for me always, but what are you going to do for me now? When your past track record wasn't going to be of any use to you all of a sudden?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I guess it wasn't all of a sudden. All of a sudden I'm insensitive and all this stuff. And maybe I am insensitive, but I never felt I was insensitive. I might have been a little – well impatient sometimes with people but not – but even that, I strive not to do.

But basically I spoiled them. The basic strength of that came from new legislators in their first and second terms, and then a few older ones who saw a chance to utilize their discontent and unhappiness. But they had never had such help before! You know, they had people – the staff they could go to and be really prepared the thing. So sometimes a little knowledge is more dangerous – “beware of the young lawyer with a book.”

Ms. Kilgannon: Your Speaker’s Fun Nights also became an issue, I guess?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, they made a big thing out of it and we were having a lot of fun with it. We raised some money but it was peanuts compared to other things. But it was kind of a fun thing. We called it a “Fun Night” and we raised some money. I don’t know what the big deal was – they were trying to find things against me at that time and so whatever I did, they were going to look at it and decide what could be bad about it and that’s what they wrote. It’s what they do.

Ms. Kilgannon: Some people in your party, it seems, in your caucus, protested that too many of the strings were in your hands.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh yeah.

Ms. Kilgannon: You helped in campaigns and that did help you become speaker.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh yeah.

Ms. Kilgannon: And you stayed speaker. And they wanted that money more spread around and have a committee to distribute it, not you personally.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, that’s fine. I agree that would be great. Then get off their butts and go dig up the money. They just wanted to sit back and be the administrators. They didn’t want to do any – they didn’t want to go out and pound the doors. We went out and worked at it and they weren’t willing to. Before I left, we had really been climbing (in numbers) every year because we were working it. After that, people just took it for granted. And what happened? We lost control. It’s just that simple. Because the Republicans then got off their duff and got going.

Yeah, they want me to go out and trudge around and knock on doors and ask people for money. And then if anything goes bad, who’s bad? Me. But they want

me to take it and give it to them to spend.

Ms. Kilgannon: All this aside, it seems like some of your committee chairs were upset with you.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I gave them all staff – basically the committee staff were assigned to the chairmen. Now our chairmen they could get to me any time they wanted. Like when we were going to pull bills from Rules – they would tell me what bills they wanted me to pull and when we were ready to pull I would notify them. They would come over and testify on their committee’s bills because I didn’t like the idea that so many times when sitting in Rules Committee I had no idea what the bills were. And sometimes I’m sure I voted against the chairman and I shouldn’t have and so forth.

So I brought them in. Now some of them didn’t like that. They grumbled a little bit like that – they didn’t want to go over there and so forth, but gee, if I was a chairman I’d want to go – if these people (on Rules) had any control over whether my bill was going to go, you darned rights I’d be over. And the chairmen, on a whole, did a very good job. And it was very helpful.

Now when we were doing all these things it’s true, I didn’t go back to the caucus and say, “Hey, can I do this?” I thought I had the – I knew what we wanted to do in the caucus – we wanted to help teachers, we wanted to help these – and if I saw someplace to do that, I’d go do it. Or set up and try to do it. But most the budget things, Shinpoch and Bagnariol were in on it. Because as I said, as far as the technical portions of budgets, I was weak. So I used them. I had them right there.

Ms. Kilgannon: And yet Shinpoch is unhappy.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, he’s unhappy. Well, see he got unhappy because he thought he should be chairman of Ways and Means.

Ms. Kilgannon: Not just of the subcommittee.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, that wasn’t really a subcommittee. In our mind, it was a regular committee. And Bud was very good at detail. But he wasn’t a salesman. Bagnariol wasn’t a great – but he understands concepts real well. He didn’t get lost in figures but he was a good salesman. People liked him. He could go out and sell the budget. You know, he might do it over a pool table. I don’t know where he did it but he was very good that way. And that’s how he got to be speaker. He com-

municated with people well.

And so Bud was very unhappy with me. And this was his chance to get even. And I think a lot of those people – a few of them – just wanted to get even rather than do something.

And you know I made a change with Al Williams but who'd I put in his place? I didn't put in somebody that was a real favorite, I put Helen Sommers in and she had background in the issue. She deserved the job. And that's what we always tried to do. I always told our chairman that they were good bunch. Sure we had a couple weak spots, mainly because we were just weak in experience in certain areas so we had to have people fill in.

Ms. Kilgannon: So you had a deep bench as they say.

Mr. Sawyer: That's right. I think if I had one strength, I think I could judge people's abilities and I would place them where I thought they'd do the best – now sometimes, maybe we didn't go to the caucus. And no speaker ever had before. We went to the caucus to get them approved but you want to go through there and go through all the personalities and all the problems in the whole caucus? Not me. They would have run me -

Ms. Kilgannon: It would cause as many problems as it solved?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh jeez, our caucus at that time was so solid and so solidified that I didn't want to do anything that would be the least bit upsetting – and I don't think I was all powerful. But I think my caucus was the most powerful caucus on the floor.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yeah, you've got a lot of rising stars -

Mr. Sawyer: Oh yeah. That's what I mean. And we picked those people. Like young Rick Bender, he ended up being one of the ring leaders of the dissidents. But I had a lot of faith in Rick and he ended up being the head of the whole labor council for the State of Washington. Look at Marc Gaspard; he left us, went over to the Senate and became one of the most successful Senate leaders we've had. And then went on and was director of the higher education. These were quality people. And we got them and put them in a position to do something. And Helen Sommers. She's high-quality, and I thought that was a good change. And I knew Helen wasn't going to be a yes person. I don't like yes people. I like people who are independent.

Ms. Kilgannon: Some of their complaints were actually about staff. I mean you have introduced an entire new culture into the Legislature. People weren't used to staff, shall we say. And suddenly they were complaining that staff stood between them and you. That you had too much staff somehow.

Mr. Sawyer: I thought they might be referring to my personal staff.

Ms. Kilgannon: I don't know. I know you wanted to talk about your staff and explain who you had and what their functions were. So this might be a good time to do that.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, my key staff person was Dean Morgan, but he was only there for the first session and then he went back to private concerns.

Ms. Kilgannon: So he wasn't even there at this time?

Mr. Sawyer: No, he was lobbying. But he was always available and I could get him as a consultant at any time – to go back to Washington D.C. Because he brought us all kinds of money and he was really experienced, he was one of the best lobbyists in the State of Washington. And as far as Sen. Magnuson's office, they knew him, they trusted him. He knew the system and he knew Maggie wanted to help the state. Nobody else, no other speaker or anybody had ever did that.

Now that's called wheeling and dealing and I wanted to be a wheeler and dealer. They all said I was a wheeler dealer; well, I don't know what exactly a wheeler dealer is, but if that's it, yes, I'm a wheeler and dealer. We did use everything we could.

So we had Dean Morgan, and I got some flack on him. And after what he did, I can't believe it.

If it hadn't been for him, I don't know if I could have put the continuing session together because he and Dawne Friesen, who happened to be working with us, they sat down and put the words together and made charts and did all that sort of stuff. Well, not too many people can do that, but Dean could. And then, jeez, we already discussed what he could do back in Washington D.C. And he knew budget like the back of his hand. He really knew the budget. So I had real good people.

I didn't get a lot of flak, but I did get some from certain members from King County when I hired Vito

Chiechi. Now, Vito Chiechi was a conservative Republican. I knew it. He didn't say he wasn't. But Dean Morgan recommended him. And Dean knew what I needed. So when he recommended him, I didn't just brush that aside. I didn't think I was going to hire him, but I went and talked to him and I was very impressed. This guy – I could just tell by talking to him he was going to be loyal to our leadership. And he had enough background. You just don't find those kind of people.

Well, I can't say my judgment was wrong because Vito did real well and one of the mistakes that (the Democratic) caucus made was firing him after I left, because then the Republicans hired him. But to show what kind of a person he was, he called me up and said, "Len, I said I was going to be loyal to you and the caucus but they're firing me." I said, "Oh, they didn't!" He said, "Yeah, but the Republicans want to hire me, but do you think that's okay?" I said, "Vito, you rush over there. Because if those people don't want you, then cut the string of what your loyalty is." And I said, "I really appreciate this phone call."

Ms. Kilgannon: That's very classy.

Mr. Sawyer: I had classy people around me. And I really enjoyed working with those people because I didn't have to sit there and worry about them being late for work or sitting around the coffee shop or something like that. These guys were all sophisticated people. And I really thought I could really manage people until I got out in the real world and- I don't know about the rest of the public employees, but I know about the legislative employees. They are a breed of their own. And you can keep them up all night and everything else and they never ask for overtime. And we were underpaying them. Because compared to an executive and just how many fights can you get in? And I knew the press would chew us to pieces if we went too far.

Ms. Kilgannon: Now, you also had Dean Foster as your Chief Clerk. Was he able to – it's not really his role, I suppose, but did he know about some of these things that were going on? Was he able to -

Mr. Sawyer: I don't know. I should ask Dean sometime. He never said anything to me. Dean would be a beautiful target to those people because Dean was a very liberal person. I always considered myself liberal – especially in the area of civil rights – being a lawyer and so forth. But maybe I was too conservative.

Ms. Kilgannon: I think those words are losing meaning, actually.

Mr. Sawyer: Oh yeah. They now call it red and blue. And I read an article on that and this is the part that really disturbed me. The red people are moving and living in the same area; they don't want to talk to anybody except people in their own thing. So they are getting so solidified that they don't want to listen to anybody else's opinion. So how do you get anything done? It's just scary. Because in our day, the people in the middle are the ones that made the final decision.

The guidance came from the extremes, setting the policy. But when you finally get down to it, you had to compromise, you had to do something to get things done, well that's when the moderates had to be called on because they're the ones that had to deliver the votes in-between the factions. So that was just a fact of life. And that's something that I don't think the people that wanted to get rid of me even had the faintest idea about. I learned it the hard way.

Ms. Kilgannon: So you think in all this that Dean Foster would have been a neutral person? He's the administrator, he's got his hands full. Do you think he was taken by surprise as well?

Mr. Sawyer: I don't know. I didn't want to – he had a job and a family to support. I never asked him to do anything on it.. And he never offered either, because he stayed. But after it was all over, he and I had our same relationship.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, he has a different role. He's administrator, he has to be kind of there for everyone.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, he does.

Ms. Kilgannon: So he's in a different place. And you had some lists of some other people that were actually your secretaries and other people that worked right in your office and supported your efforts?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, we had some real good help there. We had – I talked about Don Clawson and Dean Foster, the Chief Clerk: he became a legend. Blair Butterworth...

Ms. Kilgannon: He wrote your speeches?

Mr. Sawyer: He wrote speeches and he did PR type of stuff. He really understood politics and he was very good. You give him a project and he'd write it up so

that people would like it.

Ms. Kilgannon: He would be called your communications director, or whatever it was called then?

Mr. Sawyer: He was working under Clawson. Clawson was communications director, and Blair was working under Clawson. Because he was just starting out.

Ms. Kilgannon: Kind of young at that stage, wasn't he?

Mr. Sawyer: Well he fooled around back in Washington for a little while. He'd worked, been around, associated with people – his dad was, I think, an ambassador to England. So he had plenty of background.

Ms. Kilgannon: He was more of a D.C. person.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, he was when he came to us. And Morgan's the one that brought him. Then, as I said, we had senate and house staff coordinator, Dawne Friesen, and I think Franz Gregory worked with her on that. Then we had Diane Oberquill, the secretary. And she became a county commissioner and very politically active. We had Charlotte, I don't know her last name I think is Manning, who after she left me went down and worked for Buster Brouillet as OSPI, and she's been a very active, strong person in education as far as I know. And then we had Gerri Rainwater who came in towards the end. We had opened a legislative office up in King County here, right by the airport. It was just a great big room with couches and chairs and stuff. And then for meetings and stuff and then we had two real small rooms. One I used for working so I didn't have to run all the way down to Olympia all the time and I could have meetings up here. And I had a fancy desk – a piece of plywood and two chairs! It was just a place to work and meet people. And it really worked out. In fact, I think the Senate went ahead and got one too.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yeah, I understand they did.

Mr. Sawyer: Because people would come in on the airplane, and they wouldn't have to drive all the way to Olympia for a meeting. They would come across the street, and they could easily go home that night if they needed to, or they could stay there. It worked out much better than I even anticipated.

When you've got a citizen legislature, you've got to do things like that because you're taking them away from their home life. If a person's working full time,

well what the heck, I don't have as much worry about them. That's a part of their job. But that really worked. And I'm sure the rebellious Seattle group used it for a meeting place. That was fine. That's what it was for.

Ms. Kilgannon: So people could book it. They could fly in – commissions, could they use it?

Mr. Sawyer: Who?

Ms. Kilgannon: Different state commissions?

Mr. Sawyer: No, no, it was basically -

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, I mean legislators sit on different boards and things.

Mr. Sawyer: No, it was used basically for just legislators and legislative business. And Gerri Rainwater kind of coordinated it and was the secretary for it up there. And during the session, she'd come down and work in Olympia. Later, she became the head of staff for Pierce County for years. I don't know, I was lucky to get these kind of people.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes, it seemed that everyone on your staff goes on to some really responsible position.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, it was a good training ground. I didn't know I was training them. Some of them were training me.

Ms. Kilgannon: Hey, a good staff person keeps their boss in line. So, there's some grumbling about your excellent staff. Let's see, some of the other complaints – there's grumbling about, though it isn't very articulated, the committee structure and how Rules is working. You, I gather, you couldn't really have solved these difficulties because nobody was coming to you and saying, "We need, you know, A, B, and C."

Mr. Sawyer: The ones that had been there certainly shouldn't have been crying because they got a heck of a lot more backup and support than they had before. But anything can be improved. And I don't know why they wouldn't come. I don't think I was that scary.

Ms. Kilgannon: So when you got the ultimatum, was there anything at that point that you could be – was it sort of an up or down thing? Or could you go to them, one at a time say, and say, "Okay what is it you want?"

Mr. Sawyer: There were all kinds of things that I probably could have done. But they had them swear and sign on an oath and all this. And I don't like to

ask people to go back on commitments. I never have. I'm not saying that I didn't check with them, a couple of them. And I was dumbfounded when they told me they were involved, because I had worked so closely with them. So, I was really surprised, there's no doubt about that. And I went home and I got to thinking about it, and yeah, there were all kinds of things I could have probably done, but I thought, "I don't want to do those things." I didn't get involved before on any coalitions but I said -

Ms. Kilgannon: What are you referring to when you say the word coalition?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, working out something with – going across the aisles and getting votes wherever you can, even if you don't have a commitment all the way. Like what Michael Somare had to do because nobody had a majority.

But I wasn't too hot for coalitions. And besides that, I was spoiled. I was used to being able to do things. And all of a sudden, at the best, I would have been crippled. I wouldn't have been able to – I could have probably maintained the trappings of the office, and so forth, but that never meant much to me. I mean being speaker, I didn't like the ceremonial things. And the only time when I wanted to be on the podium was when we were having a go at it. Something really hot.

Ms. Kilgannon: So you wouldn't be a figurehead; it's all or nothing.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I don't mean all or nothing but just to go –

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, I mean, you'd never be happy to split the reins.

Mr. Sawyer: And I'd already accomplished more than I thought I was going to be able to. And so I just didn't think it was worth a big fight; it wasn't worth splitting up the thing. But you know, we weren't going to just let people take over that didn't know how to run it. They should have, when they found out they didn't have the votes, they didn't have to come to me, they should have gone to Bagnariol or somebody that could really do something. But no, they wouldn't do it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you take counsel with anyone? You've got your leadership group that stands with you; you've got people like John Bagnariol, like say Lorraine Wojahn and great defenders of your speakership.

Did you talk with them about what to do here? What approach to take?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I don't know how much I talked to them. I think we had a lunch or something but they were putting all kinds of pressure on it. And the only thing I wanted – when I met with them – I said, you know, "It's going to be hectic around here. And I don't mind giving up, but the one thing is I'm worried about you guys; so stay together. If you guys stay together, you've got the experience, you've got the numbers, there's nothing they can do without you." I said, "Let's be practical, whoever gets that job is going to have a horrible job. And we've got horrible problems out there, and nobody will be wanting to be giving anybody the power to go do something about it."

Ms. Kilgannon: Did they see that? Did they -

Mr. Sawyer: A lot of them still wanted me to go do battle. They were mad.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yeah, there's definitely statements being made about fighting back.

Mr. Sawyer: And I was too, at first, I have to say. I think my dear friend Martin Durkan, who was my roommate, said, "Take them on. Go out in your shield." I said, "Well, that sounds good." (Laughs) And then I got to thinking, this is about more than me. If the caucus is really that upset, the caucus – I hated to see the caucus make a stupid move. I shouldn't say that because maybe they're making a hell of a good move. But it doesn't make sense to everything I know. They are going to have turmoil and I owed it – I think I owed it to the Democratic caucus that I didn't want my people all chewed up. Because they were, to me, the strength of the Legislature at that time. And so they had to protect themselves. And this wasn't going to be a rhyme or reason thing.

Ms. Kilgannon: If you had really fought, would it have been worse? I mean is that how you were looking at it? If you really dug in your heels:

Mr. Sawyer: The one thing that I really had in my mind – because I don't like to ask people – is this oath these guys took. And I'm stupid that way, but to me, your word means an awful lot in the legislative process. That's about all you have.

And the only ones I'd be asking would be people that I thought a lot of and had worked with a lot. You

know, there were five or six of them. I just couldn't believe it. But I talked to a few of them and the ones that hadn't already committed I got most of.

Ms. Kilgannon: Many identified themselves as Sawyer-crats, more loyal to you than the Democratic Party that sounds like, but it's just their definition of the Democratic Party. Some of those people were said to be talking to Republicans and seeing if they could get some support there. You might not have been looking at doing that, but some of those people seemed to have been feeling around in that area.

Mr. Sawyer: There was feeling around, but nobody got any farther than that because I think the Republicans were very -

Ms. Kilgannon: Were they, more or less, kind of sitting back and waiting to see what would happen?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, we'd been a strong, active group. And all of a sudden we exploded. No, their best strategy was what they did – just sit back. I think if we really got down to it, they didn't particularly think I was the greatest guy in the world because I ran kind of a tight ship on them. But I did treat them fairly and they got staff and all that. I always had communications with their leadership, because they were good guys and they were good legislators. And so I always figured that if push came to shove, they'd dislike the other faction more than they disliked our faction. So I think we could have made it work.

Ms. Kilgannon: You say at some point that there's a couple of people you would accept in your place but the rest of the caucus won't go for it. Maybe if John Bagnariol had stepped forward or Paul Conner, but those names aren't going to work for the caucus at that point, which is really interesting since John Bagnariol becomes speaker the next session.

Mr. Sawyer: I don't know what they were thinking. I forgot I had said that. I probably would because those are the kind of people that I would have recommended. They were solid and they had had some leadership roles and they had been in there.

Ms. Kilgannon: They go to several people and they never do identify one person, like you say, to be their leader and that was their fatal mistake, I guess. They do finally coalesce behind John O'Brien. He's just the speaker pro tem, and he assumes the gavel, but there's

no Speaker. There just never is. This seems unprecedented, I don't know if it's ever happened before.

Mr. Sawyer: I don't know if the Speaker had ever been kicked out in the middle of the term or something. Nationally, they have done it. They did it two times in one year.

Ms. Kilgannon: I don't recall quite that situation. Eventually, the press starts to pick up on this and saying "They're headless and they're wandering and they don't know what they're doing and nobody knows who's in charge." Different people step forward and try to pull it together, Alan Thompson being the floor leader at the time tries to pull things together.

He seems to be in an ambiguous position with you, doesn't he? He's not one of the dissidents, but he's not totally in your camp either. Did you have conversations with him about where he was in all this?

Mr. Sawyer: No, they never came around to me. At that time, I was up in an upstairs office, which is a good office. So, I figured the people that stuck with me, those were the ones that I was going to stick with. The others, I would be happy to talk to them. But I was going to make sure that they weren't going to be doing anything to my people that stuck with me.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you actually stay located in the speaker's office?

Mr. Sawyer: No. I moved out.

Ms. Kilgannon: Where did you go?

Mr. Sawyer: Upstairs just directly above it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Just a vacant office somewhere?

Mr. Sawyer: I think somebody vacated that office for some reason.

Ms. Kilgannon: So the Speaker's office was actually empty at that point?

Mr. Sawyer: I guess so; I don't know what they were using it for.

Ms. Kilgannon: There's this instance on Valentine's Day where Duane Berentson, one of the lead Republicans, for whatever reasons, tries to kind of force the issue. He makes a motion to elect a Speaker. You've deposed your Speaker and you then went through this period of no speaker, it's a little bit hard to tell what's going on. And everybody's getting a little nervous

because issues were kind of falling through the cracks. The session is moving through the days and you're not doing a lot.

So he tries to make people step up to it, I guess and say, "What are you going to do?" He came within three votes of having his motion passed to force an election. It didn't quite make it but everyone's a little stuck that your group is holding firm and there's quite a few dissidents but there's not enough.

So there's a lot of turmoil. What happens to the session? You've got some very difficult issues: education financing, energy policy, pension reform, the state employees salary issue – they had been pressing pretty hard on legislators, pledging a no tax increase, as you said. Bills you had wanted to push through in a very quick succession and now....

Mt. Sawyer: Well, that's what we wanted to do but that might not have been very realistic because all of the problems.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, you didn't realize things were going to fall apart.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, no, but even if they hadn't of fallen apart, that would have been very challenging.

Ms. Kilgannon: It's ambitious.

Mr. Sawyer: Ambitious, but then it's worth a try and you go in there and swing and do the best you can. That's about all you can do. Especially in that kind of a situation. In normal times, getting tax votes is tough but we're used to that. But these weren't normal times, and the teachers wanted more money, but how about the poor Boeing workers that got fired?

That was on the other end of the thing, and what was more important to people out in that area is how many Boeing workers had lost their jobs. So the timing was all wrong. And you know me, what you can't do today, you can maybe do tomorrow and vice-a-versa. Timing is what you've really got to be a master of if you're going to get anything through.

Ms. Kilgannon: Do you remember how they were able to get through some of these issues in the midst of all this turmoil?

Mr. Sawyer: No, I was interested but I don't remember. They were off there flailing away and if they really wanted help, they would have come. And I figured if

I did try to help them, they'd get suspicious that I was doing something devious.

Ms. Kilgannon: So you sort of fell back into just being a member from Pierce County, from Puyallup?

Mr. Sawyer: Umm hmmm.

Ms. Kilgannon: Was that hard for you?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I didn't like it because I was used to being able to do things. But the main thing that bugged me was the turmoil out there, and the fact that these people hadn't done any kind of a job getting ready to take over. If you're going to take over, they should have had a program all lined up; they didn't.

You know, just like when I challenged them in the caucus, that was a perfect time. They could have said, "Okay, we'll get somebody." And go back and we'd have had at it. And if that happened, I'm sure all my people would have gone along with it. Because that would have been a true decision.

Ms. Kilgannon: What are you doing during this time? Because your time had been fully taken up with being Speaker, so you're only on Rules Committee and now you're not the chair of it. Presumably, you're still on the committee but what's your role now?

Mr. Sawyer: My role was basically just a legislator. I went to caucus -

Ms. Kilgannon: But you weren't on very many committees, so it's hard to operate in that structure.

Mr. Sawyer: No, but that's the way I liked to operate. And I had lots of catching up to do. I had so many things that I had not done because I didn't have time to while I was Speaker.

Ms. Kilgannon: There's also the issue of – the Speaker, of course, has many roles as we've talked about quite a bit. And the speaker pro tem picks up some of those but according to the rules, not all of them. Who became, for instance, chair of Rules? There are certain things that belong to the Speaker that don't belong to the pro tem.

Mr. Sawyer: I don't remember, exactly. I don't think they made committee chairman changes because they'd have had a tough time of it out on the floor. The Republicans probably would have picked and chosen who they wanted on the thing. So they didn't get in

that position. I think that maybe O'Brien must have been Rules Committee chair. I don't know.

Ms. Kilgannon: He must have stepped in on some of them, but he's in sort of an ambiguous position too. It's just constitutionally it's a little muddy just exactly who has the power. Because speaker pro tem doesn't have the same – you know – cache as the speaker. He has some of it but not all -

Mr. Sawyer: He can pick up as much as the people want to let him. And that's why our caucus was so strong.

Ms. Kilgannon: So you're kind of floundering around there for a while. In early February, groups meet and they do set up a policy committee. Instead of having one head, they have six – which is an interesting innovation – Alan Thompson, Rick Bender, Donn Charnley, Ed Seeberger, Marc Gaspard – I seem to be missing one of the six here – get together and they must have made group decisions on some level.

Mr. Sawyer: But they still had to go to the caucus to get them through. I mean it was a good try. But it was doomed to failure right off the bat because they didn't take care of the basic problem. That was a superficial attempt, that's all.

Ms. Kilgannon: There is an appointment of a task force to address education funding and you gave some speeches where you talk about how levies are not the answer, how an increase in the sales tax is not the answer, and certainly not the property tax. You've been burnt pretty hard on that one. You say, "The only chance is for a graduated income tax." But nobody's sticking their neck out for that. So, you're a little bit stuck there. Eventually, of course, it goes to court and you get the decision that, you know, education is the paramount duty of the state and you've got to fund it. And you have Governor Ray coming in after the next election. But this is just coming – your session is just – you're not ready to make those decisions.

Mr. Sawyer: I'm not able to.

Ms. Kilgannon: Not able to.

Mr. Sawyer: We were all ready. We had the legislation ready.

Ms. Kilgannon: There were also some issues about, again, the powers of the speaker, who's going to make interim appointments? Everybody's kind of fussing

about that. I'm not sure how that was decided; do you recall if that fell to John O'Brien?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I don't remember because I wasn't going to be on it or anything and I have to admit that I just wasn't in – they didn't want me in the policy-making end of this sort of stuff, which was fine with me right then. I just decided I've got to get back and make a living and so I started preparing to -

Ms. Kilgannon: You're going to be focused on your practice?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, I'm refocusing.

Ms. Kilgannon: So gradually by March, you do enough to end the session and you're out of there. Did you realize that was your last day when you finally left?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh yeah. I'd made up my mind before all this happened.

Ms. Kilgannon: March 26. You just drove away? That was it?

Mr. Sawyer: I was able to – some legislators or people leave – they just can't get away. I was able to just drop the curtain. You know I was kind of disgusted and so forth at the whole thing. But I just decided, when I wasn't there, I wasn't there and I had plenty of things to keep me busy so I never was real active with the Legislature after that.

Ms. Kilgannon: How did you feel, though – driving away?

Mr. Sawyer: Oh, I so enjoyed my twenty-two years but – and many people that have said this, but it's so true – I wouldn't trade it for anything, but I wouldn't want to do it again. Because it's so time consuming; you get so involved in it. It affects your family and your kids and it affects your world, you know. And I let it do that to me. If anybody has a complaint about it, it's my family.

Ms. Kilgannon: Some people have said that when you're in the Legislature, you're closer to those people than anyone else because only they can understand what it is you're doing down there.

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, that's true.

Ms. Kilgannon: And that relationship becomes everything.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, that's true, yeah, I think it does.

While you are down there it is very strong. Everything revolves around it. Afterwards, I often said, "You go down there and you're treated like kings and then you go home and you're a peasant again."

Chapter 22

Closing Thoughts

Ms. Kilgannon: In retrospect, do you wish you had done anything differently?

Mr. Sawyer: In what way?

Ms. Kilgannon: With the back benchers?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I guess I should have. But I basically think, well, yeah I could have -

Ms. Kilgannon: Like say, back in 1973 or '74, when you're just getting started?

Mr. Sawyer: Not in those days. We were really working it and anybody says they weren't involved is wrong. In '75, I don't know, because I had done practically everything I was thinking of and I was ready to get out. You know it was just a matter of getting LEAP going real good and so forth.

But God, look at LEAP, it gave the, so much information! But, I think they just all wanted to be the boss and that's their right.

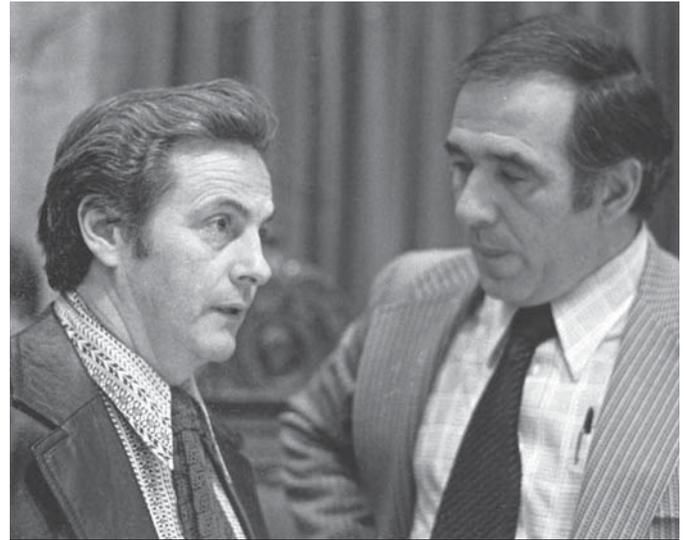
Ms. Kilgannon: I think about that era, the post-Watergate era, that people coming in as freshmen to Congress were a totally different breed of politician. They didn't want to wait, they didn't want to go through the seniority, they wanted to be powerful and give speeches. They were a very different kind of person.

Mr. Sawyer: That was the stuff that was here, too – “the now generation” I called them. They wanted their houses immediately, they wanted everything immediately. And we had come through a different generation. You had to work for it. You know, they wanted everything.

Ms. Kilgannon: Is that the phenomena you're seeing in the Legislature?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, that's what I felt afterwards. The “now generation.”

Ms. Kilgannon: Are these guys ten, twenty years younger than you?



*Speaker Sawyer with
House Ways and Means chair John Bagnariol*

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I was in my forties and they were in their early thirties and a lot of them were forty, some of them were older than I was.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yeah, so it's not really an age issue because you weren't older.

Mr. Sawyer: I didn't act older, anyway.

Ms. Kilgannon: But you had been there for a long time. Maybe you had that different perspective, you'd seen where it was before?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, I really didn't know enough. But I knew I didn't know enough. A lot of these other people didn't know they didn't know enough.

Ms. Kilgannon: That is a crucial difference.

Mr. Sawyer: Because I came into politics – I mean as I said, as neophyte. I didn't know anything. Didn't even know where the door was.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, look how far you've come. At any rate, how much does this new generation start to make an impact on what you're trying to do?

Mr. Sawyer: I don't think it made that big an impact at first. It really flared up, I guess, in '75.

Ms. Kilgannon: I just wondered if you were aware of that there were issues, or?

Mr. Sawyer: As I told you, I was ready to get out, and so I was kind of distracted. I wasn't as engaged, so there was probably a bona fide thing there. I wasn't – they were used to me paying too much attention, I guess. I still was putting in a lot of time on it, but I was not putting in the same amount of time.

Ms. Kilgannon: Were you ever tempted to go into the national field?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, when I was speaker a lot of people came around because they were reading those articles about how powerful I was. And they'd say, "You've got to run for governor." "I don't want to run for governor." I said, "I'm a part-time – I'm an amateur – I'm a part-time legislator, I do not want my family – they get enough beef now – I don't want us to depend on my being elected." I mean it's nice to be elected, but I didn't run. And I said, "and besides that, where would I go if I don't go for governor? I don't like the idea of being an administrator for all that stuff, do I want to go to the House of Representatives, where I'd be one of 460 people, no. Now if you want to appoint me to the United State Senate, I'd be interested; that's a workable body."

Ms. Kilgannon: You might have thought about that.

Mr. Sawyer: You only have to run every six years and so forth so you can really get in and do things. "That's the only thing I'd be tempted to try, but I don't think I have to worry about it." That's what I told them.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, considering that your good friend, Senator Magnuson, kind of had that locked up and Senator Jackson looked like he'd be there forever too. That removed the temptation.

Mr. Sawyer: No, and I'd never be in the shoes of Senator Magnuson. He was something else. He's just one in a lifetime coming around. Jackson would have been easier to follow but then I wasn't his type, you know. He worked on his constituents just beautifully.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yeah, if you don't want to be a congressman, then certainly the Senate positions were well taken, so that just kind of kept you right where you were.

Mr. Sawyer: I had no place to go and I never wanted to be the governor. That just wasn't my forte, my forte was policies. I was not a good caretaker. I was an idea person, not a caretaker.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, certainly the governor is the chief administrator. That's a different thing.

Mr. Sawyer: And I'm not saying – caretakers are probably more important than my kind of philosophies but I just have to live with what I can do best.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, it's important to know what that is.

Mr. Sawyer: And I learned that early. So I was ready to move on.

Ms. Kilgannon: Had you learned from, say, John O'Brien's long tenure as a speaker that perhaps it's not such a good thing for a speaker to be in there for a long time? They should get in – do their – do whatever their main goal is and then move on?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, John contributed all this time, so why shouldn't he be there?

Ms. Kilgannon: That's true, although you challenged him yourself.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, yeah, but I was tired of the same old people being in control and I thought we needed some new blood. I thought it was going to be Augie, to start with.

Ms. Kilgannon: I was just wondering if you were thinking along those lines yourself. Sort of, I'll have – you know – a couple of shots at it, and then somebody's going to come in and challenge me because that's kind of the way it is .

Mr. Sawyer: I wasn't even worrying about it. I knew I was going to quit. I already had my program about down then. If I worried about things like being challenged, then I couldn't have gotten all that done because I would have had to back off some of the stuff that's tougher. It's an old athletic thing, you know, go to your strength, go to your strength, go to your strength.

Ms. Kilgannon: That sounds like an important lesson.

Mr. Sawyer: Go to your strength and stay there.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did John Bagnariol ever call you up and ask for advice when he was speaker, or he was his own man and...

Mr. Sawyer: Oh no, he was pretty much his own man. And I was pretty controversial.

Ms. Kilgannon: He did carry on many of your innovations. LEAP is really institutionalized at that point. They don't continue with the continuing session concept but certainly the staff and all the other things that you brought in were maintained.

Mr. Sawyer: Well, the thing is, I was looking at that. We started LEAP, we started standing committees.

LEAP they kept, standing committees they kept. We had professional staff, they kept that. We had continuing session. I think they tried it for a little bit but the continuing session was the weakest part of the program and – I knew this – it was an imposition on legislators. Especially over the mountains. And we weren't paying them anything. Basically, it was the way it should be run, but then from a practical standpoint that was the one thing I fouled up. Well, I knew there was a problem.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, they went to a different solution. They went to annual sessions which took care of some of.

Mr. Sawyer: Took care of some it, but the other thing is, when I was speaker, I fought deadlines. I didn't like deadlines. Because I knew how I used them. I knew how senators like Mardesich and Gissberg used them. The last few days, when you've got deadlines coming up, you can just – nobody's paying attention to anything, you can just pass practically anything – that's when you put all these little amendments on bills.

Ms. Kilgannon: So it can be a good thing but it can be abused?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, yeah, the good thing is it sets a date and some people just don't want to move. If they've got an excuse not to do something, they won't. So that's the good portion. But I always thought the other part of it far outweighed that.

Ms. Kilgannon: In recognition of your legacy, and of what you did there, in 1988 legislators got together and sponsored a House Floor Resolution 4773. They called you back and thanked you, enumerating the list that we just talked about; the standing committees and the staff and LEAP and all those innovations.

They did this floor resolution commemorating all your work and your accomplishments, and it happened to be John O'Brien at the rostrum. The speaker at the time was Joe King, but he was not present.

So it's like a big circle coming around. And you were able to address the Legislature and be recognized. Do you remember what you said?

Mr. Sawyer: I don't remember what I said.

Ms. Kilgannon: Do you remember the occasion?

Mr. Sawyer: I remember the occasion. I was very pleased because we got so much flak about a lot of

stuff. But time takes care of a lot of that. And I was very pleased that they did it.

Ms. Kilgannon: It's sponsored by some Tacoma legislators, of course, but also some other legislators; interesting mixture, including one former dissident member, which is kind of interesting to see, including Brian Ebersole, Clyde Ballard, Dan Grimm, and Dick King.

Mr. Sawyer: I also had Helen making a speech for it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes and Helen Sommers made some very nice comments about you. So time softened the differences?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, not only that, but I think they recognized that they were a little impetuous with what they did, and I know Helen – I had several legislators come later and say that to me.

Ms. Kilgannon: That they had made a mistake?

Mr. Sawyer: Yeah, they were just impetuous. And I said, "Well, it's done now, so we're not going to worry about it." But I'm not saying that was the majority of them.

Ms. Kilgannon: No, but it was a gracious gesture. Did that give you a funny feeling?

Mr. Sawyer: Well, it made me feel good.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, sure. You were vindicated.

Mr. Sawyer: Those sort of conversations, and the resolution, yeah. It just left a good taste in my mouth.

Ms. Kilgannon: It's a nicer way to end your career. Part of the resolution read, "As the Washington State Legislature has been enjoying for many years the benefits of equal status with the executive branch of government while prior to 1973 the executive branch exerted considerable power over the Legislature.

Mr. Sawyer: That is what we were striving for.

Ms. Kilgannon: "Whereas the Legislature has been enjoying for many years the benefits of a professional, non-partisan committee staff and a continuing Legislature while prior to 1973 the standing committees and committee staff existed only during legislative sessions, dissolving during each interim and the Legislature relied only on joint committees and a small legislative council during the interim.

“Whereas these benefits which now the Legislature largely takes for granted were mostly the work of one pragmatic legislator with a vision. Speaker Leonard A. Sawyer, a representative from the Twenty-fifth District and whereas former state representative Leonard A. Sawyer served in the House for twenty-one years, from 1955 to 1976 and served as House speaker from 1973 to 1976...” and then it goes on – for quite a few more paragraphs.

Mr. Sawyer: It was nice.

Ms. Kilgannon: Representatives King, Gallagher, Grimm, Lux, and a few others spoke in favor of the resolution and it was adopted.

Mr. Sawyer: I was surprised that Lux did because I always liked her but she and I were on kind of different wave lengths. But she’s a neat gal, yeah.

Ms. Kilgannon: Do you have any last things you want to say about your legacy?

Mr. Sawyer: I worked with wonderful people. My leadership team, my personal staff, my caucus. I was lucky to know them and to work with them. And those people did a fantastic job. I mean, as I said before, and now I have to say it again because I feel so strongly about it, they are the ones that provided me with the ability to go ahead and do all that I did.

Ms. Kilgannon: A real team.

Mr. Sawyer: It was. We had something to do and we did it.

Chapter 23

Interview with Former State Representatives Rick Bender and Jim Boldt



Speaker Sawyer addressing the House Democratic Caucus

Ms. McCrady: I'm here with former state representatives, Rick Bender and Jim Boldt. Thank you so much for meeting with me together.

Mr. Boldt: Happy to. I don't know if you know the background, but Rick and I were roommates during the legislature, and we've kept loosely in touch. So, we have no problem doing this together.

Ms. McCrady: Okay, great. So, let's start with you, Rep. Boldt. You were elected in...

Mr. Boldt: I was elected in 1974.

Ms. McCrady: Okay, so that was the beginning of Leonard Sawyer's second term as Speaker of the House.

Mr. Boldt: Right. I had worked in Congress the year before and I came back to run for office in my hometown.

Ms. McCrady: And Rep. Bender?

Mr. Bender: I had just gotten back from Vietnam in 1972, early '72 and I was asked by a number of folks to run in an open seat. I ran; I was 22 years old. Turned 23 ten days before the election and was elected by 149 votes against an incumbent in what was then the 1st Legislative District.

Mr. Boldt: And I came out of the 8th LD, from the Tri-Cities area

Ms. McCrady: I see. So, you then both met Speaker Sawyer for the first time?

Mr. Bender: Actually, I knew him much earlier. My father was a good friend of Leonard Sawyer's. My father was head of the King County Labor Council in those days. In fact, when I was a teenager I was at the Sawyer house in Lake Tapps, and we visited him and had lunch and that kind of stuff. My father had been friends with Leonard for quite some time and when I

ran that first time, Leonard was doing what he could do to help me. They didn't think I was going to win, but I kind of pulled it out there in the end.

Mr. Boldt: They didn't...I don't know about Rick, but we were...someone asked me maybe a year ago or so, had I ever been discriminated against, you know, this white boy from eastern Washington. Rick, I don't know if we've ever talked about this, but being 25-years-old in the legislature, they just think you're an anomaly. So, they put us in the back row.

I remember, I met Rick and his father in the fall of 1974 during the election. My dad, a business man, was very close friends to the IBEW labor leader in the Tri-Cities; they played cards together. I leaned more on the moderate left side, so I got together with the IBEW; he said, "You've got to meet Mr. Bender – Jim Bender." I got lined up to meet Jim, and I ran into Rick. His dad made provision for my signs. So, we go back –

Ms. McCrady: Oh, okay. So, you knew each-other before when you came to the legislature.

Mr. Bender: Well, I mean we met. We didn't really know each-other, but we had met for the first time.

Mr. Boldt: But, we started interacting. There were... were we among the only ones in our 20s; Marc Gaspard was, and who else was there?

Mr. Bender: Yeah; Gaspard's just a year older than me...

Mr. Boldt: During the 1974 election they called us Watergate babies because a Democrat could get elected anywhere due to what happened in Watergate.

Ms. McCrady: Oh that's funny.

Mr. Boldt: And, we picked up a few other of the younger guys.

Mr. Bender: The thing is, I wasn't really running to run. To be honest with you, I had just gotten back from Vietnam and I said, that's the last thing I want to do right now. I want to get back to civilian life and go back to school, college. But, they finally talked me into it and I said, "Oh, what the hell? I'm not going to win but it will be a good experience anyway", and I won.

Ms. McCrady: How many terms did you serve?

Mr. Bender: I served five terms in the House, and two terms in the Senate; it was 18 years altogether.

Ms. McCrady: How about you, Jim?

Mr. Boldt: Two terms in the House, and I was working in Congress; I was doing advance work in community relations for Congressman Mike McCormick. I did all the newspaper clippings for him and I went in one morning and I said, "Mike, both House seats are open in the eighth district; they're going to challenge each-other for the senate. Two open-House seats at one time." Mike said, "We've got to get somebody to run; I've got to get going on this." I said, "Hello?" He said, "You graduated from college?"

Ms. McCrady: You're 24 years old?

Mr. Boldt: I said, "I can do this." He said, "Okay, let's do this." And, I went home.

Mr. Bender: We both faced the issue; sometimes some people thought we were just too young to be elected.

Ms. McCrady: Oh, I'm sure.

Mr. Bender: Geraldine McCormick came up to me after my first committee meeting and said, "Nobody's 24; that's pretty cool. Nobody's 24."

Ms. McCrady: Nobody's 24. [Laughter]

Mr. Bender:...that first day, I was supposed to be sworn in, and the door people wouldn't let me in the House Chamber. They told me, "Interns are not allowed in here," and I got to thinking, "am I an intern before they actually swear me in?" Because I wasn't sure, is that a new term I didn't know about, intern? I said, "Well, I'm not sure if I'm an intern or not." And they said, "Well, what's your name?" And I said, "I'm Rick Bender." "Oh, representative, you can go in." But, I

couldn't get in the first time; they wouldn't let me in.

Mr. Boldt: I got a lot of that, too. I'd go to get a copy of a bill and they'd ask "Which member do you work for?"

Ms. McCrady: Wow. Well, even now there aren't a lot of members under 30.

Mr. Boldt: There were four or five or six of us.

Mr. Bender: Yeah. Bulletproof and nothing to lose. But, 33 of us that got elected on both sides of the aisle that year, so a third of the House was brand-new.

Ms. McCrady: Brand new in '72.

Mr. Bender: After the '72 election, because it had just gone through redistricting, too.

Mr. Bender: So, that's why we had such a big class of freshmen on both sides of the aisle.

Mr. Bender: But, it was 1972 that the Democrats took control of the House. We had 56 Democrats at that time.

Ms. McCrady: And, that's when Mr. Sawyer became Speaker.

Mr. Bender: Became Speaker of the House, right.

Ms. McCrady: What was your impression of him at that time?

Mr. Bender: Well, he was pretty supportive...he wasn't too bad with some of us young guys. I do remember, my first term especially, he had appointed both Marc Gaspard and myself as assistant majority whips. So, I got put on the leadership my first year. But, we need to understand too, during those days Sawyer appointed the leadership. They weren't elected by the caucus.

Mr. Boldt: This is a key thing....

Mr. Bender: We reformed that.

Ms. McCrady: Oh. He appointed everyone?

Mr. Bender: Not everyone; there were a couple of positions that were always elected. One of course, was speaker.

Mr. Boldt: That's constitutional.

Mr. Bender: Yeah, constitutional. And then of course, the caucus chairman was always elected but he would appoint the floor leaders, he would appoint the whips, etc.

Mr. Boldt: He would introduce them, boom, there

they are.

Ms. McCrady: There was no caucus input?

Mr. Bender: There was no input, those were decisions he made.

Mr. Boldt: Until we took over and changed the rules.

Mr. Bender: Yeah, he had all the power. I mean, the speaker was the power.

Mr. Boldt: You played the game, or you got...

Mr. Bender: Nothing, you got nothing. You'd be put on some committee and you'd stay there.

Ms. McCrady: What were Speaker Sawyer's legislative priorities?

Mr. Boldt: Rick experienced the, I call it the professionalization of the staff; that was here when I got here.

Mr. Bender: And, the technology.

Mr. Boldt: And, this technology that we had for the budget, I was one of three freshmen on the appropriations committee in the 1975 session. He let me go on – they didn't generally put freshmen on. John McKibbin and I, and someone else, a republican, got appointed. And, he warned us, but Bud Shinpoch called us in and said, "Lenny's going to put you on the committee, you do your homework and you're going to be reading these reports that this computer program's kicking out."

Ms. McCrady: Mm hmm, okay so that's when it was new, the LEAP system? committee So, prior to that how did it work?

Mr. Bender: The Governor's staff wrote the budget, I mean really wrote the budget. OFM wrote the budget....that was for the governor's fiscal staff, and they turned it over to legislature and you scrambled. What happened is, you spent most of the session finding out if your bridge was in the transportation budget and if your hospital was funded.... And, you couldn't look at an historical trend of spending on some social program if your life depended on it; it wasn't there.

Ms. McCrady: So, the governor was turning this budget over to the Legislature and saying, "Here you go?" So, Sawyer was frustrated by that process?

Mr. Bender: Oh yeah! When you're talking about bringing on full-time, professional nonpartisan staff, yeah, he was frustrated.

Ms. McCrady: But, that must have been a pretty big thing because...

Mr. Boldt: Lenny was married to the legislative branch of the government, a student of government, and he knew that the legislature received no respect and no resources.

Mr. Bender: And, that was also the first time we tried those mini-sessions; we had about six or seven of them.

Mr. Boldt: Clear into October.

Mr. Bender: October, but we didn't go for the full time. We would cut off – because we knew the budget had to be passed by June 30th. But, we had a bunch of mini-sessions.

Mr. Boldt: We'd recess.

Mr. Bender: Recess, and then have mini-sessions.

Ms. McCrady: Like a rolling recess?

Mr. Boldt: Remember also, this is before every year sessions.

Mr. Bender: There weren't annual sessions until later.

Mr. Boldt: So, he kept the legislature alive, he and the Senate. Someone would come in and answer a roll call every 72 hours.

Ms. McCrady: Okay, so you did do a rolling recess the whole year?

Mr. Boldt: We had to. And then, we'd have four-day sessions, or five-day sessions.

Mr. Bender: I remember the unhappiness of some members over that.

Mr. Boldt: Yes, a lot of people couldn't maintain their job because of that schedule.

Ms. McCrady: That was what I was just going to ask you, how do you do that with another job?

Mr. Boldt: I sold real estate.

Mr. Bender: Yeah, it screwed up legislators' lives pretty good. With work, family vacations, school – you never knew when you were going to get back into sessions.

Ms. McCrady: Back to the legislative staff, though. Sawyer professionalized the partisan and non-partisan staff both, is what some people say.

Mr. Boldt: To his credit, to his credit.

Mr. Bender: And, to his credit the committee staff were supposed to be non-partisan, they're supposed to provide equal services to both sides of the aisle... Give them any kind of information they need to make supposedly the right decisions.

Mr. Boldt: The roots of this staff that's here today were put in the ground by him.

Mr. Bender: By Leonard Sawyer, he laid that ground.

Ms. McCrady: Okay. So, did all of this happen during Sawyer's first term as Speaker?

Mr. Bender: A lot of the stuff, yeah.

Ms. McCrady: He started working on his vision quickly, then.

Mr. Bender: We got our first LEAP runs in the start of his second term. But, he instituted those during my freshman year.

Ms. McCrady: And, he got it past both branches and the government didn't veto?

Mr. Bender: No.

Mr. Boldt: No.

Mr. Bender: But, I think he had strong support from on all sides, and the Republicans appreciated the information, too.

Mr. Boldt: Did you miss the part that it was Boeing Computer Services?

Ms. McCrady: Well, you mentioned that and I had heard a little bit of that sometime back, but I'm not too familiar with it.

Mr. Boldt: When industry began to transition to peace mode during the 1960s and the early '70's Boeing was looking for an expansion of business. They opened a huge office in Richland, Washington to do all the computer work for the new Hanford contractor. And, they actually did not subcontract; Boeing had contract with the federal government at the time. It wasn't Department of Energy; they were different departments. So, we had a big Boeing Computer Services and they were looking for jobs...computers are just coming in, okay? 1972, '73, they're opening these things up. So, they also thought, oh, let's go.

Ms. McCrady: That's amazing. So, Boeing got, how long did they stay in the computer business, I wonder?

Mr. Bender: I don't know. I think that contract kind of overran a little bit though.

Mr. Boldt: It overran a lot. [Laughter]

Ms. McCrady: Was that for Hanford or for here?

Mr. Bender: Oh, the LEAP system.

Mr. Boldt: Yeah, the LEAP system. But, once again, you get halfway in....

Mr. Bender: Boeing working new technology into the process really helped us be more informed.

Ms. McCrady: So, Sawyer modernized the legislature and he instituted the LEAP system. And, have full-time legislative staff then, rather than just the legislative council?

Mr. Boldt: Right.

Mr. Bender: Exactly.

Mr. Boldt: And the staff is selected because of their research background, not partisan. They're educated and dedicated.

Mr. Bender: Right, they're very good.

Ms. McCrady: But the caucuses didn't have staff then, permanent staff, did you?

Mr. Boldt: Yeah, we had a lawyer.

Mr. Bender: Yes, and we had some professional staff on-board, partisan staff, in our caucus. Some attorneys and others.

Ms. McCrady: They were year-round, then?

Mr. Bender: Yeah, they were year-round.

Mr. Boldt: And, the speaker had three or four people of his own.

Ms. McCrady: He had a lot more staff then than they do now.

Mr. Boldt: Yeah. Rick and I had an aide.

Mr. Bender: Yeah, we just had an aide during session.

Mr. Boldt: Right. We didn't have offices in the district, none of that nonsense.

Mr. Bender: No, back in our day, no.

Mr. Boldt: There were no computers. We had a typing pool. I would dictate in Eastern Washington, they would go through them, call me if there were any

changes; they'd type them, print them out, put them in an envelope, mail them to Kennewick. I would sign them, put them in the mail and send them to my constituents; a week turnaround.

Ms. McCrady: A big difference! So, Leonard was forward-thinking in a lot of ways?

Mr. Bender: He was, yeah.

Ms. McCrady: But, I guess it was more his technique for getting things done...

Mr. Bender: His style of leadership was more the old power-type.

Ms. McCrady: So how did that work? Educate me a little bit on the system. So, he was Speaker, he appointed all his leadership team. So, he appointed, obviously people who were friendly to him or who agreed with a lot of his stance on things.

Mr. Boldt: Or, enough to do what he said.

Ms. McCrady: Okay, and they ran the House?

Mr. Boldt: Mm hmm, and the rest of us kept our head down and our mouth shut.

Ms. McCrady: And, apparently voted when he told you to vote? That was something I read?.

Mr. Bender: Well, yeah. And, Perry was the same way.

Ms. McCrady: Bob Perry? He was transportation chair at the time?

Mr. Bender: Yeah. There was a critical vote coming up in committee on whether or not the governor should have the ability to appoint the secretary of transportation. Bob Perry was working very closely with the pro-side, and Duane Berentsen, who was from Washington, was strongly opposed to it.

And anyway, Bob Perry comes up behind us and puts his hand on my shoulder, because we sat together way in the back row and he says, "This is how you two are going to vote this afternoon; you're going to vote for this bill. I want the governor to appoint the secretary."

Ms. McCrady: Wow.

Mr. Bender: That's what he said, and then he just left. I looked at him like, that son of a bitch. So, anyway we worked with Berentsen and we put the screws to Bob Perry at the committee hearing that afternoon. He broke his gavel...

Mr. Boldt: And, you don't cross these guys; these are old bulls.

Ms. McCrady: He broke his gavel?

Mr. Bender: Yeah, he was so angry he just broke his gavel and that was it.

Ms. McCrady: Yikes!

Mr. Boldt: You followed your chair on the committee; you followed your chair, you didn't question it and when the bill came to the floor you followed your majority leader. You would pause about one second and see how, in this case, Charette voted, and then you'd fall in. People understood this; they would walk up and down the aisle with a clipboard, gas tax on this side and all the pet projects in the transportation budget on this side. "You want that thing? Are you going to vote for the gas tax?" "I can't." "Okay, it's out of the budget."

Mr. Bender: So there goes your project.

Mr. Boldt: Even if you killed 1,000 people on a bad bridge.

Ms. McCrady: Or, you lost the member because they couldn't bring home the bacon.

Mr. Boldt: That's right.

Mr. Bender: That's why they don't do it anymore. It was a different situation back in those days; they played hardball politics.

Mr. Boldt: We didn't like it, the way it was being played. We were motivated. We got our air hose stepped on and we said, "That's the end of that one."

Ms. McCrady: So, what happened? I'll just let you guys start.

Mr. Bender: Well, my freshman year, in 1973, I was... you're just learning the process, and what I was noticing is that there were a lot of bills coming before us, where they were special interest bills. A good example is the small loans bill.

Ms. McCrady: Small loans bill?

Mr. Bender: Yeah. They wanted to greatly increase the interest rates for average people and many people who couldn't even afford to get a loan from a big bank. They go to these small loan companies and they want to raise it from 12% to 30%. I said, "This is just not right." So, I was at the forefront against my own

leadership in the House as a freshman. We beat him the first night, defeated the bill, and then of course the party politics started to play.

All of a sudden, there was a motion to reconsider. They worked members, and especially those who had things to lose, like their committee chairmanship. “Mr. Bender, I can’t stay with you now,” I heard, and I said, “Well, why not?” and they said, “Well I’ve been told that if I don’t vote the right way I’m going to lose my chair.”

So, that was my first experience dealing with the kind of power plays that Leonard and his group played. And of course, we lost the next day on a motion to reconsider and they passed the bill. The good news is that Governor Evans vetoed it.

Ms. McCrady: So, what was the bill? Who was the...

Mr. Bender: The small loan companies were pushing that very hard.

Ms. McCrady: So, they weren’t the check cashing places we have now, but they were the...

Mr. Boldt: No, they were the precursors, selling a bill of goods to those who can’t get conventional loans.

Mr. Bender: Household lenders.

Ms. McCrady: Oh, Household Finance Company and that type of thing? I do remember that.

Mr. Bender: HFC was the big one...

Mr. Boldt: And, you understand, they’ve got it all on these...of course, not on homes so they weren’t mortgages, but they were loans for durable goods, so they would repossess.

Ms. McCrady: So, furniture, appliances, etc?

Mr. Boldt: Yep, you get the payments so high with inflated interest, then you’re in default, then they reclaim it and they can sell it as used and they start all over again.

Mr. Bender: But, those are people who couldn’t get the traditional loans from the bigger banks.

Ms. McCrady: Sure, sure.

Mr. Bender: And, I just couldn’t believe that as Democrats, we were passing legislation like that.

Mr. Boldt: And, we had usury laws for a reason.

Ms. McCrady: And so, what was the reason? Why did the Speaker want the bill?

Mr. Bender: Because I think there were commitments made and there was...

Mr. Boldt: Campaign.

Ms. McCrady: So, campaign money?

Mr. Boldt: Perhaps.

Mr. Bender: Yeah, or who knows what else? But, I wasn’t back in the old days...

Ms. McCrady: So, you were angry about that?

Mr. Bender: Yeah, I was upset because I just thought it was a little – and then, I noticed there were other bills that were coming out that were really special interest bills, and what was bizarre is that...

Mr. Boldt: We were Democrats; we weren’t Republicans. [Laughter]

Mr. Bender: What was bizarre was that the majority of our caucus were voting against these bills, against our own leadership, but with the Republicans and with the Leonard Sawyer group, they were able to pass all this legislation, special interest legislations. So, I said, what’s going on with a leadership that doesn’t really follow the majority of their caucus? They’ve got their own game going on in a number of areas. And then of course the next bill that we’ll talk about is the private power bill.

But, it was just obvious to me that something was wrong here. Going into the next session when Jim came in in 1975, about the first month of that session the same thing was happening again. We were passing legislation where the majority of our caucus was strongly opposed to it, but these guys were...

Mr. Boldt: And then, you’d go into Lenny’s office and you’d say, “I need to talk to Len.” And, you can expect, “Mr. Boldt, it’s going to be a half hour because we’ve got these other meetings.” You would sit there, like, for an hour. These guys would come in and out of the office, and I just got...

Ms. McCrady: Like lobbyists?

Mr. Boldt: Yeah, or flying in from out of state or whatever. So, that session Puget Power – Puget Sound Energy introduced a bill called Construction Work in Progress. I don’t want to bog down on this

but generally the risk – remember, these utilities are monopolies, private or public. Generally, you put some risk on the stockholders when you’re building a plant or you’re doing something like this. They wanted to put the Construction Work in Program into the rate base and put the risk into the rate payers instead of the stockholders.

Okay, I come from Benton County. Richland City Light, Benton PUD, Washington Public Power Supply System (WPPSS), Benton Rural Electric Co-Op; I didn’t have a private power company and I don’t like private monopolies. I knew that when I was 23 years old. So, I came over here and they introduced this bill. Dan Evans, his own UTC chair, Don Brazier, the Utilities and Transportation Commission, came out against and concerned...

Mr. Bender: It worked mostly with our group because we were putting a team together to fight the bill and...

Mr. Boldt: Rick and I had work sessions for our caucus on the economic implications of this because the precedent is pretty strange. All right, the bill comes out of committee and it’s sitting on the calendar, ready to be taken up. And, I think it was Perry Woodall who passed away, a former state senator from Yakima, and all the old-timers took off for Yakima for a day. I think Shelby (Scates, former Post Intelligencer reporter) wrote this story; I haven’t gone over it in years. But, I said, “Rick, they’re not here. Talk to (John) McKibbin.” Seeing that they didn’t have the votes to pass it, I stood up from the back row and made a motion that we immediately consider House Bill 435. Lenny was here but everybody else was gone, and he put the House at ease right away. And, he called me up to the podium and he said...

Ms. McCrady: Oh, don’t even go to his office, you just go right to the podium?

Mr. Boldt: House was at ease, and I’m standing there being lectured, humiliated by the Speaker of the House. And he told me, he said, “Do you really want me to show you who runs this place?” And I said, “What do you mean?” He said, “You’re not one of our caucus officers. You don’t make procedural motions.” And I said, “Look, I don’t want that to pass, and we got the votes to kill it right now.” And he said, “Don’t ever do that again.” And I said, “Hm.” So, I went back, and of course, they brought it up later, and I mean, that

really frightened me, and I was 24, and I was frisky...

Ms. McCrady: A little cocky, sure, sure.

Mr. Boldt:...and I was bulletproof. And so, they brought it up and they passed it.

Ms. McCrady: They passed it?

Mr. Boldt: Yeah, that’s how it got vetoed.

Mr. Bender: He vetoed that bill, too, Dan Evans. But it’s funny, the same thing happened. We beat it on the first time around. They made a motion to reconsider.

Mr. Boldt: Twisted our arms.

Mr. Bender: Twisted arms, threatened, you name it. And got their votes.

Mr. Boldt: We raised the visibility of it.

Mr. Boldt: So, it stunk by the time it left here.

Mr. Bender: And you also need to understand, too, that was kind of the aftermath of the private power fight back in the sixties when they got rid of John O’ Brien as Speaker, and you know, Bob Perry, who is very close with Leonard, went to prison. Because of his... Basically, he was bought off by the private power industry.

Ms. McCrady: Oh?

Mr. Bender: Yeah. He said he was on the, he actually admitted it, that he was on their payroll. And, it passed that kind of legislation.

Mr. Boldt: So that was back in the sixties.

Ms. McCrady: Wow.

Mr. Bender: Anyway, that bill locked up the House for about three days.

Mr. Boldt: So, that pretty well flipped me. And Rick and I, before then, with a couple other members, started talking that Spring.

Ms. McCrady: The Spring of 1975?

Mr. Bender: Yes. And there were also some meetings during the legislative session in ‘75.

Ms. McCrady: It sounded, from news clips, like you had been meeting pretty much throughout the year.

Mr. Bender: You can imagine, this was like the French Underground. Originally, we weren’t going after the Speaker of the House. I just wanted to find out if people

were as unhappy as I was with the way things were operating in the House. And, I can remember in '75, I actually asked Speaker Sawyer to have a private lunch with me. So Leonard and I went and had lunch and I told him some of my frustrations, you know, "we're passing these bills that are not really in the interest of normal..."

Ms. McCrady: Democrats?

Mr. Bender:...of every citizen. And Democratic bills. And then I said, "I realize, maybe, Leonard, that you've got some debts you've got to pay, and things like that for some of these groups supporting you and helping you get into the majority and all that kind of stuff. But fine," I said, "Leonard, are we done paying off our bills? Can we start doing things for average working people?" You know what he said to me? "That's no fun."

Ms. McCrady: That's no fun?

Mr. Bender: That's what he said. "That's no fun." And I said, "He's got to go. I can't support somebody like this anymore. I'm gone."

Ms. McCrady: So you were about 25 there.

Mr. Bender: I was 25, yep.

Mr. Boldt: And that started...

Mr. Bender: Then we started talking with other folks to see if they were happy with all this stuff being passed with the majority of our caucus being against it. And they were passing it with that core group of lawyers, of Sawyer's people, with the Republicans.

Ms. McCrady: So were the committee chairs all Sawyer's people, then?

Mr. Bender: No, no, no. There was a core group of five of us, about May of that year. In May '75, we met at the Governor House. Jim, myself, John McKibbin, Clemente. Was Bud Shinpoch with us?

Mr. Boldt: No, oh, no, Shinpoch was way later on. That was in August. That meeting was in August. Might have been Helen Sommers, or was it Al Bauer?

Mr. Bender: Bauer. Bauer and McKibbin, and Clemente. That was it. But I remember the first couple meetings...we started talking about what the process would look like, and the consequences, you know, it's the old: "you get two spears when you're going to go after the king."

Mr. Boldt: You better get him, or he's going to get you!

Mr. Bender: We all knew that, we all understood that. We were, so we put it out on the line, and then at that point, it wasn't much longer after that...

Mr. Boldt: We started bringing people like Helen Sommers in, and some people to help us kind of, draft the game plan. How are we going to put this thing together? So we started a process that was actually a 'French Underground' process, and it is that we had a floor resolution drafted that asked the speaker to step down and resign.

Ms. McCrady: Okay.

Mr. Boldt: And it had thirty five or thirty six (signature) lines on it, and we needed thirty...well, there were 62 of us, we needed 31.

Ms. McCrady: Right, you said you had to have 32. You said you weren't going to go unless you had 32.

Mr. Boldt: Mr. Bender was the keeper of the original.

Mr. Bender: I'm the only one who knew who actually signed...

Ms. McCrady: Let me double check this: People signed it individually. They didn't get to see who else was on the list first.

Mr. Bender: Right. For example, I would come to you and I would say, "I'm with a group in your caucus; I'm not going to say who they are because I'm not going to say who you are. So you trust me, or you don't. If you're with us, you're with us, and you sign this. Here's the resolution: you sign one of those lines, when we bring you to your first meeting, you will then sign the master. If you do not, we will take this resolution with your signature on it to the press.

Mr. Boldt: Well, we told them, if you're going to take your name off...

Mr. Bender: And once you sign it, we never put pressure on, but...

Mr. Boldt: But you have to...

Ms. McCrady: If you sign it, you got to stick with it.

Mr. Boldt: You got to do it on the House floor.

Mr. Bender: Or we're going to make everybody know about it.

Mr. Boldt: So this is a serious decision.

Ms. McCrady: Indeed.

Mr. Boldt: And we screened people, too, very carefully. I mean, we would talk about it, we would screen them, we would feel them out in some cases. We wouldn't ask them the first time, necessarily. We would go and see if they weren't happy with the way things were going, like we weren't happy, and then, if they if they were, if we knew they were with us all the way, then they would get that opportunity...

Ms. McCrady: How long did it take to get enough?

Mr. Boldt: It took us pretty close to what, four or five months?

Mr. Bender: It did. We were in to the high twenties in December.

Ms. McCrady: And this is 1975.

Mr. Bender: '75. And then in '76 in January, we came in to session, I don't know, we were in the high twenties, probably.

Mr. Boldt: Yeah, we were close. We were close.

Mr. Bender: But there was a critical meeting that was really important in this whole process. Because we were a bunch of young guys. Or people didn't have that many terms under their belt. We needed some credibility. We needed somebody who'd been there, who was well respected, and in August of '75, we met with a guy by the name of Bud Shinpoch.

Ms. McCrady: Okay.

Mr. Bender: John McKibbin, myself, and Al Bauer. We met Bud, and we found out Bud was very unhappy, too.

Ms. McCrady: And he was the chair of the Appropriations Committee at the time?

Mr. Boldt: Yes.

Mr. Bender: And he was well respected, he worked for Boeing Company, and things like that. He was well respected.

Mr. Boldt: There were two subcommittees for Ways and Means.

Ms. McCrady: Appropriations and...

Mr. Bender: Revenue.

Mr. Boldt: Randall (Rubert Randall, 23rd, Kitsap County ports) had Revenue. Shinpoch had Appropriations.

Mr. Boldt: And I was in Eastern Washington. They had gotten together and asked Shinpoch to come on board.

Mr. Bender: Jim had a more difficult time, because we were doing a lot of our work on the west coast side of the state. But we met with him, and we found out that Bud was not happy with the leadership. He had some run-ins with leadership; I think with Leonard about some things that were going on.

Mr. Boldt: My job was to get Tub Hansen. And all I got from Tub, is "I won't go, but I won't tell." That's all I got.

Mr. Bender: We assigned people to talk to different people.

Mr. Boldt: But I said, it's an issue, understand that if they find out about this, we're not going to make it.

Ms. McCrady: "We're doomed."

Mr. Boldt: We're doomed.

Mr. Bender: Can you imagine? We went clear up, we went to the point that it was presented in caucus with 33 signatures.

Ms. McCrady: Eight months, and nobody told.

Mr. Bender: Nobody, nobody. Because we had a group of Seattle legislators...

Ms. McCrady: I can't even imagine. It started in May, I read.

Mr. Boldt: Yeah, that was the meeting at the Governor House.

Mr. Bender: But, I mean, we had a group of, we knew we had a bunch that we could count on to support us. Especially the Seattle folk.

Mr. Boldt: But they couldn't keep their mouths shut.

Mr. Bender: But they couldn't keep their damn mouths shut.

Mr. Bender: We didn't get them until right at the end.

Mr. Boldt: They are what I call, 'Rather bleed than win' Democrats.

Ms. McCrady: So, let's back up just for a bit here. What did you, there was a petition asking the speaker

to step down?

Mr. Bender: There was a drafted floor resolution...

Mr. Boldt: A vacation.

Mr. Bender: To vacate the House, the position of the speaker of the House.

Mr. Boldt: It had never been done before. We weren't sure how we were supposed to do it.

Mr. Bender: We went through all of this, and figure out that if the Speaker resigns, the position immediately defaults to the Speaker pro tem.

Ms. McCrady: Right, which was John O'Brien.

Mr. Bender: So we need to have a sidebar right now.

Mr. Boldt: Speaker O'Brien. We knew O'Brien...

Mr. Bender: John was in the loop all the way. Didn't say a word.

Ms. McCrady: Oh, so he did know!

Mr. Boldt: He learned about it in the summer.

Mr. Bender: I met privately with John O'Brien at the Washington Athletic Club. And I said, "John...John, before I go any further, I need your word. I need your commitment that you won't say this, anything about what I'm about to tell you." And of course I went through the whole process of what we were doing, I told him, "we have, we're getting very strong support, there's a whole lot of people that are very unhappy with the leadership in our caucus". And I said, "John, would you be willing to be part of our team?" and he wouldn't. But he did make this commitment, he says, "Rick, I will not say a word to anybody about this." But he knew from the time of my meeting that we were doing this.

Mr. Boldt: Right, he knew it was going to fall to him, too.

Mr. Bender: Yeah. There's only one other person – you're going to meet with Dean Foster, right?

Ms. McCrady: Yes.

Mr. Bender: Dean always played us square. He was Lenny's right hand, but I'll tell you, he was fair and square on every dealing we, I, ever had. After the petition, after we presented it to the caucus, we went into Foster's office and said: "You play square. We hope

you stay." Because that was like, a civil job.

Mr. Boldt: So, the petition – the first day or so of the session, we picked up signatures number 31 and 32. Okay. And we had a couple of votes that said "yes" and wouldn't sign.

Mr. Bender: Charlie Kilbury from the Tri-Cities was our 32nd signature. And then, Ron Hanna (26th District, Kitsap County) came on as 33, late, very late. He was the very last person to sign.

Mr. Boldt: So, with 33 signatures, we stood up in caucus, I forgot who presented it...

Ms. McCrady: Yeah, I was going to ask you that.

Mr. Boldt: Well, the motion that was made before the caucus... oh, it was Bud Shinpoch, who made a motion...

Mr. Bender: Yes, Bud stood up in the caucus...

Mr. Boldt: And made a motion of 'no confidence' for the speaker. That was our first thing, I mean, that was the first sign from the caucus that there were problems.

Ms. McCrady: So this is a caucus meeting, everybody's in the room...

Mr. Bender: They called the caucus.

Mr. Boldt: They had no idea this was going to happen.

Ms. McCrady: So, this was like a routine caucus.

Mr. Bender: Routine caucus.

Ms. McCrady: And so, Bud stands up and says...

Mr. Boldt: First thing out of the chute...

Mr. Bender: First thing out of the chute, he stands up and makes a motion of 'no confidence' for the speaker.

Mr. Boldt: Our mouths were dry. We were just...

Mr. Bender: Let me tell you...

Mr. Boldt:...we were scared to death.

Mr. Bender:...you could've heard a pin drop.

Ms. McCrady: Oh, the hearts are just a' pounding.

Mr. Boldt: We're in our mid-twenties!

Mr. Bender: And then, he just blows up. I mean, just goes...

Ms. McCrady: Who did?

Mr. Boldt: Lenny.

Mr. Bender: Lenny. Stomps out. But, [INAUDIBLE 00: 45: 05] tried to calm him down, in front of the caucus, but he was just fit to be tied.

Ms. McCrady: So, he had no idea?

Mr. Bender: He had no idea.

Mr. Boldt: I couldn't believe it, we caught him flat-footed.

Mr. Bender: We caught him totally flat-footed.

Ms. McCrady: But...

Mr. Boldt: The whole leadership team...

Ms. McCrady:...did he not know people were unhappy with him? Or did he just ignore that?

Mr. Boldt: You know, maybe he was too brazen about it.

Mr. Bender: Yeah, I don't think he ever thought we would stoop to something like this.

Ms. McCrady: He must've known you were unhappy when he brought up bills that you wanted to kill.

Mr. Boldt: Sure, well, he was thinking, he was thinking we were a bunch of young bucks.

Ms. McCrady: Okay, the back-benchers. I heard it said that he called you guys the 'back-benchers'.

Mr. Bender: Yeah, he took me to a conference in D.C. and his message to me was: "Look it, just cool it, your time will come."

Mr. Boldt: Yeah, you'll wait two terms.

Mr. Bender: Wait your time. You know, he had to wait his time.

Ms. McCrady: Yeah, he was a member for a long time.

Mr. Bender:...but, I mean, we were there trying to, thinking we were going to do something for the citizens of the state of Washington, and, watching all this special interest...

Mr. Boldt: I sided with Dan Evans, trying to keep the big corporate farmers out of eastern Washington and the water rights restrictions, and Lenny didn't like any part of that because he had friends,...yeah so it just built up.

Mr. Bender: Anyway, then, we go to the floor.

Ms. McCrady: Okay, so let me just make sure I have this right. You did the vote of 'no confidence'; did you ask him at that time to step down as speaker, though?

Mr. Boldt: I think we did.

Ms. McCrady: Did he have the petition yet?

Mr. Bender: No. We weren't going to present that until we actually had to have the floor of the House of Representatives.

Ms. McCrady: Okay, so that's when you went to talk to Dean Foster?

Mr. Boldt: After the vote of no confidence, I think in that little time period before we went back to the floor, we just told Dean, you know, just keep doing what you're doing.

Ms. McCrady: Dean said to me that the staff were aware something was going on, but they didn't know what. He said that was the only time he can ever remember in his long political career that something like this happened without anybody telling. Without anybody leaking.

Mr. Bender: It was. I mean, usually when you say it's confidential in the caucus, there are some members of the caucus that will be the first ones out talking to the press.

Ms. McCrady: Oh, yes. Or at least, you know, another member, or staff, or somebody. But the press had no idea, either, apparently, from what I can gather. The press didn't ever get wind of it until...

Mr. Bender: Oh, no, no. There were no leaks, this was all done underground.

Ms. McCrady: So, when you made the motion in caucus, and he stomped out, the caucus obviously broke up.

Mr. Boldt: Yep.

Ms. McCrady: Did somebody go talk to the press, then?

Mr. Bender: I didn't.

Mr. Boldt: Well, Rick and I, we talked about this, that we can't start being heroes. We can't go out and start talking.

Ms. McCrady: No, it looks like everybody kind of kept their heads down. There wasn't really an identifiable leader, according to Shelby Scates in the Post Intelligencer.

Mr. Boldt: There was a lot of time that passed after that caucus. The state basically shut down, because lobbyists didn't know who to talk to.

Mr. Bender: What do you figure, days?

Ms. McCrady: It was like three or four, at least.

Mr. Boldt: The Republicans in the '76 elections state-wide called it a "rudderless session", and how wasteful it was, a bunch of whippersnappers...

Mr. Bender: Yeah, we broke up their coalition.

Mr. Boldt: We talked about how, you know, the lobbyists had more access to the Speaker than we did as members of the House, and things like that. But we tried to play it cool, because, you know, like anything else, if they would've ever got that list, they would've gone one by one...

Mr. Bender: They would've picked them off.

Mr. Boldt:... and peeled them off. So, we played that game before on legislation in the past.

Mr. Bender: They'll play in your home district. You'll go home and you'll end up facing people that'll stick their nose in leadership.

Mr. Boldt: Anyway. Well, we had our own speaker go against us. When we were running for re-election.

Ms. McCrady: That's unusual, to say the least when we were running for re-election. Were you unable to elect a new Speaker after Rep. Sawyer stepped down?

Mr. Bender: Oh, we need to tell you about Haussler. So, we had Joe Haussler (7th District) lined up to run.

Ms. McCrady: Okay.

Mr. Boldt: Yeah.

Mr. Bender: We had Joe, Papa Joe. Everybody loved him.

Mr. Boldt: He was well respected.

Mr. Bender: Moderate Democrat.

Mr. Boldt: Moderate Democrat from Eastern Washington.

Mr. Bender: We wanted to put him in as speaker.

Mr. Boldt: So, we had a person ready to go, and he agreed to do it, but the Sawyer group and the Republicans were unwilling to...

Mr. Bender: We couldn't get to fifty votes.

Mr. Boldt: We couldn't get to fifty votes, yeah.

Ms. McCrady: So, that's how O'Brien ended up run-

ning it for the rest of the year?

Mr. Boldt: Yeah, unfortunately we had an opportunity to elect a speaker and that, we kind of messed things up for O'Brien, there. But that's another story.

Mr. Bender: So, we limp through the '76 session; are we ready to limp through the '76 session?

Ms. McCrady: Well, can I ask you a couple of other questions first, though, about other factors that might have played into this? Maybe this is just my own interpretation, so feel free to say so if it didn't. But how much did other factors, like the scrutiny from the Public Disclosure Commission, the Speaker's Fun Nights, New Guinea, etc., play into the caucus's unhappiness with Speaker Sawyer?

Mr. Boldt: My characterization is that it was all part of the stew. We didn't have people at our table there, because he was interviewed by the grand jury and they didn't indict him. But all of that, all of that was coming into play. Some people felt strongly about that from an integrity perspective. You know what my issues were. Mr. Bender talked about a couple of his, so, Lenny had been out there bumping everybody up in a different way. But I don't know that I would say that any of those were pivotal.

Ms. McCrady: Okay.

Mr. Boldt: But they all added to it.

Mr. Bender: There was a cavalier attitude by the way. And we didn't, I didn't trust him, I mean I'll be honest with you, I just didn't trust him. And that was...

Mr. Boldt: Certain folks were hot about money and things like that. But anyway, he just... I think he lost a lot of us in terms of our trust and just watching the type of legislation he was moving. And it wasn't because he was trying to represent citizens of the State of Washington at that point in time. It seemed like it was either paying off debts or being able to raise much more money as we go into the next election cycle. To keep the majority, I mean there was a lot of that game being played.

Ms. McCrady: So, I do want to ask you a little bit about that too. So, but first of all, let me just make sure I have the whole three events. You did the "no confidence" vote in caucus, he leaves the room. You kind of mill around for a few days; during that time,

then, are you expecting him to resign? Or when does he get the petition?

Mr. Bender: Yeah, we don't, we don't know yet. But we knew that during that period of time that we're milling around that there's going to be a lot of pressure put on members to change their position. And...

Mr. Boldt: But it's still in his (Mr. Bender's) folder.

Mr. Bender: I've got the folder, I've got the resolution...

Ms. McCrady: So, he still doesn't know who everybody is.

Mr. Boldt: No. They – Lenny and his team – they can only guess.

Mr. Bender: And I went in to ask him if he was going to resign, and I couldn't get in the door.

Mr. Boldt: But then the time came, when we made a move on the floor of the House.

Ms. McCrady: So, who called you to a floor session?

Mr. Boldt: They did. They called us into session.

Mr. Bender: It was time to get going.

Mr. Boldt: Time to get going. They had to get something...start getting something done, you know. So, we put the petition before the House with all the signatures on it.

Ms. McCrady: How do you do that?

Mr. Bender: You take it up to the bar and introduce it as a resolution.

Ms. McCrady: Oh, okay.

Mr. Bender: It's like when the House passes its own rules by resolution. The body can direct its own actions by resolutions.

Ms. McCrady: Oh, I've never seen that happen.

Mr. Bender: John O'Brien taught a parliamentary class every week, and I went to that class.

Mr. Boldt: I went to that class too.

Mr. Bender: We all were students of parliamentary procedure.

Mr. Boldt: They probably wished they didn't have that class.

Mr. Boldt: We studied Reed's Rule. Yeah, we did. And

he was a great teacher, he knew all the rules.

Ms. McCrady: So, you took it to the Chief Clerk, you put it on the bar.

Mr. Bender: And we had our first state vote.

Mr. Boldt: Stated intention for introduction.

Mr. Bender: Yep. And we had our first vote. And we lost it.

Mr. Boldt: What happened was the Sawyer...

Mr. Bender: The Sawyer Coalition, with the Republicans, defeated it.

Mr. Boldt: And then that next day, there was an editorial by the Seattle Times that just ripped the Republicans.

Mr. Bender: They got torn apart.

Mr. Boldt: Torn apart by the Seattle Times in that article.

Ms. McCrady: For?

Mr. Boldt: For supporting Sawyer and his group.

Ms. McCrady: I see.

Mr. Boldt: So, what happened was, Bud Pardini who is close to Sawyer, on the other side finally told Leonard that...

Mr. Bender: He was their Floor Leader.

Mr. Boldt: Yep. He says, "Leonard we can't keep our caucus together for you anymore."

Mr. Bender: So, that's when we went the second time to the resolution on the floor and this is when we...

Mr. Boldt: I was getting nervous.

Mr. Bender: Oh, I was too.

Mr. Boldt: Because my career's over.

Mr. Bender: Yep. I mean I was leading the floor that day. I was going to be the first one to speak.

Mr. Boldt: If he doesn't step down, if he doesn't step down, I was going to take that second speech and I was going to talk about my meeting with him at lunch. I was going to really let him have it on the bills that we were passing, all that kind of stuff, but...

Ms. McCrady: In your floor remarks?

Mr. Bender: My floor remarks. Yeah, it was going to

be tough, it would have been a blood bath...

Mr. Boldt: We're going to unleash.

Ms. McCrady: Right in front of the press.

Mr. Boldt: Yep, everybody.

Mr. Bender: Yep, you couldn't find a chair in the place.

Mr. Boldt: But anyway, we get called in.

Ms. McCrady: To his office?

Mr. Bender: No, no. We get called into session, because we took a break for lunch. And of course, I'm ready to make my remarks, and everybody was ready to do what we had to do, and all of a sudden, he gets up and gives the clerk something to be read.

Mr. Boldt: It takes a point of personal privilege.

Mr. Bender: And then he resigns as Speaker of the House.

Ms. McCrady: And that's when he gave his speech.

Mr. Boldt: He thanked some of the people that he served with.

Mr. Bender: And basically, resigned as Speaker of the House.

Mr. Boldt: And we're going...

Mr. Bender: You got to be kidding me. That caught us off guard.

Mr. Boldt: We were a dog that just caught the car.

Mr. Bender: And so immediately on his resignation, without motion, O'Brien becomes Speaker for the House.

Ms. McCrady: So, okay, so, he, you didn't actually have to vote on the resolution, he just resigned himself.

Mr. Bender: And we didn't have to elect O'Brien because we already had...

Mr. Boldt: We already had him earlier, because he was Speaker Pro Tem til election...

Mr. Bender: Thank goodness, who knows where we could have ended up, how many ballots. Because now, we were starting to get the thing, oh, you guys great, you can take it down, but you can't put it back together and, blah, blah, blah.

Mr. Boldt: But that caucus was pretty bitter. I mean it was...

Mr. Bender: Oh, we were split. We had two caucuses.

Mr. Boldt: We had two caucuses.

Ms. McCrady: So, you have like 33/34 in your group and then everybody else is angry.

Mr. Boldt: Well, the core of it was 31/32. Probably 32/30 was the core.

Mr. Bender: And during that interim we were all getting calls and threats, and those kinds of things. I got a call from a Pierce County labor leader who was threatening me.

Mr. Boldt: "You'll never get re-elected..."

Mr. Bender: Yep. Neil Cheney, the state Democratic Party leader, came to me at a Democratic event, told me I was ruining the Democratic Party. That's what he said to me. And I said to him, "You're next," and I walked away. And he hated my guts from then on.

Ms. McCrady: So, how did you get any business done?

Mr. Bender: We did it.

Ms. McCrady: Because there was quite an agenda coming in, it was a special session.

Mr. Bender: We didn't change any committee chairs or anything like that. We didn't try to make wholesale changes. "Go do your stuff, Chairs."

Mr. Boldt: Only the leadership changed, mainly because they forced us.

Ms. McCrady: You mean they quit.

Mr. Boldt: Yes.

Ms. McCrady: So, how did the lobbyist community respond?

Mr. Bender: Oh, they were angry.

Mr. Boldt: Well also they were walking on nails because they didn't know which way to go, who to talk too. Where the real power was in this situation.

Ms. McCrady: That's a good point.

Mr. Boldt: Lenny's loyalists were pretty upset.

Mr. Bender: Oh, some were really bitter towards us. In fact, it took years for some of them to ever really like me again.

Mr. Boldt: And you can imagine now, instead of a united caucus heading into an election...

Mr. Bender: We had two elections, basically two teams Democrats running that.

Mr. Boldt: And remember this is Jimmy Carter, 1976. Okay. So, the Democrat Party is, “Yay, rah, rah, here we go.” And locally we’re just all torn up. We had two campaign teams, two sign teams, two caucuses, and you know what? We went through all that...

Mr. Bender: And we came back with 62.

Mr. Boldt: Came back with 62 members. And guess what? We went seven ballots, 31/31 to elect a speaker.

Ms. McCrady: Oh, wow. That was the year John Bagnariol was Speaker?

Mr. Boldt: Baggy won on the 8th ballot.

Ms. McCrady: And who was running against him?

Mr. Bender: Al Bauer. Al is a saint. But Al didn’t work that speakership election as hard and he could have. I think if he would have just made some phone calls to some of the new people coming in, he would have had them, no sweat. But he was working the farm, and doing that kind of stuff.

Mr. Boldt: We were all out trying to elect our Democrats in those primaries. So, they were trying to elect their Democrats in those primaries.

Ms. McCrady: So, how did that go?

Mr. Boldt: It came out 31/31.

Ms. McCrady: But, ultimately, a Sawyer loyalist won the Speakership?

Mr. Bender: We don’t know who broke rank.

Mr. Boldt: We have our guesses.

Mr. Bender: But we don’t know.

Ms. McCrady: So, did you do that on floor, or did you do that in caucus, like they do now?

Mr. Bender: Well, you decide in caucus and then you go to the floor formerly.

Ms. McCrady: Right, right. But you vote for your Pro Tem and all that in caucus only, right?

Mr. Boldt: Oh, yeah.

Ms. McCrady: That’s the way they still do it.

Mr. Boldt: Community chairs and everything else – done in caucus.

Ms. McCrady: So, you guys instituted that change then?

Mr. Bender: Yeah, we did. We took away that much power from the speaker. We said the speaker is no longer going to appoint all the leadership. And then the committee on committees concept came on board. I mean the speaker still has a lot of control on that, but still you have to get the committee...

Ms. McCrady: You have to get a consensus.

Mr. Boldt: Yeah, a consensus from the committee on committees.

Ms. McCrady: And that all happened in the ‘76 session?

Mr. Bender: Mm-hmm.

Ms. McCrady: Wow, you guys, just think – that was 40 years ago.

Mr. Boldt: We’ve been thinking about it for 40 years.

Mr. Bender: Right. It left a mark on us that’s for sure, this whole battle that we had.

Mr. Boldt: Oh, it shapes, when you’re young, that shapes your life. I mean I learned... I needed to make some money, I was getting married. And I needed to get out of the legislature, and I was looking for work. I loved politics, but she wouldn’t marry a guy who was a legislator.

And I thought, well, I’m going to do some lobbying. And, so I ran PUD Association for years. And when I came down here and I’m starting to think, I wonder what impact what I did just three years ago is going to have on me when I talk to these people, you know. And so, you know there was a concern for a while.

I may draw the line together quicker than most, but I think that the RICO (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act) convictions and the “GamScam” (FBI “Sting” Investigation)– I think that was the final vindication for all of this. Because we not only took out Lenny, we fought Baggy tooth and nail.

Mr. Bender: Oh, we fought him tooth and nail.

Ms. McCrady: Thinking about Baggy – he became Speaker in the 1977 session, with 62 members, and then the Republicans tied up the House in 1980 and he had to share the Speakership with Duane Berentsen?

Mr. Bender: Co-speakers.

Mr. Boldt: He went out and tried to manipulate his

own majority.

Mr. Bender: And tried to target some of us.

Mr. Boldt: He wanted to prune out the libs. I would have never gotten re-elected in Eastern Washington because the winds were starting to blow over there.

Mr. Bender: He couldn't get me. But he got some other folks, but he ended up losing the majority.

Mr. Boldt: So, you know, out of that, we went our different ways. A core of people stayed in politics.

Mr. Bender: I did.

Mr. Boldt: And people just didn't talk about it.

Mr. Bender: We never brought it up much. I mean, it was just one of those things where we felt we had to do what we were doing. It was the right thing to do. Based upon our experiences working with Leonard and his team. And after all this happened, I felt good about it. I never had any regrets whatsoever.

In fact, I told myself, I said, "You know what? I'm young. If we lose, my political career is going to be over real quickly. I'll just go back to school." I figured I'd get my degree and move onto another career path. So, I mean, despite all the threats and everything that went on, we had nothing to lose. I was a bachelor. We were all young.

Ms. McCrady: So it sounds like, even now, you have no regrets for the actions you took?

Mr. Bender: Absolutely no regrets for what we did. I think we formed a process to make it fairer. Took some of the power, so much power out of one individual's hands.

Mr. Boldt: We made the process more inclusive.

Mr. Bender: Yeah, more inclusive. And we also, I think we gave leadership an awareness they lacked – say hey, when you start passing legislation when the majority of your caucus is against it, then there's something wrong with this process. There's something going on and we need to know about it.

Mr. Boldt: You know, at age 66, how I measure regrets. What I tell my grandkids about something I did. I would be very proud to tell my grandkids that I participated in this, just on behalf of the democracy. I would do it over again in a heartbeat.

Mr. Bender: But you think about the people who participated in that process who DID have things to lose. Al Bauer was Chairman of the Education Committee, for example.

Mr. Boldt: But either it's for the people's business or it isn't. And everybody with a brain can tell the difference.

Ms. McCrady: Did you have any relationship with Speaker Sawyer, after he left?

Mr. Bender: No. I mean I met Lenny a couple of times, I met him one time at a football game, Husky Football game. It was cordial. We said, you know, hello and things like that. But nothing, no, there was no closeness there. But you know, I used to talk to Mark Gaspard, and he was close to Lenny.

Mr. Boldt: I had two situations, one was about 30 years later when I had left politics and lobbying, and did some public affairs work as just kind of as semi-retirement. I worked a project with his daughter.

Ms. McCrady: With Sawyer's daughter?

Mr. Boldt: Yeah, and we, I sat down and I said, "Look, I hope you know everything, and we're just going forward." And she was real big about it.

And the other thing, my dad was in the real estate business. And he, I forgot what year it was, I went over to TriCities to see my dad and we were having dinner and he looked up and he said, "A bunch of people came into town last week for a big buy and a development out here. And there was this guy named Len Sawyer with them, and said he asked me if I was related to you, and I said, 'Yeah.' And my dad said, 'I don't think Len thinks much of you.'" (Laughter)

Ms. McCrady: One final question. Despite how things ended, both of you have said you thought Speaker Sawyer made some positive changes in the Legislature. What would you each say was his biggest achievement?

Mr. Bender: Oh, the institution of LEAP, no doubt about it. He had the vision and he made it happen. And, though it's evolved, the program is still being used today. It was a big step toward making the Legislature an equal branch of government.

Mr. Boldt: Absolutely. LEAP was a groundbreaking idea – among the first in the nation. And I also give him great credit for professionalizing the legislative staff. The non-partisan committee staff is really what

keeps the process together.

Ms. McCrady: Thank you both for participating in this project.

Chapter 24

Interview with David Ammons, former Associated Press reporter covering Washington State Government; known as “The Dean of the Capital Press Corps.”

Ms. McCrady: Thank you for meeting with me to talk about former Speaker of the House, Leonard Sawyer.

Mr. Ammons: Of course! I always liked Lenny; he was very personable and lots of fun and he seemed to enjoy working with media. He was one of those people that would give you an honest answer, and a very interesting answer, usually.

Ms. McCrady: Quotable. [both laugh]

Mr. Ammons: Quotable. He was a favorite of lots of reporters, I think, and he was candid and fairly open. Any speaker has to do their strategy behind closed doors – so in that respect, you know, he could determine when he was ready to say something and how far to go and how to describe what his caucus was thinking on various issues. But if you look at various speakers through time, including the current one, [laughs] who is very enigmatic, Lenny was more of an open book. And I think we all appreciated that about him.

A little bit of a scamp, I think, and you would hear things but you wouldn't know if half of it was the truth, and I retain a pretty positive impression of him. He was a skilled legislator. Seemed to love the intrigue of it, and that was back in an era when there were more partnerships across the aisle and across the rotunda, and so that was another skill set he was able to use.

Ms. McCrady: When did you first meet him?

Mr. Ammons: Must have been 1971 or so, right after I got here.

Ms. McCrady: So when you first met him he was in the minority. The Democrats had been in the minority



Speaker Sawyer with Senate Majority Leader August Mardesich.

for quite a few years. Did you have much interaction with him before the '72 elections? He must have been the minority leader at the time so he probably did meet with the press to some degree.

Mr. Ammons: The 1972 session would have been my first session because I arrived in the summer of '71, so that would have been my first experience. It was a presidential year, gubernatorial year.

Ms. McCrady: 1972, yes. Very interesting year.

Mr. Ammons: It was an interesting year. It was an interesting time in our history and in our state. Initiative 276, the Public Disclosure Commission and disclosure stuff was passing that year, and as I recall, Governor Evans was pushing yet again for an income tax and... Republicans behaved very differently in that era. The Evans Republicans at least. And those were good times. I think it was a golden era for government a lot in the 70's – early 70s to mid-70s. We were getting environmental protection laws passed. Creating the Department of Ecology.

Ms. McCrady: Does it seem odd that all of that happened at the time Nixon was elected president?

Mr. Ammons: Well, Nixon, for all of his wackydoodleness, created the EPA and on domestic stuff was pretty good. But it definitely was a heyday here, I think, for collaboration across the aisle and for progressive politics. At that time, collaboration and compromise didn't have a dirty name to it.

Ms. McCrady: Yes, that's true. Did you think Rep. Sawyer, while he was in the minority, worked well with the Republicans?

Mr. Ammons: I did. Yeah I noticed him fairly early on because he was so high energy and seemed to be everywhere on the floor, and so I was paying attention to him already fairly early on.

Ms. McCrady: So apparently right about that time that the Democrats, maybe the whole legislature, was getting a little bit tired of the governor running the whole budget process. I have heard from people that Rep. Sawyer was very instrumental in getting the LEAP program started. Do you recall any of that?

Mr. Ammons: Yeah, I'm not aware of the specifics of that either but it definitely was a good reform, and it gave the legislature more authority and more of a place in the process. In Olympia, it's always been the three branches – particularly the legislative and the executive branches – trying to have more to say about how things work [laughs] – looking for ways for that to happen.

The legislature, as a part-time, citizen body, with, at that time, fairly limited staff, really did yield a lot of power to the executive branch. And it was said that if legislators or reporters wanted to know something, you ask the lobbyists or the agencies. So the more you could equip the legislature with information – I mean information is gold.

Ms. McCrady: Oh yes, it's power.

Mr. Ammons: So... Len understood that.

Ms. McCrady: Even people who disagreed with the way he wielded the speakership, credit him with really bringing the legislature into its own and sort of making it a more equal branch of government.

Mr. Ammons: Yes, and as I recall he invented continuing sessions concept. Remember when we had the mini sessions?

Ms. McCrady: No, see I wasn't here then. Today is the first I've heard about the mini sessions.

Mr. Ammons: The idea, which was a beautiful theory that never quite worked out, but the idea was that during the interim, legislatures would perfect legislation in committee and pass it out of committee to Rules and then every now and then they would have one day where they would come together and they would pass this stuff that they had perfected off the floor. They wouldn't have to wait until the next session. So if you

look at the listings and the sessions you'll see some one day sessions here and there. It worked for a while and then they sort of got back to annual legislative sessions. Then, after the governor wouldn't call a special session in '78, they put a constitutional amendment guaranteeing annual sessions on the ballot and people approved it.

Ms. McCrady: So they amended the constitution.

Mr. Ammons: They did. The idea was that Washington is such a big complicated state and was growing more so, the legislature couldn't be meet every-other year. And the frequency of special, or extraordinary sessions made it really hard on legislators that had other jobs back home.

So the continuing session as I've described it worked for a while, and then eventually it got back to the old way that interim committees were doing studies, and if they couldn't bring a bill to conclusion in one session, then sadly, they would hear it all over again from square one. Hold public hearings all over again, etc. and so that was an experiment that never quite panned out.

Ms. McCrady: That's fascinating! So did you consider Len to be a go-to guy on anything before he became speaker or were you not really working the session stuff? I know he was very involved in transportation issues at some point.

Mr. Ammons: I think I saw him, from my coverage standpoint, less of an issue guy – at least in the areas that I covered – than a strategy guy and a leadership guy. Eventually that's when I got to know him the most – when he was in authority to tell me stuff that you know, just simple stuff like, "When are you going to take up the tax bill" or stuff like that. And then to be a spokesman for caucus policies like Rep. Lynn Kessler and some of the others have been so good at over the years.

Ms. McCrady: The Democrats won the majority in the House in 1972, so Rep. Sawyer became speaker in 1973. What do you remember from his transition – did he grasp the reins quickly?

Mr. Ammons: Yeah, I think he was a natural born leader, with such a quick study of the legislative process, I think he did that part of it very well, and from my perspective as an outsider just covering it, the trains seemed to run on time.

Ms. McCrady: He apparently seemed to get along with the Republicans in the house pretty well?

Mr. Ammons: Yes, yes, that's my recollection as well. It was a different era sadly – or happily. Whatever you want to say. [laughs]

Ms. McCrady: Unfortunately, it seems that members of his own caucus became pretty unhappy with him rather quickly, so what can you tell me about that?

Mr. Ammons: I wasn't on the inside so I didn't know what that was about, initially; whether it was wielding too much raw power or what that was, but eventually, I know he got challenged.

It's care and feeding of the people all the time and a smart leader knows that you can lead and you can have an agenda and your leadership team, but if you don't have the troops behind you then that's – you haven't fully done your job of understanding that dynamic.

Ms. McCrady: Some of his caucus complained that he often did wield power absolutely, and that they felt that he was very cozy with certain lobbyists; the power people.

Mr. Ammons: Yeah, you heard that a lot.

Ms. McCrady: Did you, in the press corps, know his caucus was going to ask him to step down that day in January, 1976?

Mr. Ammons: No, at least I didn't. It must have really been behind closed doors.

Ms. McCrady: I don't think anyone could ever keep a secret like that now.

Mr. Ammons: No. Although the press corps is so small that maybe... (laughter)

Ms. McCrady: Well, apparently nobody knew that was coming, including him, until it happened. My understanding of the story is they called a caucus, somebody got up and made a motion in the caucus that they give the speaker a vote of no confidence, which they did do. He refused their demands and for three days pretty much everything shut down. Is that kind of the way you remember it?

Mr. Ammons: Yep. Yep.

Ms. McCrady: Do you feel that things were done a little bit differently in the House following Speaker Sawyer's departure?

Mr. Ammons: Maybe not immediately, but slowly there was more democratization of the process and some decentralization. I think today, even though we have a really strong speaker, he's still not like the way Speakers were then. Committee chairs have more say now, and I can remember when Ruth Fisher and some others had a conniption fit on the floor when certain bills were moved without their permission and support.

So, I think it was evolution, not revolution; I don't think it changed overnight.

Ms. McCrady: As you know, Rep. Sawyer didn't run for re-election. But he also sort of just left town, it sounds like – went to New Guinea and...

Mr. Ammons: Faded away..

Ms. McCrady: But you're saying your overall impression of him was he was a pretty decent guy?

Mr. Ammons: Yeah, yeah. I think he colored outside the lines some but I think he was a good legislator and good leader.

Ms. McCrady: And what would you say was his most long-standing legacy to the legislature?

Mr. Ammons: I think attempting to increase its clout as a branch of government and increasing the information that lawmakers and their staffs have, creating that independent base. it's what I remember, and continuing sessions. Again, that was brilliant but it didn't work out. [laughs] Not every experiment does but that doesn't mean you shouldn't try. In fact, I would be delighted if they would look at it some more. Maybe reboot it for a new generation.

Ms. McCrady: Thank you so much for taking time to talk to me. I appreciate it.

Mr. Ammons: My pleasure.

Chapter 25

Interview with Dean Foster, former Chief Clerk of the Washington State House

Ms. McCrady: This is Friday, September 30, 2016 and I'm with Dean Foster at his home. I've prepared some basic question to get us started, and we'll just flow from there.

Mr. Foster: Okay.

Ms. McCrady: How did you meet Speaker Len Sawyer? You were already on staff when he was elected Speaker?

Mr. Foster: I was in the Air Force and I got a call from Dick King. I had been involved in redistricting starting in 1963 with Bob Greive in the Senate. There was redistricting going on in the House in the '70's, and Rep. Dick King asked me to come back. It just worked out that I got out of the Air Force and I came back and went to work for the House Democratic Caucus.

Ms. McCrady: Just like that!

Mr. Foster: They kept me on and I kept working that year. I worked a lot on the campaigns. In those days staff did a lot of that. Then Leonard was elected Speaker and I was elected Chief Clerk.

Ms. McCrady: Who else was on staff at that time with you?

Mr. Foster: Bill Chatalis was a caucus chair. Mary Walker Lewis was a caucus aide and Naomi Duke and maybe Gordon Newell. That's sort of the entire crew.

Ms. McCrady: Leonard was elected Speaker and you were elected Chief Clerk. Len had already been the Minority Leader and had been in the caucus for 16 years, so he didn't really have a lot of opposition as Speaker at that time. Did he have some major legislative goals?

Mr. Foster: Oh yeah. In fact, I traveled all over the state with Len that year and he clearly was into legisla-

tive reorganization. There had been a Supreme Court decision earlier that had to do with the length of the session. I believe what they did is throw out a bill or two that had come after the 60 days, like in the first hour after the 60 days or something like that. Justice Rosellini wrote a little asterisk kind of thing that said, "Well, the regular session had to end at 60 days, but nothing was said in the Constitution that any special session could only go 60 days."

Ms. McCrady: Hmm.

Mr. Foster: So Leonard read that and he decided that if he could just get the legislature into a special session, then they could recess the legislature and they could come back when they had bills ready. This was called the continuing session concept.

Ms. McCrady: With kind of a rolling session?

Mr. Foster: Yeah, yeah. He thought that since we didn't have a full time legislature, that might be a good way to keep things moving, but he had all kinds of other reorganization ideas in his mind. In those days, people were on six to eight to ten committees. There were upwards of 20 to 25 committees. There was no committee schedule. Committees were called to...this is both in the Senate and the House. The Senate and House had all kinds of different named committees, never any coordination. People who were chairs of committees called committees (meetings) whatever they wanted to. Generally, at the end of a session during the day they'd announce there was going to be a committee meeting in ten minutes. Members didn't know. The public didn't know. Lobbyists didn't know whenever anything was coming up. This was the beginning of when people started paying a little bit more attention to the public being involved. One of the things that he advocated was having the Senate and House have the same committees, having them meet at the same times. Members, at the most, would be on three committees. There would be regularly published schedules, like 24 hours, unheard of.

His idea also, along with the continuing legislature, was that there will be a full-time legislative staff. That would replace what was called the Legislative Counsel, which was an interim operation prior to 1972. In 1973, we started hiring full-time staff, both the Senate and the House. It's called Office of Program Research in the House. That was a non-partisan staff selected by a committee. We actually looked at people's resumes and hired people from all over the country based on

their talent. They hired a research staff both in the House and Senate. We also then had a budget staff, both revenue/operating budget and capital budget, in the House and the Senate. Up until 1972, really the only entity of government that had information about the budget was the Governor, in the Office of Program Planning and Fiscal Management, OPP and FM. Everybody had to use his numbers.

What Leonard realized, he was a transportation guy, but he realized that the Governor was controlling the entire debate on the budget and the budget is how you set public policy. We hired these non-partisan staff people. Each committee had a staffer, sometimes more. With budget and revenue, they had more. Then we realized what we really needed to do was get the data. That's when we started...this is early days of computers. That's when we started figuring out a way to get computers involved and forcing the Governor to give us the same data he had, and then we would interpret what that data meant, not the Governor. That led to LEAP, which we still have; the Legislative Accountability and...

Ms. McCrady: Legislative Evaluation and Accountability program.

Mr. Foster: Yeah, something like that. Anyway, it still exists. All of those really brought the legislature into equal footing with regard to information with the Governor, with the Governor's agencies. If there was an issue in licensing, the transportation committee and the legislature then had people who understood licensing department and we weren't just getting information from the Governor's side. This was really not a partisan issue, although Dan Evans was governor. The Governor had tilted the balance forever. That's sort of the vision Len had.

Ms. McCrady: He did all that and he really started pushing that in his first term.

Mr. Foster: First week of the first term, absolutely. We announced. We went around and made speeches about what we had planned and it evolved every day. We often didn't understand where we were going and we would evolve it. Augie Mardesich had just become the Majority Leader in the Senate. They came a little more reluctantly to the table. They thought it was a little bit too much process and they like working the way the Senate probably still works; a little bit more

individual, a little bit less public.

Ms. McCrady: Right.

Mr. Foster: They went along with a lot of those things that Leonard got started. We ended up after, say the first year, with a lot of things in place, rescheduling and all that kind of stuff.

Ms. McCrady: The committee structure really changed then.

Mr. Foster: Right, yeah. So our committees, we started having committee weekends and holding hearings once a month or once every two months, when people came back for a weekend. It was unlike the old days when people were on interim committees but they weren't necessarily on the same committees during the session, or even had the same chairs. Now there was a continuity throughout the year.

Ms. McCrady: Did they actually pass legislation then during those committee weekends?

Mr. Foster: At the start. We tried continuing session for a couple of years, but that was the one failure in Len's plan. People really didn't like the idea, particularly the press and lobbyists didn't like the idea, of just holding this session open and popping up with bills anytime. There wasn't much of that. It think it might have happened a couple of times and it didn't go over very well. That's what led to sessions in 1979.

Ms. McCrady: That was a constitutional amendment, right?

Mr. Foster: That's right, that's when people said wait a minute. You could keep going, but let's make some end dates. Leonard's concept was you didn't have an end date. That's when we went to annual sessions with a defined number of days. Now you're required to call special sessions.

Ms. McCrady: But in that time, they didn't have to end, so they just kept going?

Mr. Foster: They were extraordinary sessions. Leonard's idea was that it would run year-round, and although he never supported a full-time legislature, some people would have argued that was what he was moving toward.

Ms. McCrady: How did that work for people who had other jobs? I know he was an attorney also, but how

did people like schoolteachers...?

Mr. Foster: There are a couple arguments. About this time is when some of the public disclosure stuff started. There quite a few arguments that anybody who wasn't subsidized, anybody who was in a private business, who was a lawyer, who had their own business, would have trouble with the continuing sessions. That's about the time that we started getting less of those people in the legislature and more people who could take time off of work. Teachers were able to; farmers could take time off work. They always had in the winter and that was a thing for farmers. Sometimes lawyers and other people couldn't. Also, sometimes lawyers didn't want to disclose their clients or where they got their income.

I think you can, depending on how you want to look at the data, you can go either way on the public disclosure thing. I think it opened the public's involvement in legislature. Some people didn't like that. You just have to trace that over the years. I think we started having more women in the legislature. We've had, clearly this is demonstrable, less attorneys. In my mind, although attorneys always get blamed for a lot...they were awfully good to have in the legislature. What did happen, however is that we had a much stronger staff to catch some of the things.

Ms. McCrady: We started hiring lawyers on staff.

Mr. Foster: We have a lot of lawyers on staff, yeah.

Ms. McCrady: Everybody I've spoken with gives Leonard a lot of credit for modernizing the legislature.

Mr. Foster: Oh there's no doubt. He clearly is the one who had the vision. He's the only one who had the vision. He brought people in because he really did believe in this part of the legislative process.

Ms. McCrady: Did he mostly do it to, obviously to improve the legislature, but to make it a more equal branch of government then with the Governor?

Mr. Foster: Absolutely.

Ms. McCrady: That was the real impetus?

Mr. Foster: Yes. And it's because the Governor controlled all the information. He would write the budget and he would give the information why things were needed. The legislature never had an opportunity to interpret Full-Time Equivalents (FTE, Staff Counts) or interpret how money was being used. They just sort of

put it out there. This was an argument that everybody ought to have the same information and then they could interpret it, as opposed to the Governor having the information and him interpreting it, and the legislature having to just take that interpretation.

Ms. McCrady: Yes, I've heard legislators say that all they basically could do was look through it to find out if their project was there, or how much they were getting for their hospital, or whatever.

Mr. Foster: That's right, yeah. They were only in session 60 days. Up until Evans, I think, generally that's all they were in session. They had a lot to do in 60 days. It was very hectic and very chaotic. People played tricks and they wrote things into a budget. For the first time in 1972, we didn't allow oral amendments. Prior to that, they had oral amendments. They'd be on the floor and the really smart Augie Mardesich, Bob Charrette, the really smart attorneys would put something in a simple little oral amendment and all of a sudden it changed the whole direction of the bill.

Ms. McCrady: That's not good. To your recollection, did Governor Evans fight the idea of LEAP and the legislature having their own information?

Mr. Foster: No, I don't think he fought it. I don't remember. He wouldn't have. There probably was resistance on the part of the executive to turning information over to the legislative. That would be normal.

Ms. McCrady: Of course.

Mr. Foster: If you've got the same data, then you're going to have this tension and that's what this is about. If we wanted to have a unicameral legislature like Nebraska, we would, but we don't. We've got a bicameral. If we wanted to have a system like they have in Canada or Britain where you really have the legislature and executive the same, we would, but we don't.

Ms. McCrady: Thank goodness. It's a pretty good system.

So, you then became the Chief Clerk, sworn in the same day as Len was sworn in as Speaker. You worked, obviously, pretty closely with him in that capacity.

Mr. Foster: Adjoining offices. We had a great relationship.

Ms. McCrady: Who was his attorney? Did he have a Speaker's attorney in those days?

Mr. Foster: I don't remember. It would be somebody who would be called in. At the beginning it would be somebody who would be called in from the outside. The Speakers hired their attorney for the session.

Ms. McCrady: Oh, I see, okay.

Mr. Foster: At the beginning, the code reviser was the principal set of attorneys and they were writing the bills. Then when we started hiring more staff in the legislature, and then we started hiring more attorneys and then it evolved into speakers having an attorney and actually then evolved into them sitting on the rostrum, which they do now.

Ms. McCrady: Yes and who is his majority leader?

Mr. Foster: First time was Bob Charrette, who was from Aberdeen or Hoquiam, an attorney, really a brilliant guy. Let's see, I think Bill Chatalis was still caucus chair, but I'm not sure.

Ms. McCrady: I think so. How would you describe his leadership style? Was it collaborative? Was he from the top down?

Mr. Foster: It was pretty top down. He wasn't particularly collaborative. He had his ideas and he really worked hard at talking people into reorganizing the legislature. He was sort of the old school. He wasn't the kind of person who wanted a lot of focus on the legislature or on himself. He liked to keep private and work private deals, which is what ultimately got him into trouble with his caucus. This is 1972, '73, '74. People are just coming back from Vietnam. People are discouraged about government.

Ms. McCrady: Watergate.

Mr. Foster: Watergate. They're starting to want to open things up. We had opened up in 1971 under Tom Swayze, who was the Speaker before Leonard was. They had opened the Rules Committee. The Rules Committee had always been closed. That is, they went into Rules and it was a closed committee. The legislative committees had closed work sessions. We went from a closed Rules Committee to an open Rules Committee and then to open committees. We don't have close. I mean, people adjourn for caucuses, but it's all mostly done in public. Leonard was more inclined to sort of work the back rooms. That's the way he did it. That's the way it was done in those days. He wasn't afraid to involve committees and committee chairs.

He didn't dominate committee chairs. He dominates a few issues, but not too many of them.

Ms. McCrady: Some complaints I read in Leonard's transcripts and in news accounts related to his less-than-open approach, and that he sometimes pulled bills from committees over the objections of the chairs. There was a feeling, maybe, that his members were expected to kind of "shut up and vote" once he'd made a decision.

Mr. Foster: Certainly the people who finally led him to lose his majority in the caucus, were that younger, I'm going to say idealistic, in a positive way, group who wanted more openness, who wanted legislators to be more participatory. The seniority system in those days was real important. If you were a freshman or even a sophomore, you didn't do a lot of things. You kept your mouth shut. You voted pretty much the way people ask you to vote. You had a few things you got. But then in the early 70's, people started coming in the reorganization caucuses and they wanted to be a part. They wanted to be a part the first day. That was a change in the environment. For the good.

Ms. McCrady: But it was not the way when he was elected in 1954 the first time. He came in the '55 session. That wasn't the way it was then.

Mr. Foster: Absolutely. But it really did evolve a lot. In today's terms it didn't, but it did evolve.

Ms. McCrady: I read in some news clips that sometimes bills the caucus was opposed to still came up for a vote on the floor. One of them was a small loans bill. Do you remember that one?

Mr. Foster: Not specifically, but I have a hunch it had to do with interest rates on loans.

Ms. McCrady: It did. Household Finance Company was a big supporter of it, and the majority of the House Democratic Caucus was opposed.

Mr. Foster: Okay. Well, until the tie in 1979, there wasn't a lot of caucus activity on every bill. They didn't go into caucus and discuss every bill. It was sort of up to the Rules Committee members and the Speaker to pull bills out of committee. There were splits, Eastern-Western Washington, not unlike now. There were a lot of business Democrats who had a different opinion of things than the more labor people. There was public-private power that had to do with

where you lived.

So, things came out onto the floor that sometimes people in the caucus would vote against, sometimes a lot of them. Sometimes they became a really big deal. Leonard would not have been the favorite, for instance, of the State Labor Council. He would work with the state labor council on things, but he wasn't a 100% vote for labor. He came from a private power county. Puget Power was in his area, although Tacoma Public Power was important there. So, it's not as sometimes clear as it is now. Plus right now, the caucuses...because of the tie, in my opinion...the caucuses were forced to almost take stands on every single issue. So, you don't get Republicans crossing the aisle or Democrats crossing the aisle to work with people on individual local issues, because it all becomes a partisan caucus issue.

So, yes, there were people in the caucus who were opposed to that issue, the issue of loans. Some people would say that people were bought off; and some people would call that campaign contributions; and some people would say, philosophically, they thought let the market take care of itself. I'm not going to make a judgment on that, but I understood at the time and I understand now people could make those judgments.

Ms. McCrady: The unhappiness seems to have come from the fact that the bill was voted out with a minority of Democratic votes.

Mr. Foster: Could be.

Ms. McCrady: Then the other thing that I've read a couple times was a bill would fail on the floor. This isn't unheard of in today's world either, but it was a big bill like the power bill, for example, that was voted down on the floor. Then it was moved to reconsider, and then there was a lot of arm twisting and threatening going on to make sure that the bill passed...not my words...that the bill passed the next day. Then it did pass the next day.

Mr. Foster: Here you get a conflict between people who represent their district and are Democrats, and that doesn't necessarily represent what a majority of the Democrat or Republican caucus think. So, we've now moved to more of a caucus decision-making process from a decision-making process that sort of involved all 98 people.

Ms. McCrady: Well, I think the majority of bills still

pass with 98 votes, or 96 votes, or whatever – huge majorities.

Mr. Foster: They do. We do the compromising differently nowadays than we did in the old days. As a result of the first tie where nothing could pass without bipartisan help, they started compromising at the committee level rather than later.

Ms. McCrady: So, they avoid the big floor fights.

Mr. Foster: That's right. Some people would argue that that was done for political reasons, because they could be used later. We would get people out, and we'd have a vote, and it would be very close. Then even when it failed, it would often come back under reconsideration. They'd make some changes on the floor... almost an open meeting...and it would pass. Then they started calling people on it – “Well, you voted for this amendment or you voted against this amendment,” so it became a political thing in the next election. Yes, they voted for it. It never became law, because it was changed, but that's all inside baseball.

Ms. McCrady: I'd like to talk about what happened with the caucus uprising. It looks like there were a lot of things swirling around at that time. From the newspaper clips, Leonard was facing quite a few different challenges in the press. There was something with the West Seattle bridge that was going on. I'm not quite clear what that was, but there was some sort of a suggestion that there was some improprieties in the contract awarding process. There was a loan to Senator Mardesich that was questionable. The PDC was just coming into its own, and they wanted to audit everything he did, it sounded like. So, there were quite a few other things happening coming into the '76 session.

Mr. Foster: Well, I think that there were a lot of accusations at that time. I was with Leonard, and I wasn't involved in that kind of stuff. Leonard resigned because a majority of his caucus asked him to. As far as I know, nothing came of most of those issues.

Ms. McCrady: No. I don't think anything did.

Mr. Foster: But in the short period of time where people got worked up, they, for a variety of reasons, signed a letter; and they got a majority; and they went in and asked him to resign; and he resigned.

Ms. McCrady: My question was more: do you think

that those outside influences had anything to do with those members taking that action? Did they feel like they were going to lose the majority; or from a political perspective, do you think that played into it at all; or do you think it was all pretty much all internal?

Mr. Foster: I think it was all internal. They didn't lose the majority. We still kept the majority. I think it was internal, and I think it was speculative. However many people signed that, they did it for that many different reasons. Leonard didn't let them run their committee right; Leonard was taking money under the table; whatever made somebody sign that letter. Since then, I've been in conversations with a number of people who signed the letter who wished they hadn't. But they did, and it was the heat of the moment... And that's what happens in those kinds of things. I think it was internal with external excuses.

Ms. McCrady: Okay. So, there was a caucus of 62 people, and 32 or 33 of them voted. My understanding is there was a caucus called like the third day of the '76 session, and in that caucus, I think Bud Shinpoch made a motion to take a vote of no confidence on the Speaker. Were you in the caucus room at that time?

Mr. Foster: No. About 11: 30 that day, Bud came up to me...it was quarter to twelve, something like that...and said, "The majority of the Democratic caucus wants to have a caucus." I said, "Can we finish this bill?" He looked at me... I don't know if you knew Bud, but he was very direct..."the majority wants to have a caucus now." John O'Brien was presiding. Leonard was back in his office. I went back and said, " Bud came up to me and said, 'A majority of your caucus wants to have a caucus right now.' "We put the House at ease."

It was clear something was going on, but we didn't know what. I don't even remember what day of the week it was. I think it was probably a Monday. They'd had a meeting that weekend, and they'd got this letter signed. It was pretty clear we didn't need staff in there, so no staff went in.

Ms. McCrady: Seems like that was a wise decision.

Mr. Foster: They let everyone in; they did whatever they did, and they presented him this letter. I think I wrote the letter of resignation, which was very simple: "I resign." The next day or the next couple days... They were very bitter on both sides, but you know how you

get during a legislative session; you get bitter over a bill.

Ms. McCrady: Oh, yeah.

Mr. Foster: So, he resigned, and that was it.

Ms. McCrady: What I couldn't get from the people I've spoken with is it seems there was no real discussion with him first, that they didn't go to the Speaker directly with their individual concerns ahead of taking this action. Maybe a few people did. I don't know. I don't know who all signed the letter. It seems like they gathered the signatures individually, one-on-one. Nobody knew who else was on the letter.

Mr. Foster: My understanding is that they handed Leonard a letter with signatures on it.

Ms. McCrady: Oh, maybe they did.

Mr. Foster: But when they had the letter and when they had you sign your name, the other names were covered.

Ms. McCrady: That's what they said. They didn't tell anybody who's on it, and they promised everybody that their names would never be disclosed until they got the number they needed.

Mr. Foster: That's right.

Ms. McCrady: So that nobody would be politically harmed.

Mr. Foster: So, it was a majority. I believe that people thought they were communicating with Leonard. They thought they were telling him what they were unhappy about. They believe that he ignored them; they believe that he put them down; they believe that he didn't pay any attention. However they believe, that's how they helped get signatures on that letter. It was a, I think, one vote majority. He decided that he didn't want to remain Speaker under those conditions. They had no backup plan for him to resign. So, John O'Brien, who was Speaker Pro Tem, remained Speaker the rest of the term.

Ms. McCrady: One thing the former members I spoke with did assure me was that he did not sign the letter.

Mr. Foster: What?

Ms. McCrady: One thing they assured me was that O'Brien would not sign the letter. He said no.

Mr. Foster: Oh, I know that. Right.

Ms. McCrady: So, he wasn't involved in it. Well, Shelby Scates, the former PI writer for many years up on the hill – I found quite a few clips from him and other reporters, as well...

Mr. Foster: You should have found some from Mike Layton, too.

Ms. McCrady: I did, and Lyle Burt, too, from the Olympian. There were quite a few articles. It doesn't seem like there was ever really... It never was really spelled out completely. You know what I mean? The press never knew everybody who was on the letter. It wasn't ever given to them, which I find impossible, in today's world. I think through the lack of technology probably helped that, because they didn't do anything in email.

Mr. Foster: Well, there were clearly some people who were unhappy. I hope what we're writing here, however, is about Leonard's total career, not about this one thing. He did what he had to do. The caucus was unhappy. He resigned.

Ms. McCrady: Then what did he do?

Mr. Foster: He didn't run the next year. Then he went back and became a lawyer a few years later when there were a number of Democrats who were supporting insurance tort reform. Now, the whole majority of the caucus was against tort reform, but there were a few Democrats, including Alan Thompson, some other people, for good reasons who were supporting it. This is when John Bagnariol and Duane Berentsen were, I think, co-Speakers. Leonard came back and lobbied a little bit.

Ms. McCrady: That's what I was going to ask: did he ever lobby?

Mr. Foster: He was really good, but he only lobbied that one issue.

Ms. McCrady: Tort reform.

Mr. Foster: He never lost his legislative touch, but he left the political scene and...

Ms. McCrady: Became a private citizen.

Mr. Foster:...became a private citizen and a lawyer.

Ms. McCrady: Well, before all that, he did a lot to help other Democrats get elected and you were part of that, too, at least for a time. When you were work-

ing to recruit candidates, one thing I read in some of the notes was that he looked for people who had been athletes in school because he thought that demonstrated drive, and some leadership, and so forth.

Mr. Foster: Right. He believed it. One of the things that he did... and the athletic model was part of it... he really understood what somebody's district looked like. The story that I like to use is when we went over and met Tub Hanson in Central Washington. We met him in a restaurant there. It was an amazing... I was pretty young. It was an amazing conversation between Leonard, who talked too fast sometimes and Tub, who talked too slow sometimes. They couldn't finish sentences. They used words wrong. When we finished... and he had recruited Tub...he said to me, "I know you think that this guy's a bozo, but he's not; he's a really smart farmer." We all know what happened with Tub (Tub: 6 years in House; 13 years in Senate, 13th Legislative District).

But he recruited people, unlike what we sometimes do now, he recruited people who represented their district. So, one of the reasons why he got into trouble was there were people who would vote "against the caucus," especially eastern Washington folks who had farmer issues. They had issues that weren't like Seattle, and they voted that way. Sometimes that got people into trouble. Leonard always professed that he would not force somebody to vote against their district. If he was pushing it, it had to be really something important like a final budget or something. The athlete thing, they represent their district. Do you look like your district? That was always important to him.

Ms. McCrady: He did a great job, apparently, recruiting.

Mr. Foster: In those days. Now, we're talking about... Of the group who came out of World War II, generally they started their own business; they went back to the farm; they went to law school; and they were maybe athletes. All of those things came together about that time.

Ms. McCrady: How did he get the names? Did he just know people, this grapevine, or did you...?

Mr. Foster: You would call local Democratic groups. You would call people who you know had been involved before. We were always looking for somebody who was an elected official. A school board member, a

mayor – that would be great. The campaigns didn't start that... You didn't recruit until after the second... maybe the beginning of the second session. Filing opened in... I don't know...

Ms. McCrady: July, I think, in those days.

Mr. Foster:...July. You'd start your recruiting in May or something like that. People didn't build up big war chests.

Ms. McCrady: No. I was reading some of the campaigns were run on... Len said his first campaign was \$500. That's just unheard of.

Mr. Foster: They'd do some signs, and they'd go out and talk to people. People who knew them in their districts... They know who is known, especially in the larger districts. You just go out and try to find somebody. Often we'd recruit people who didn't even know they wanted to be in the legislature, and we'd have to talk them into it.

Ms. McCrady: Did you run against a lot of incumbents, or were they seats that were coming open? I know in '72, there were a lot of new seats because of redistricting.

Mr. Foster: That's because of redistricting. The caucus didn't have the tight rules they have...or the tight procedure they have now of not challenging incumbents. Incumbents did get challenged...particularly in the Senate. I remember when I was working for Bob Greive in the Senate, Greive would go out and find candidates to run against incumbents and other people who had been opposed to Greive would go out and find candidates to run against his incumbents. It wasn't so public, you just knew it. A couple times recently I think that's happened with Republicans over in Chelan and places like that.

Ms. McCrady: How did he work with the Republicans?

Mr. Foster: I think well because I think he thought he was a moderate kind of Democrat who could see both business and labor sides. He was probably a little more to the center or to the right than some other people. He lived in Pierce County which was different than King County.

Ms. McCrady: Especially in those days.

Mr. Foster: He lived in rural, he lived in Sumner or Puyallup, raised in Puyallup. Different than Seattle.

So, his view of business was, it wasn't the enemy. In some cases in the Democratic party, the big enemy was big labor.

Ms. McCrady: He also had a pretty good relationship with the Senate? I mean, he and Augie were friends.

Mr. Foster: Very close; see Augie was in the House for a long time. Augie and Leonard would switch who was going to run for speaker against John O'Brien. They were very close. They were both on the Legislative Transportation Committee. The Legislative Transportation Committee was an interim committee in those days, funded separately than the legislature was.

Ms. McCrady: That was only disbanded very recently.

Mr. Foster: That's right. They had their own money and Julia Butler Hansen, who was the longtime chair of that... She got the money and she got, the House had one extra vote. They'd organize and the House would always get their people together and walk over to the Senate, because the Senate never wanted to walk over to the House. There was always that one vote majority that Julia got.

Ms. McCrady: It appears though that Julia and Lenny weren't always on the same page. They clashed quite a bit.

Mr. Foster: They did clash.

Ms. McCrady: What was the main thing?

Mr. Foster: I don't know. The first session that I was there was in 1959. That's when I first went to the Senate. That was Julia's last session, I believe.

Ms. McCrady: Before she went to the Congress.

Mr. Foster: The only thing I remember...I was in high school. The only thing I remember is that Julia came over to the Senate one time in a light moment and they brought her down the aisle. Everybody was bowing and everybody was laughing. Somebody came over to me and said, "Don't think that this is anything funny. This is serious. They admire her and hate her and are afraid of her." She was very tough.

Ms. McCrady: It did appear from the interviews that they didn't get along that well.

Mr. Foster: I think Gordon Sandison was John O'Brien's campaign manager when John O'Brien was running. Julia and John were running for Speaker. John beat her

by one vote. I've heard this story from Gordon Sandison. After the vote and the caucus, reorganization caucus, she came up to him and said, "Congratulations, you son of a bitch, I'll get you." [Laughs]

Ms. McCrady: Oh man! So O'Brien had challenges for speaker frequently, didn't he?

Mr. Foster: Most every time, yeah.

Ms. McCrady: That's kind of rare, anymore.

Mr. Foster: That was rural versus urban. That was public versus private power. That was anti-private school funding, anti-money for Catholic schools versus...John was very close to the Catholic church, was always trying to sneak money in for books or transportation.

Ms. McCrady: Into private schools?

Mr. Foster: Yeah.

Ms. McCrady: Oh man. I can't even imagine that.

Mr. Foster: That's right, you can't. That was a big deal in those days. All of those things fit in.

Ms. McCrady: One other thing that was interesting to me, and seemed to raise a few eyebrows, was something about "Speaker Fun Nights." I didn't know what that was.

Mr. Foster: In those days you raised money during the session. So Leonard put together a caucus event the weekend before session. It was called Speaker's fun and then in parenthesis d, fun(d) night.

Ms. McCrady: Fun(d) night, okay.

Mr. Foster: Everybody was invited. Caucus members were invited. Mostly lobbyists were invited. That money went into a fund that Leonard controlled. That made the caucus people unhappy. My understanding of the story is that they went briefly to that event and then they met someplace in Olympia. Some of them met. I don't know how many of them met to sort of put together their ducks on getting the letter signed, that kind of stuff.

They were unhappy that Leonard was raising this money and he was going to control it.

Ms. McCrady: Did the Speaker always control the caucus fundraising money?

Mr. Foster: I caution you not to put today's values into what was happening then. That's the way it worked in

those days. That became a big deal.

Ms. McCrady: Okay. They wanted to have a vote on where the campaign funds went?

Mr. Foster: See, we wouldn't even have that issue now, because you can't raise money 30 days before the session.

Ms. McCrady: Right.

Mr. Foster: Money worked differently. When I first came to the legislature, every week Washington Water Power and Puget Power, the private power companies had their legislators that represented them. My friend, Bob Greive, was a private power guy. It doesn't make any sense, except that the way he made his majority was mostly out of Eastern Washington and rural areas.

Anyway, Washington Water Power, every week during the session, brought around two rolls of stamps and gave them to every one of their legislators. The Olympia Brewing Company brought a case of beer around to everybody's house or office, wherever they wanted it. The Seattle Times and the Seattle P-I delivered newspapers to everybody free. The Y gave local memberships. They gave memberships in the Y to people who were here during the legislative session, members.

Ms. McCrady: It was a big business, legislature.

Mr. Foster: We looked at these things as, I don't know, were they bribing them? People went out to dinner. It's just different and so those things happened. I was in maybe 1964 election, Greive gave me a box of stamps and he was supporting somebody. I took them down to the post office. I don't know how much, to put it into somebody's account.

Ms. McCrady: Their bulk account.

Mr. Foster: They pulled me aside. Somebody had just stolen a bunch of stamps. They called him and I got that taken care of. I traveled with Augie one time. We were in a plane and we landed in Bellingham. I had the box, but Augie gave Barney Goltz a whole box of stamps for his campaign. We didn't report those kinds of things. You didn't have to report them. We didn't report them. It was a way companies washed money.

Ms. McCrady: Things really were different then.

I really appreciate you taking this time with me.

You've filled in a lot of gaps.

Is there anything else you would just like to say about Leonard? You've said a lot, of course, but something else you want to make sure gets said?

Mr. Foster: I watched him after he was in the legislature. He was the kind of guy that you can get drawn to. His legislative career, there was a certain amount of it that appeared like he was a top-down guy, but he generally was very friendly and I learned a lot from him. I respected him a lot.

Ms. McCrady: I know he thought a lot of you, as well. Thank you again.

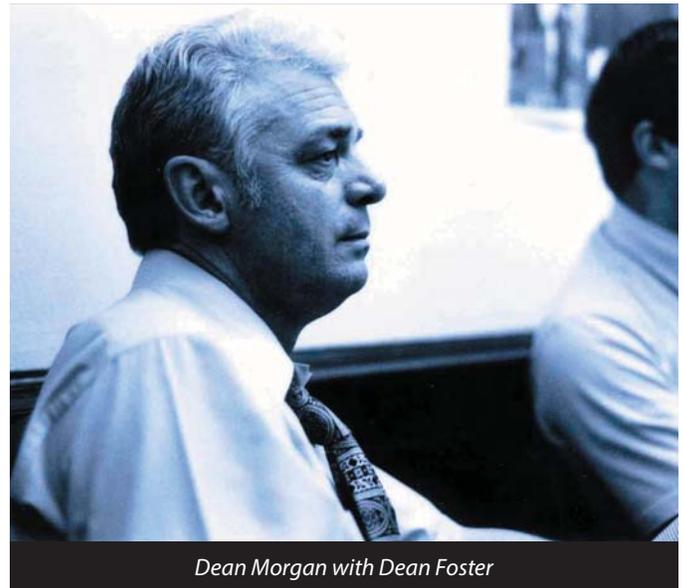
Chapter 26

The Reform Program: A Group Interview with Speaker Leonard Sawyer, former Chief Clerk Dean Foster and former assistants Dawne Freisen and Vito Chiechi conducted by Anne Kilgannon on September 2, 2004.

Ms. Kilgannon: Today, we are here with Speaker Leonard Sawyer, Ms. Dawne Friesen, Vito Chiechi, and Dean Foster. We're going to talk about Leonard Sawyer's reforms that transformed the work of the Washington State Legislature, beginning in 1972, when he was Speaker of the House. Leonard Sawyer was a long-time legislator from the Puyallup area who then gradually worked his way up the hierarchy in the Democratic caucus and became Speaker in 1973. He served two terms in that office.

He had had these reforms in mind for quite awhile and this was his first opportunity to put them into place. He had a great team that helped him who are not all present here today, but we have a good representation of the people that worked with him.

Speaker Sawyer's main goals were to strengthen the legislative branch. The executive branch under Governor Dan Evans had been growing and developing considerably over these years and many legislators—certainly Leonard Sawyer—believed that the Legislature had been weakened in comparison and needed more tools and more structure to help it keep up with the executive branch. His other goal was to maintain a part-time citizen Legislature, close to people, responsive, but more effective. So with those big-picture goals in mind, we can turn to Leonard and he can tell us how he kept those things in mind and what he did in the Legislature.



Dean Morgan with Dean Foster

Rep. Sawyer: Thank you, Anne. I think one of the first things that I want to talk about is, I've always believed that in the Legislature—or any kind of activity—the person with the best information is the one that prevails.

And we never had any information as legislators. I always used to say we were fed pabulum because somebody else had digested the information and all we got was what they wanted to tell us.

Vito Chiechi: Whatever came over from the administration is what we got, because they had the staff to do it with. The Legislature didn't have the staff to go in and do the research that was necessary.

Rep. Sawyer: And it was really very frustrating most of the time to legislators and staff people, too. So our main thrust was we wanted to get information. We wanted independent information that we could rely on and wasn't colored. Before, all we got was information from the executive staff. We got information from the lobbyists. And quite frankly, they were probably more honest most of the time than the executive people because they didn't have quite the structures that they were trying to create. So this is where we started from.

There are three branches of government: there's the judicial, there's the legislative and the executive. Well, the executive had more staff than he needed, we always felt. We had none—to an extent—and what we did have was mostly part-time. We wanted people there all the time. And then the judiciary has always got very qualified staff, probably the most qualified of all. So we were the only ones without any permanent staff or any means of getting any independent information. So that's basically what we really started from.

Dean Foster: And part of it was the Legislature's fault. The Legislature really had two kinds of operations: one during the interim, which they called interim committees, which would start at the end of any session and disband right at the beginning of the next session. And there was no carryover from the information they received because many of the members of the interim committees were going to some new committee. And the staff may or may not go on to another legislative committee and it might not even be the same one. So the legislative hierarchy itself was not set up to help the legislators get information. It was more: what do you do during the interim and then come in during the legislative session. So part of this was to put the Legislature itself into a position of getting more information. And that's where the permanent staff started coming in.

There was, I recall, a lot of opposition to that, couched in the terms that "It's going to cost us so much money." But in terms of how much money the Legislature budgeted every year for the state, it was nothing. A tenth of one percent or something like that. And yet, finally, there was some competition with the information that the executive branch put out—legitimate arguments about how much money was coming in and how it was going out and where it was going to.

Ms. Kilgannon: Previously, you'd had some staff, but they were patronage staff, I understood, but what you brought in was something very new: nonpartisan staff.

Vito Chiechi: Well, one of the reasons, too, that there was so much controversy over whether or not this would work or not—because the people were saying, "Well, the party in power would dominate the staff." Well, Leonard said, "No, we're going to pick the staff and we're going to have this number of Republicans on that committee and this number of Democrats." So the people had to be qualified to be part of that program research staff. And so we got some very good people because of that, because we didn't take any political hacks. We took the people who had legal backgrounds and it worked out exceedingly well. But you had to have that nonpartisanship actually hiring those kinds of people.

Ms. Kilgannon: So that was the joint committee of Republicans and Democrats?

Vito Chiechi: Yes, the joint committee that we had

talked about before.

Dean Foster: And the proof of that is when the Republicans took over control of the House in '81, not very many of the nonpartisan staff were let go. I mean, they continued them because they had worked that balance and the Republicans knew that the nonpartisan staff—that was the first time the minority party had really had access to any staff. There was partisan staff, but they really hadn't had access to this caliber of staff. And it worked both ways.

And the truth is, thirty-some years later, there's still some of the same people on that staff. It's my understanding that Leonard's idea was that we would hire staff and they would be with the Legislature for a couple of years—four years or six years—and then they'd go out into state government or with other organizations and we'd be expanding this knowledge about government. Most of them stayed.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, they liked it.

Ms. Friesen: The Legislature became a little more institutionalized, I think, than Len's original concept envisioned.

Ms. Kilgannon: I suppose they built up expertise...

Ms. Friesen: And security.

Ms. Kilgannon: ...security and relationships, and learned how it worked.

Ms. Friesen: Now, that's not to say that there wasn't partisan staff. This was the professional staff. It was the professional staff that was hired by this employment committee.

Rep. Sawyer: The other thing is I can say that I don't like term limits because experience means so much in the legislative environment. Because you have to look back, because so many things look really good unless you've had experience with it and you know, they present the bad and the good. You understand some of the negatives. So I wanted a staff that was going to be there and they would have the experience to back up their research. So I thought it was really important that we maintained this staff as long as we could. I didn't really think they'd last that long but they seemed to like the environment that they were put in and they stayed, which was all good. So it was a real thing.

And then as far as the partisan staff, when I was a minority leader, I had one person, half-time, I think. Maybe there was one person. And so I took him and divided his time—mainly I went ahead and hired a person out of our staff budget to do the redistricting thing. So we computerized it. Now, that was the first time that it had ever been computerized and that was my first experience with computers on that basis. And it worked so beautifully! We knew more about it than Senator Greive and his big staff and Swayze and their big staff. We could go through and take a plan and within two hours know the break-up. It would take them days. Now, Dean used to work on those kinds of programs and they were huge.

Ms. Kilgannon: He was there at the paper and pencil stage.

Dean Foster: I was, absolutely. But I was now with the House, by this time. And yes, we were way ahead of them.

Rep. Sawyer: After we went through it, we ran it different ways and we didn't think things would stay—unless somebody got in there and went real partisan on it—that we were going to end up in good shape. We didn't particularly want a lot of change. And we kind of drug our feet all through the thing and luckily they couldn't put it together and the court came in and did it. And then after the court made the redistricting, a lot of our Democratic leaders and the labor people and all these people said, "Oh!" and were just horrified.

We ran it and boy, it was better than what we could have passed, because it was done very properly. So we were very thankful to the people that did that redistricting. But that's when I really got enraptured with computers, because I didn't know them too well before then.

The guy that did that for us is Graham Lammers. He was a young man working up at Boeing and I think Dean [Morgan] or Vito found him for us. He did it part-time, at nights and weekends, because Boeing wouldn't be involved in something partisan like that and this was purely partisan. So we paid him out of our small budget. He didn't get much compared to what he did.

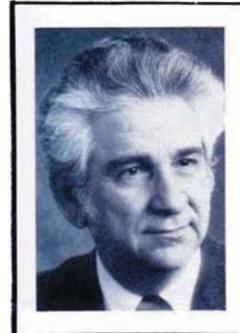
Vito Chiechi: Oh, absolutely not.

Ms. Friesen: He was a jewel.

Rep. Sawyer: Yes, and he was a genius, too.



FOSTER, DEAN R. (Democrat) Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives serving his first term. Worked as an employee in the Senate from 1959-1965 and in the House in 1972. Born in 1941 in Yakima. Attended Western Washington State College and graduated from University of Washington with a degree in Political Science. Served in the United States Air Force as an Intelligence Officer. He and his wife, Cynthia, have three sons.



CHIECHI, VITO T. (Republican) Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives. Public Affairs Staff Executive and Consultant with over 30 years experience in the public and private sectors in local-, state- and federal government relations. Former Executive Assistant to the Speaker of the House, 1973-76. Born in 1925 in Seattle, hold a degree in Finance from Seattle University. Vito and his wife Dolores have nine children and live in Olympia.

Vito Chiechi: Anne, that was a time that if you had to interrogate the larger computer, you had a piece of equipment this high and it had telephone couplings and you put the telephone on there, on the coupling that went to the main computer in order to hold all the data. And then you could sit here with your computer and put the data in and it went to the main computer, to work it. And then all of a sudden out of the thing would come the paper; it would come banging out.

And Leonard brought the Senate in one time. They had a plan that was supposed to be good. And Leonard said, "Just a minute." He just got Graham Lammers to put all the information in and then Leonard looked at him and said, "Nah, this is not any good."

Rep. Sawyer: Right there in front of them!

Ms. Kilgannon: They must have been astonished.

Ms. Friesen: We were all pretty astonished, initially.

Vito Chiechi: And Senator August Mardesich (Senate Majority Leader) just got mad and started calling him every name under the sun because he hadn't told them about that he had this computer.

Ms. Kilgannon: The "magic box?"

Vito Chiechi: That's right, the magic box. That was the arrangement, the advent at least of being able to go from that telephone coupler to today, we've got it on today's PC. Yes, it's got a little teeny screen. Ask

Dean, he worked on this last redistricting on a little piece of computer on his desk.

Dean Foster: But not much changed except the size. When the Court Master, Morrill (Professor Richard Morrill, Emeritus, Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Washington.) came up with the new redistricting—I think it was in the spring of ‘72—and Leonard put in the new lines—whoever did it—put it into his computer, we knew right away, or we expected right away, that we were going to do real well in the next elections. You still have to campaign, you still have to have good candidates.

But what he [Morrill] drew—which was a totally non-partisan drawing—well, all the Democrats, Bob Greive starting, they got all excited. They thought this was a terrible thing that was happening and we were going to lose the election. We knew from the beginning that if we had the right kind of candidates, because of that data, we were going to win. And it turned out pretty well. I don’t know, we won fifty-five seats that year, I think.

Rep. Sawyer: Went from forty-three to fifty-five.

Dean Foster: And everybody was astounded. And we weren’t astounded at all. We knew it had to happen.

That was the beginning, in my mind, of the use of computers and then later we’ll talk about LEAP [Legislative Evaluation and Accountability Program], which is really the great thing that was done for the Legislature beyond the structural changes. But the structural changes had to come first before you were able to implement the other kinds of competition with the executive.

Rep. Sawyer: Well, the things we were doing weren’t very glamorous. The press, nobody, in fact, most people didn’t pay much attention. But those of us that were in the Legislature all the time, and struggling and struggling, it was all pretty important to us.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, that’s hard now to remember how it was before and then how much you did change it. Let’s talk a little bit about what you did with committees because you made some changes there that—on paper—sound like, “Why is that so important?” but they actually made the committee structure quite different.

Ms. Friesen: Anne, could I make a preliminary statement here before you start that? I think that it’s

important to understand that everything that Leonard was trying to do was very suspect. Because it was new—and it was change.

Ms. Kilgannon: People don’t like change...

Ms. Friesen: People in positions of power, however large, great or small the power, the fear is of the loss of power and fear of change. And Leonard never was afraid of anything like that. He’s kind of a visionary and sees change as opportunity. And that frightened a lot of people.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, I don’t know if it was a good thing or not a good thing to say, but several times when people were talking about these innovations, they said, “This is the most change in eighty-four years.” In other words, since statehood. So that kind of set it up as almost revolutionary, rather than evolutionary, which is exciting but challenging to people.

Rep. Sawyer: Well, one other statement that I want to make, because I feel so strongly about this is, when I was running the minority, they squeezed us off. They didn’t give us any help. I talked to U.S. Senator Warren G. Magnuson and he said, “A strong minority is helpful.” And that didn’t make sense, but then, the more I was in the Legislature, the more I would think, if you’ve got a strong minority, they’re going to make it tougher for you to pass the bills through. But the bills are going to be better screened. You’re going to have better legislation when you have a strong minority. And just because the minority is strong, if you can’t pass something, it shouldn’t be passed, is the way to think.

So when we went in, I think the Republicans, they said they were suspicious of what we thinking, saying all these nice things, but we really meant them because it was based on our experience. I’d been in there nearly twenty years and Dean had been in and around the Legislature.

I really believe in a strong staff. One of the reasons we were able to do as many things as what we’re going to be talking about, I had a fantastic staff. I really did. And these people—we’ll be talking about them later on—they all went on and did great, and were very successful people afterwards. And stayed in politics. And so did the Republican staff. So, it really worked when we made this staff.

The main thing is that Dean touched on a little

bit—prior to that, the interim committees became little kingdoms, fiefdoms, and they were expensive. And nobody knew what they were doing and they were out there; there was no organization. Nobody knew when a meeting was going to be held—it was nothing—it was just whenever the chairman felt like it. And so, we knew that we were going to get an awful lot of pressure from the elder statesmen that we had to deal with in the Senate.

Ms. Friesen: Not all elderly!

Dean Foster: So that talks about the committee structure before 1972. Let me just give you some numbers. Both in the Senate and the House, there may have been twenty to twenty-five committees during the regular session of the Legislature. And members may have served on from eight to twelve committees. You never knew when a committee was going to be called. Prior to about 1967, most of the committees closed most of their meetings. So you never knew when there was going to be a meeting. A chair would get up on the floor and call a meeting, and nobody would have any idea what was going to be done at the meeting.

What Leonard then did and he talked the Senate—Senator Mardesich—into that, is cut the number of committees to about ten or twelve.

Ms. Friesen: I think there were fifteen.

Dean Foster: Fifteen? And limit the membership on those committees to three or four per member. And then we set up a structure by which people would know when those committees were going to meet: three times a week, or two times a week, at a certain time. So you go from total lack of knowledge about anything and members on so many committees, to getting a subject down and then having the same named committees in each body so that you would know that a bill that might go to one of these committees would clearly go to the other one.

Ms. Friesen: Unless the person referring the bill thought it might not get a fair hearing.

Dean Foster: Right. But generally, what was then set up was some consistency and some knowledge about what was going to happen. That was terribly threatening to lots of people. They didn't want the public knowing when a hearing was going to happen. A chair didn't want the public to know that they were going

to have a meeting.

Ms. Kilgannon: They might come?

Ms. Friesen: Well, yes. And the press.

Dean Foster: And the press.

Ms. Friesen: We published a weekly schedule of when the meetings were going to be and where and what was going to be on the agenda. And that was available to the public and to the press and it was actually posted on the floor of the House. Not the agenda, but the times.

Ms. Kilgannon: Give people a chance? Dawne, I understand that it was part of your role to coordinate between the House and the Senate and try to keep things moving. Build that relationship—for the first time.

Ms. Friesen: Right.

Ms. Kilgannon: Was that hard?

Ms. Friesen: It was an extreme challenge! Yes. (Laughter in the room)

Ms. Kilgannon: So, do you think that's an understatement? So, would you look to be forging a whole new way of working with people, and teaching them and coddling them along?

Ms. Friesen: Oh, coddling, yes. But the reason that I had that position was that I had worked for both the Senate majority leader, Senator Mardesich, and Len Sawyer as Speaker of the House and so I knew how they operated. And I worked with them closely on the development of the restructuring—the reorganization of the Legislature.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did they both turn to you and say, "Make it work?"

Ms. Friesen: No, no, they turned to a lot of people to make it work. But I was able to facilitate some activity between the two Houses because of my familiarity with the leadership. There was a sort of "Super Rules Committee" that was composed of House and Senate leadership—the majority leadership—that met about once a week at some unholy hour in the morning and I staffed that. We determined at those meetings and other meetings what would be considered major legislation. Not that all legislation wasn't important, but there were certain bills and certain issues that needed to be addressed during the session and we wanted to be sure that those were progressing in a positive way

through the process in both Houses. That was one of my responsibilities: to track both major pieces of legislation and make sure that they were moving. That was totally new.

Ms. Kilgannon: I gather that nobody before had looked at both houses and tried to coordinate?

Ms. Friesen: Right. And I would work with the chairmen of both groups, and the House and the Senate majority leaders, and then the Speaker, to make sure that they got on the calendars and through the Rules committees.

Ms. Kilgannon: It would take that kind of attention?

Ms. Friesen: Right.

Rep. Sawyer: She wasn't the most popular person in the world because when she saw something, well, she'd go to Augie or myself and Bailey, whoever she could get hold of and say, "This bill is not moving." And before that she'd have to go interview the chairman to find out why it wasn't moving, and so forth. And so some of them didn't...

Ms. Friesen: Didn't appreciate that.

Rep. Sawyer: Didn't want to share that information and so forth. And we didn't do it to all the bills, just the bills that...

Ms. Friesen: ...we considered major legislation.

Rep. Sawyer: ...we decided were major legislation. We wanted to pass them or at least bring them up so they had a hearing on the floor.

Ms. Kilgannon: I understand besides this 'gentle' oversight, shall we call it, that you actually expected more from your chairmen. You wanted them to know more about their own bills that were coming out of their committees and to come before Rules and actually stand up and describe these bills.

Rep. Sawyer: Yes, they weren't too happy with that at times. But in Rules—I'd been on Rules since my second term, you know. And half the time, you don't know what's going on. You turn to somebody and you like him, and he asks you about a bill. What did we have? Five-thousand bills and how are you going to know them all? So, you always relied on friends. That's another thing Senator Magnuson told me. He said, "Pick your friends. Outside the Legislature and

inside the Legislature, that's where you're going to get your information and you can call them." So that's the way you did it. Too much and it became a little bit of cronyism, but there was a reason for the cronyism, is what I'm saying.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, certain persons would be well-versed in education or transportation or whatever and you would probably look to their lead; you can't know everything.

Rep. Sawyer: So what we decided, we had them enlighten the Rules Committee a little bit, too. We were acting kind of blindly. And so that's when we decided we'd have the chairman come over and explain the bills in the open forum.

Dean Foster: They not only had to explain them. The other great advantage to this is the Rules Committee members generally were more senior members, the senior members in leadership. They'd had some experience. And they could, by having an opportunity to sit there and read the bills or listen, pick out problems, raise questions to the chair or to staff that early in the process could be corrected. These wouldn't necessarily be partisan questions, these wouldn't necessarily be policy questions, but they would just read the bill and say,

"It doesn't say what you're saying it says." And so it was an early check on how well the committee had done and how well the staff had done. Plus, it forced the chairs to understand what the bills were, which was pretty threatening in itself. But it worked out because, by the end of the session, chairs wanted to get in there and get their bills moved and had a chance to practice before they went to caucus or on the floor about what the bill was about.

Ms. Friesen: So it was a good opportunity to fine-tune the legislation itself, too.

Dean Foster: It took a lot of commitment of time, because you think about, in a period of four or five weeks, how many bills come out of the committee and then having to sit in a Rules Committee for two or three hours with six or seven or eight chairs.

Ms. Kilgannon: But in the end, did you get better legislation? You put this work in up-front and in the end, isn't it better legislation that comes out? Isn't that the whole goal?

Rep. Sawyer: Well, I think it worked and was kind of important in the overall picture of the continuing legislative session, I think. Because, in September, in a period of ten days or eight days, we were all ready to go. When they called us in, everybody was saying, “This wasn’t going to work.” Every one of them backed off of that statement because we had the legislation ready and the chairmen were well versed and everything. And it went! And you knew what you were voting on. And so we could really pass an awful lot in those days. And we weren’t just rushing legislation—it was legislation that had been well thought out, and only in a short period of four or five months, prior to the end of the session.

Ms. Friesen: The hearings had been held by standing committees during the period between sessions.

Vito Chiechi: And I believe the other thing that was important about opening Rules—before Rules used to meet in a room about this size. You know, just the Rules members. But what Leonard did, he had it moved into a big hearing room to where the public could be there and listen, too. And bills—before—would get into Rules and would die and somebody would say, “Well, why did it die?” And nobody would say anything. They all had their little cliques going and they just stayed right there. That way we opened up, again, the process. And that’s what I think he always was striving for—to open up the process.

Ms. Kilgannon: Bring the public in?

Ms. Friesen: Couldn’t you still go into executive sessions for votes, though?

Dean Foster: No—couldn’t.

Ms. Friesen: Well, that was after public disclosure. But that was passed while he was Speaker.

Dean Foster: I thought all committees by the time Leonard became Speaker were open?

Ms. Friesen: Well, you’re probably right. I don’t remember.

Ms. Kilgannon: It was awhile ago! Earlier, Vito was telling me about another piece of this is that you worked with your chairmen and you would take them for lunch or dinner once or twice a month and really talk. And they would hear each other’s concerns and you would get the big picture. Do you want to talk

about those dinners?

Rep. Sawyer: Yes, we used the Tye for that, out there, at least once a month, and we’d have dinner if we could. And then the chairmen all would get up—and, basically, it was their meeting. And so I had the leadership there and the chairmen. Now, this was just Democrats, completely. I thought it was a great thing, because I always figured it was the chairmen that were supposed to go back and educate their committee members as to what the idea was. But we got a better picture of the whole thing. And they weren’t in caucus where they had to wait to speak. Each guy had plenty of time and it was an informal situation. So that really worked well. Anyway, I thought it did, from my standpoint.

Dean Foster: Well, everybody knew what everybody else was doing and no surprises. So, not only was he working to get the public more involved, his members got more involved in a lot of the other issues. And therefore, ultimately you had a stronger caucus, a more knowledgeable caucus. And more participation. This probably caused more work, but it allowed everybody to be more involved. And if it’s called the legislative process—we probably used the word “process” more than a lot of folks—but we were able to include people in a lot more things than had been done before.

Ms. Kilgannon: So maybe their old way of doing things wasn’t actually as powerful as this—in a way—because they could be more involved?

Ms. Friesen: That’s right. And I think what the chairmen came to realize was, not only did they have power, but they had knowledge, and then their power was therefore somewhat more justified—at least I would see it that way. I’m not sure that they all did, but, you know, they had more information, they had more knowledge, and began to learn how to use it. And then it was like an eye opener to them, too.

Rep. Sawyer: But the one thing, Anne, that we had a problem with—and I worried about it all the way—I knew we were going to put more strain on the legislator’s time, because we just couldn’t do the job within the period. But at least we had the information, that we could do a good job if we had the time. But that was one of things that the continuing session—that’s the only reason that I can see—that they didn’t continue it. It was a strain, especially on farmers and so forth,

and people coming in. So it was something that we knew was going to be a problem and it ended up being a problem to a certain extent. But I don't know; I thought it was well worth the problem.

Ms. Kilgannon: Maybe you could tell us in more detail what the continuing session concept was. We keep touching on it, but we should discuss it more fully.

Rep. Sawyer: Okay. Well, the continuing legislative session: I happened to be reading advance sheets—being a lawyer—and I got this one where Judge Rosellini from my county had written an opinion and said that the main session could only last sixty days, but an extra session had no limit. That it was up to the legislators to determine. And he didn't quite say it that way, but when I read it, that's what I read.

So boy, I got down to Olympia right away and I went up to see Judge Rosellini and I said, "Is this what I think it says?" And he said, "What do you think?" And I said, "Well, I think it says we're on our own." He said, "You're right." And so, instead of adjourning, all we'd do—instead of Sine Die-ing—we'd adjourn and then we could call meetings any time we wanted.

And what we did—even though a lot of times we didn't call the Legislature in session—we started having regular meetings instead of interim committees meetings, we had regular meetings scheduled in which the whole Legislature was there. But it ended up being cheaper than the way we were running it before. And they were meeting and they were working on bills they were going to act on, or not act on.

Ms. Kilgannon: Continuity?

Rep. Sawyer: So Judge Rosellini was the leader in that. Because he'd been a legislator and he didn't like the way it worked and so they got that rule. I don't think they're using it, but it's the most beneficial rule for legislators I know.

Dean Foster: Well, they're not using it and there are probably two reasons. Leonard touched on the first one. It was a lot more work for the legislators. But that hasn't changed. They're not using it, but they're still working full time. A legislator's job now is full time.

What the real threat was, was to the lobbyists, because the lobbyists love having a defined time. They could kill a bill in a short period of time. But if there was the possibility of study and getting consensus

in the Legislature and passing something—that did not work with the lobbyists who were generally opposed to things. And so they really started working the members, and the press and each other about how this was a terrible concept. It was a terrible concept because it was threatening to their ability to control things. So that's why I think that you're not seeing so much of it any more, because the lobbyists were able to put all kinds of stops to it.

Ms. Friesen: Good point! They weren't always enthusiastic about legislators being informed about what they were voting on.

Dean Foster: Right.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, independent information was what you were trying to get.

Dean Foster: It was very dangerous. Absolutely!

Ms. Friesen: It definitely diluted their power, tremendously.

Dean Foster: But nevertheless, now, even today, legislators think in a year-around concept. They have interim meetings all the time; they're thinking about the next session. If something comes up and there might be a special session, they're working on that right away.

Ms. Kilgannon: Committee weekends...

Dean Foster: The fundamental purpose of this—throw out some of the details—the fundamental purpose: to have the Legislature more involved in policy making and more involved in understanding of policy, is a result of this.

Rep. Sawyer: That's why I was talking about the overall meeting. And if I remember right, Dean, at the end of March, we spent less money than the session before us in the Legislature.

Dean Foster: Well, yes, because what happened was we put people on a permanent payroll, and we didn't have the interim committees traveling all over the country—or maybe all over the world. And there was a lot of continuity. So when you look at two or four years of costs, it ended up being less. Although it was a legislative cost, rather than hidden in the budget. And they got us a couple times on that, but in the bigger picture, what the cost of the legislative branch was ended up being less.

Ms. Kilgannon: That's rare!

Dean Foster: Well, it's less—and it is about one-tenth of one percent of the state budget.

Ms. Kilgannon: A bargain.

Dean Foster: Yes, and it still is about that way.

Ms. Friesen: And more cost effective.

Dean Foster: Right.

Ms. Kilgannon: You get more for it, that's for sure.

Ms. Friesen: Right. Are they still doing committee weekends?

Ms. Kilgannon: They're actually not there on the weekends.

Dean Foster: I forget what they call them, but they're during the week now. We called them committee weekends...they now...

Vito Chiechi: They start them on a Tuesday.

Ms. Kilgannon: That's just sort of a euphemism?

Ms. Friesen: I don't think they have the concept of the committee weekend as it was originally conceived.

Rep. Sawyer: Well, the reason I always did it on weekends is our people weren't getting hardly any money at all and they had to depend on their livelihood. And so the only time we felt we could steal from them was from their families so we did it on a committee weekend. But now they are being paid a little more, but not enough.

Ms. Kilgannon: I understand you did try to raise their per diems and salaries a bit in this period to try to compensate for this extra work?

Rep. Sawyer: We wanted to more than we did. But we figured we were taking on a lot of people here with all these changes. I'm not a believer in having a big banquet and getting sick; I'd rather nibble at things. And I didn't think we could get all that done, really.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, you've only got this much political capital...to use it up on the salary issue...

Rep. Sawyer: Anyway, in the House we had a fantastic caucus. They were on a crusade; they went right with us. And it was kind of a crusade. We thought, "By golly, we're going to change things!" And we had a strong staff, both independent and caucus. And so

did the Republicans. I thought it worked out real well.

Ms. Friesen: We had to sort of pull the Senate along.

Vito Chiechi: We had some pretty good people on the Republican side who understood what you were trying to do and helped instigate this concept.

Rep. Sawyer: Definitely. Newhouse (Dan Newhouse, 15th Legislative District) at first was very reluctant and so was Deane Berentson (40th Legislative District) and A.J. "Bud" Pardini (6th Legislative District). And I don't know if Robert "Bob" Curtis (12th Legislative District) ever came over...

Vito Chiechi: Curtis never did, no.

Rep. Sawyer: Because he was Party-oriented, more. But these guys wanted to get things done. They were frustrated. They were very talented people and they wanted to do something with their time if they were going to be down here. So it really worked well.

Dean Foster: And the difference between the Senate and the House is the same as it always has been and always will be. The House is generally younger; they're generally more wanting to do something. The Senate usually is a little older; they're laid back; they're in no hurry to do something. And so one of the brilliance of this is we got as far as we did with the Senate. Because their reluctance to move very fast is traditional in a Senate/House concept.

And the timing was perfect because Senator Mardesich had defeated Senator Greive, so you went from sort of the old way of doing things to a new way of doing things. But even with Senator Mardesich, he would look at Leonard or Dawne once in awhile and he'd say, "Could we go a little slower?"

Ms. Friesen: Well, he understood the process and didn't always buy it all, but the total process he agreed with. But he also understood his people.

Dean Foster: That's right.

Ms. Friesen: "We may have to slow this up a little for me to get people on board."

Ms. Kilgannon: It's all about people.

Ms. Friesen: It is. It's all people.

Dean Foster: That's right.

Ms. Friesen: And let's not forget the resistance of the

administrative branch and the governor, who were threatened.

Ms. Kilgannon: Could they slow this down in some way? This was a legislative initiative.

Dean Foster: There was a variety of ways to slow it down. You could badmouth it to the press and they could write something: “It was going to cost too much money. It was going to give too much power to Leonard or to Augie, or it was going to take away power from...” All that kind of stuff. You could...

Ms. Kilgannon: Sow seeds of doubt?

Dean Foster: That’s right. You could use the lobbyists to do the same kinds of things. You could be talking to individual members, if you were the governor, and raising doubt. That was why it was important to be including people in what it was we were doing and why—so they understood the theory behind it—not just have it thrown at them.

And I think we moved so fast that the executive branch didn’t realize—very rapidly—and by the time we had probably gotten to LEAP, which was the fundamental threat to them, it was too late. They didn’t have a chance and we had the data and that’s where we had the opportunity to really move.

Ms. Friesen: Well said, Dean. Well said!

Rep. Sawyer: Dean brought up something. They attacked me and Augie all the time on being too powerful. And that’s a horrible reputation to get. That’s the start of any downfall. If you can get people thinking that “that guy’s got too much power, and therefore he’s going to abuse it” and so forth. And it was tough. But Augie, he had a tougher job than I did on the thing. But we had the impetus and they knew our caucus was strong.

Ms. Kilgannon: I think it’s really important to acknowledge that relationship with Senator Mardesich. You had been long-time friends. I don’t think a lot of this could have happened without that strong relationship.

Rep. Sawyer: In my second term, I got on Rules. And when I was on the Rules, I was kind of the tail-end of the thing and nobody was supposed to be on Rules that hadn’t been there forever. And I got to sit right next to Augie Mardesich and then the Speaker and then on this side was the leader of the minority. So I’m right in the middle and I’m listening to all this conversation going

on. And that’s when Augie and I started our relationship. And then the next term, I became assistant floor leader and he was the floor leader. So Augie and I had worked together from my second term on, and we knew each other and we respected—I think he respected me, too—so it made a real working relationship. And luckily, Dawne had worked for both of us.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, that is one of the beauties of this; these pieces falling into place where, if some pieces had been missing, this would not have gone as far as it did.

Rep. Sawyer: Well, the one thing O’Brien taught me was timing. “What you can do today, you might not be able to do tomorrow. What you can do tomorrow, you can’t do today.” And the secret of being successful in the Legislature is understanding that and being aware that you’ve got to be patient and the things will start falling together and when they do, you better be ready. And that was the idea of our people having information. We were ready to pass legislation when the time was right. And I think that’s important.

Ms. Friesen: I think it’s also important to know that from the Senate and House standpoint, that Len had the staff. He deliberately recruited staff and he’s always been very willing to delegate to competent people. And on the Senate side, they didn’t have that kind of staff. And the leadership there was not quite as willing to delegate and so that also slowed them up a little.

Rep. Sawyer: Well, and on our staff we didn’t want just “yes-men.” We hired...

Ms. Friesen: Well, you can tell?! [Everybody laughs]

Rep. Sawyer: We wanted strong people. At our leadership meetings, I mean, what we wanted was a consensus and we needed all the information we could get. And we got real excellent people and so that was the reason. It’s a people thing. We just had fantastic people.

Dean Foster: I’d like to say something right here about a fellow who isn’t here. He died recently, Dean Morgan (1921-2001), who had made about five reputations, but at least one of them was with Boeing. And one of them was with Dan Evans, running what was then called Social and Health Services or something like that. And he was a real important part of putting this together because, while some people were politicians and some of us were so young we didn’t know what was going on,

Morgan understood systems. And Morgan put together this whole sort of plan. He took Leonard's scratchings and his ramblings and put it into something that made sense. So he was able to help Leonard get a structure which Leonard could sell to everybody.

Ms. Friesen: Right, he was a process man.

Dean Foster: It was much easier to sell to the House Democrats because we were just newly in the majority, having been out of the majority for awhile and boy, they're ready to go when they're a new majority.

The Senate Democrats, however, were split. Augie had just beat Greive in a really, really ugly kind of... so Augie had to work that. We had ours going, but Morgan helped put it together for everybody. He ought to be acknowledged.

Ms. Friesen: That's right.

Ms. Kilgannon: We almost should have another chair here to show his place.

Rep. Sawyer: Remember when I got nominated Speaker by the caucus? I got hold of Dean [Morgan] and I asked him—he was assistant to Sid Smith (Secretary, DSHS)—but I told him—we were sitting there at lunch and I said, “Dean, here's what I want to do.” And I told him the basic premise. And I wrote it out on a napkin.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes, all of the best ideas are written out on a napkin!

Ms. Friesen: We used up a lot of napkins!

Rep. Sawyer: We were talking and he looked at it and he said, “Yes, that will work.” And so I said, “I want to present this now, just before the session. And two, three weeks later, Dawne and he bring in this thing with the charts showing everything—

Ms. Friesen: Well, he did most of the work on that.

Rep. Sawyer: He had it all charted out so you could see it. People were sitting there, reading it and it was just beautiful. And as Dean said, I had this skeleton and he put meat around the bones. And he put it together and it was just beautiful. And then we got the LEAP. He was the main instigator of that.

Ms. Friesen: And Dean was the one that addressed the procedures that were implemented that you were overseeing. And that was an immense undertaking, too.

Rep. Sawyer: And so when you get all this new thing going on, and then we brought poor Vito in when Dean resigned, to take his place...

Ms. Kilgannon: Dean Morgan was another Boeing man, and I understand, Vito, that you worked for Boeing, so maybe we should talk about that.

Vito Chiechi: That was a good connection, because we were capable of utilizing some of the Boeing trainers that were necessary in order to put the LEAP bill together.

Rep. Sawyer: That's right.

Ms. Kilgannon: So both the computer knowledge and the systems knowledge?

Vito Chiechi: The systems knowledge, yes. So we could reach into that organization and pull people that had total experience in both of those areas, which helped tremendously in putting the LEAP program together.

Rep. Sawyer: See, Dean [Morgan]'s the one that recommended that I hire him.

Dean Foster: So Leonard comes to me and I'm going to say that we keep forgetting what the real issue here was. He [Vito] was beyond Boeing at that time. He worked for Harley Hoppe. Now, Harley Hoppe was the King County Assessor, who all Democrats thought was just terrible! And I mean, Leonard said to me, “I'm going to hire Vito Chiechi, [mumblings] ... Harley Hoppe.” I said, “Harley!” And so Vito had two strikes [1) Republican; 2) Hoppe] against him when he came to the caucus, because of this Harley Hoppe connection. But he was able to convince members of our caucus that he actually knew what he was talking about.

Not only did he know what he was talking about, about systems and computers, he actually knew something about property taxes which were starting to cause all kinds of political problems.

Ms. Friesen: That was one of the major issues.

Dean Foster: So he was able to—even though he had these two strikes against him—take from what Morgan brought and what he brought with Harley and make that the next successful part of the operation.

Vito Chiechi: But Anne, Leonard told me, “Okay, I'll bring you down to the Legislature, but you've got to

get a couple of people to endorse you. Okay?” So he said, “Now, you go get U.S. Senators Warren Magnuson and Henry Jackson to endorse you.”

Ms. Kilgannon: No small order.

Vito Chiechi: But at that time, because I was working for Boeing, I had gone back to D.C. and had worked with Magnuson and Jackson, Norm Dicks and those folks back there. So, and Maggie was a hell of a guy, and I got a letter from both of them saying, you know, “He is competent,” and so forth and also, the state Democratic chairman, Neil Chaney. You remember? So when the caucus started raising hell, Leonard pulled out these... (laughs)

Ms. Kilgannon: Oh, “He’s alright,” sort of a certification?

Rep. Sawyer: Well, besides that, we wanted to know what the Republicans were thinking and so all we had to do was ask him, “Well, what do you think of this?”

Vito Chiechi: And you don’t know how many times he used to say to me, “Get out of here, you lousy Republican.”

Ms. Kilgannon: And you just had to take that?

Rep. Sawyer: I was only joking.

Vito Chiechi: Just joking, because I’d say, “You know, you don’t need that much staff.” “What are you talking about? We got to have staff.” And this is one I always love to tell, because I said to him one day, “Leonard, one legislator. We should be able to put more staff out there to give one legislator, I mean two... Two staff people could handle...”

Ms. Friesen: No, one staff person could handle two legislators.

Dean Foster: Right.

Vito Chiechi: Yes, one staff person could handle two legislators. And he said, “You’re crazy.” And he goes into the caucus and he says, “Do you know what this guy wants to do?”

Rep. Sawyer: Oh, we would listen to Vito in our leadership meetings because he had a lot of background and information we needed, but he was getting frustrated because we never took all his suggestions and so forth.

So we took this to caucus and brought him in and almost had a rebellion! (Laughter) And from then on he never bothered, he still kept talking, but once we

made our decision, he went with it. And that was the only requirement we had of him.

Ms. Kilgannon: He didn’t stop making his pitch?

Ms. Friesen: No, no, you have to do that.

Rep. Sawyer: But once a decision’s made, you have to be loyal to that decision and loyal to the Democratic caucus. And he lived up to that two-hundred percent.

Dean Foster: Absolutely. But it was real set-up. There’s no doubt about it.

About six years before that, the way the Legislature dealt with—in those days we called them secretaries—is there was a secretarial pool. We didn’t have offices; we didn’t have lots of things. And so it changed, so people had offices and then they started going from a secretarial pool to each having a secretary and maybe another aide. And that helped the legislators a lot. It hurt the budget but it helped the legislators a lot.

So Vito was trying to help save the budget and almost got killed for it. Because they started falling in love with this much staff.

Ms. Kilgannon: Now, we’ve touched a little bit on your use of computers to bring you more information, especially budget information. You could really get those numbers right away and have more detail and get further down into the process understanding the numbers. At least that’s what you’ve told me. Part of one of the things that bothered you was that the Legislature would pass bills and then you wouldn’t actually know what the agencies did with those bills, how they carried them out. You didn’t get that feedback of “then what?” So you wanted some process of discovering what was going on after you passed the bills. You wanted some accountability; you wanted some more information. So you gradually evolved a program which you called LEAP [Legislative Evaluation and Accountability Program] that came a little bit later in all these innovations. Rep. Sawyer: Now, the word LEAP was Morgan’s. He was great for acronyms.

Ms. Kilgannon: A good acronym can sell a program; if you’d called it something else, it might not have had that forward momentum. So maybe you could describe to me a little bit about what you were thinking there and how this came together.

Rep. Sawyer: Well, it basically came together. I think it was we were always digging trying to find a way to get our information and put it together. And Dean [Morgan] came up one day to me and he said, “You know Len, I think we could do some computerization here.” And I said, “How’s that?” And he said “Well, you know, I’ve been thinking of this ever since we talked the last year...” and so forth. But one of the main things is you’re always comparing apples against oranges and grapefruit and different things when you’re talking figures. And so it’s difficult. So we needed a source of information. And that was the first thing we had to have was a source of information where everybody had the same. We’d all be using the same. And so he said, “Every expenditure ends up down in the basement here on a big wheel in computers.” “Oh, does it really?” And he said, “So we ought to go down and use that and the only thing we’ll be changing is the program.”

I didn’t know the difference between the basic data and the program, but I learned. So that’s what it was. We were able to get a basic database which everybody had. And so we had the same information then that the governor had. And so we could manipulate his information any way we wanted and we could sit there and take a different approach. So this was the main thing. And that’s what made this work.

So Dean Morgan went up to, what’s the name of the space group at Boeing?

Ms. Friesen: Aerospace? [Boeing Computer Services, BCS]

Rep. Sawyer: Because his brother was kind of a property manager so he knew all these people. So then he went up and he started looking at what they were doing with computers up there. Well, they were so far ahead of anybody else in computers you couldn’t believe it at the time. And they had this new program in which—it’s hard for me to explain—but anyway you have a big box—and in the old days, every time you wanted to do a new program, or vary it, you had to bring in a programmer. And they had to program it and then you had that one thing and you’d slip it in the thing. All of a sudden, we just had these programs, a hundred of them all put together. And they were able to let those things interrelate so you didn’t even have to go and get each program set up, so a staff person with some very limited information could work this.

And all of a sudden computers became a real reality to me and I think to everybody. I didn’t have any idea at all of this thing, and it really was beautiful.

So then—and we’re talking about LEAP now and I want to tell this story because I think it’s important—we were so proud of LEAP when we got it done, we couldn’t believe what it was doing. So we were just running around and giving demonstrations wherever we could. And so I appeared—I went out in a snow storm and Morgan was with me because I made him drive and we went up in this snow storm to meet with—what’s the inner circle of business people?

Dean Foster: The Business Roundtable? [Washington Roundtable]

Rep. Sawyer: Yes. And we went to one of their breakfasts, you know. So Dean said, “You know, we’ve got to have fun with them.” And I said, “Okay.” So we pulled out the University of Washington program, because their lobbyist was going to be there. He was always there, you know. So we pulled his program out, and lo and behold, there was flim-flam in that program, see. And I forget the details of it, but anyway, we went up there and we put the demonstration on and the guy was there and I said, “Hey, your budget’s here, shall we look at that?” “Oh, yes.” So I said, “Well, how come?” And a big smile...

That was the start. And so then some of the people out of there wanted to see this program. So we invited them down for a demonstration, down at the Capitol. And the president of Boeing, T. Wilson—great guy—he came down with about fifteen of these guys, the big business people, top of everything. And so we put on a demonstration and we’d bring in our person and he had been trained, but he was not a computer person.

But he knew how to work this machine. And we put on a real show and then T. Wilson asked the question, “Where did you get that kind of a program?” And I said, “Mr. Wilson, we got it from your company.”

Ms. Kilgannon: And “thank you very much!”

Rep. Sawyer: They were just using it for computerization for very complex mathematical situations. And so Dean, again, he found us this young guy that was just starting his computing thing. We couldn’t afford one of those—we talked to somebody and they wanted over a million dollars or some horrible sum. And he

was going to do it for \$250,000 or something like that. And he went in and between him and Dean, they put this together. And it was just unbelievable, in my mind.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, here was a new tool for legislators.

Rep. Sawyer: And that was kind of the background, but I always remember T. Wilson; he was surprised it was his own company that was doing it.

Vito Chiechi: I remember—you know when you said you were traveling around—we went to Alaska. Remember?

Ms. Friesen: I do, yes.

Vito Chiechi: We went to Alaska to do a presentation up in Alaska. Of course, when we got up there we had the computer guys, but you couldn't get a telephone line.

Ms. Friesen: They were on satellite.

Vito Chiechi: They were on satellite. And we got on and then we were making the presentation and bang, it went off and you could never get the thing finalized. And I'll never forget those people in Alaska saying, "What a great program," but we could never get it finished.

Ms. Friesen: Couldn't use it.

Ms. Kilgannon: Maybe they were used to that.

Vito Chiechi: They probably were. But Leonard, also, tell them what you did with it then after, here in the Legislature, how you carried it.

Rep. Sawyer: We went back and made presentations in different places because we were so proud of this thing. Nobody else—we were so far ahead. Florida had one, but they just got reams of paper. We had charts on the thing. So you didn't have to go through a whole ream of paper, you looked at the chart and the chart would tell you a forecast. It's like we had the forecast between grants and the medical—wasn't it on the Social Security? Also our welfare. And all of a sudden the medical thing was going up like this (raises hand) and it went ahead of the grants.

Ms. Kilgannon: So you could point and say, "I've got a problem here."

Rep. Sawyer: So we reviewed it, and here is one of the samples. Basically, then we went back and made this presentation to one of the state government meetings in New York. And that time it didn't pull out and so we

gave them the whole shot. And then we started getting calls. Like, I was called by Colorado; the Speaker of the House there said, "Gee, we would really like to know more." I said, "Well, I'm going through there. You want me to come in and I'll make a presentation?" He said, "Okay, we'll have a joint session of the Senate and the House." And then he wrote a letter to a lot of members where he had heard this thing in New York, and I think they put it in and after that, I don't know. And then people were coming out all the time for presentations by the staff, and 'Baggie' was putting presentations on. I don't know, we must have fifteen, twenty states, didn't we? Vito Chiechi: Yes.

Ms. Kilgannon: You're speaking about John Bagnariol?

Rep. Sawyer: Yes, he was the chairman. And then, I talked to Senator Magnuson about it and he said, "Well, I'd like to look at that thing." So I said, "Okay." So we went back and he had the budget person there and people from the budget committee.

Vito Chiechi: Alice Rivlin [Congressional Budget Office (CBO), Director].

Rep. Sawyer: So we went in and demonstrated. And they were worse than we were! They passed a bill and they didn't know until three years later what it cost.

Ms. Friesen: Their budget information was two years old. That was frightening.

Ms. Kilgannon: That's really flying in the dark!

Rep. Sawyer: Oh, yes. So Dean went ahead and in about two days, he got hold of the head of the staff of Maggie's committee—which was Appropriations—and they went ahead and gave us the information. So we pumped it into the computer for Maggie. And so we said, "Maggie, do you know some of the things you can forecast?" And he mumbles, so we put this little sketch on and all of a sudden this little line was going up like this and this little line was going down like that. And he says, "What are those little things doing?" (Laughter)

Ms. Kilgannon: "What's happening?"

Rep. Sawyer: I said, "That's how their expenditure's going." And we did that in his office and that's when he called in Alice and the rest of them because he wanted to go with it. But I knew it was going to have problems back there, because you know why? Back

there, the staff completely controls the Appropriations Committee because it's too massive. And all of a sudden this would have simplified it so that people could actually know what they're voting on a little bit. So, Alice was all for it. There were a couple of the other ones that were interested. I think they finally put in some version of it. I don't know.

Ms. Friesen: And Vito was onboard by then, too.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you eventually go back to Congress?

Vito Chiechi: Yes, I went back there.

Ms. Friesen: He was with us on that venture, but Dean was on as a consultant.

Vito Chiechi: Yes, Dean was a consultant and I was on staff.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, reforming the state of Washington is one thing; reforming Congress is quite another. The scale...

Dean Foster: Well, and this is where we got into trouble with our own executive branch because they didn't want to give us the data that broke down. They wanted to give us big numbers. They are happy to say, "Pass the budget." But they didn't want to break it down to salaries and per diem.

Vito Chiechi: Each one of those little boxes, they didn't want to give us the detailed information.

Dean Foster: And that's what they recognized was the real danger. Because it's like the University of Washington example, you go inside there and all of a sudden a number doesn't make any sense. And somebody has to explain it and they can't. They can hide those with big numbers and so we, finally, I believe, had to pass a law that it was required that they give us the same information that they had with the same breakdowns. And when we got that, then we were really able to go in and analyze the budget.

Rep. Sawyer: And the thing is, when I was speaking to that group, the guy that was there, he didn't know what he was doing either.

Ms. Friesen: He was taking his staff's word...

Rep. Sawyer: Yes, he was just taking his staff's word, he had no idea how they were doing it.

Ms. Kilgannon: It was a revelation. Interesting.

Rep. Sawyer: So LEAP was something was really fun to work with.

Ms. Kilgannon: And it still exists. There is still a LEAP Committee.

Rep. Sawyer: Well, one thing that I don't know, if you guys can tell me... We were building up our first term and we were working on just getting LEAP; then after that we started to work on programs on how to use LEAP. And one of the things we wanted to do, one of the favorite tricks of the departments is: you give them a two-year budget, so what they do, they don't spend very much until the last quarter of the budget, or last year of the budget, or less than that, the last six months. So then they go out and hire and pump up their staff and everything because they've got this backlog of spending that we don't know. Then they come back and they're asking for money. "Well, that's high." "Well, no, it's just meeting our present standards." And how do we argue against that? We don't know.

So we developed the program that we could monitor, not only what they were spending but what they weren't spending. So our chairman then could call people in and any time during the interim and say, "Hey, how come you're not spending the money?" Or, "You're spending too much." We were more interested in the money they weren't spending because that was the one that was knocking our budgets all out of whack. And so I don't know if they kept monitoring them...

Dean Foster: Oh, not only did they keep monitoring, they now have it so that they have an allotment by month and quarter.

Rep. Sawyer: Oh great!

Dean Foster: And so they're watching and so you can't play those kinds of games any more. The LEAP Program now is a fundamental part of the legislative process. It's so fundamental that people don't even know about it anymore. It's just there and it's something that everybody uses and everybody assumes that they'll use it.

Ms. Kilgannon: So much a part of the environment...

Dean Foster: Right.

Ms. Kilgannon: So, imagine not having it. Imagine not having that ability?

Dean Foster: Well, you'd just go back to the old days

when the executive had all the numbers and the Legislature wouldn't be a part of the system.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, it's like when you were passing appropriations bills without any fiscal notes.

Dean Foster: Right.

Ms. Friesen: Doesn't the present law require that the Legislature receive the information?

Dean Foster: Oh sure. I was just saying if you didn't have it would be a different story.

Ms. Kilgannon: That's quite a change.

There is one person also, besides Dean Morgan, not present that we wanted to include in the conversation, but who wasn't well enough, Don Clawson, your Communications Director, or whatever the title was in those days. What would have been his role in helping you pull this together and promote it?

Rep. Sawyer: Basically letting people know what we're doing, not what people wanted to say we were doing. And Don did a real good job. He's a very likeable person and he's well known in the press, he's well known among the legislators, so he was just our—

Ms. Friesen: Flak man.

Rep. Sawyer: Hopefully, anti-flak man.

Ms. Kilgannon: He would just be on-message and correcting the misconceptions and just always putting it out there?

Rep. Sawyer: He was another person that Dean Morgan brought on board, because he worked for the Department of Social and Health Services under Dean over there. So he had a basic understanding of government. He had a real gut instinct for the press.

Ms. Friesen: The press liked him. And he would call the press together...

Dean Foster: He had credibility.

Ms. Kilgannon: And get your story out?

Ms. Friesen: ...as a group, or talk to them individually, and try his best to get them on board.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, isn't perception half the job? If people think you're doing a good job and they understand your motives...

Ms. Friesen: Absolutely.

Ms. Kilgannon: What you're trying to accomplish, so they can get on board. But if they're being undermined...

Vito Chiechi: Everybody's perception is reality.

Ms. Kilgannon: Occasionally, yes.

Rep. Sawyer: Perception, unfortunately, is reality too often.

Vito Chiechi: Yes, it is, isn't it?

Rep. Sawyer: May I make a political statement now? (Laughs)

Ms. Kilgannon: So he'd be a real key player?

Rep. Sawyer: Oh, he was.

Ms. Friesen: He was.

Vito Chiechi: Oh, absolutely.

Ms. Friesen: Low key—a low key man.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, you don't have to hit people over the head.

Rep. Sawyer: In fact, he just moved around. A lot of people didn't even know he existed but he was working all the time.

Ms. Kilgannon: That's what it takes. Is there anyone else on your team you'd like to speak about? Is this pretty much the core group here?

Rep. Sawyer: Well, Bob Charette was very important, too. He was a fantastic floor leader. He loved debating, he loved the back and forth and the Republicans all trusted him because he was straight up. And it got pretty hot out there at times, but it was always, "Go out and have a drink afterwards. Go have dinner or coffee," or whatever it was. So there was communication back and forth across the aisle. And I think that's so important. And he was the best leader of that and then we had a real up-and-coming young assistant floor leader, Rick Bender, who's now the head of the Labor Council. We had Marc Gaspard, who was new back then. We just had a lot of people, and we tried to use them all. Helen Sommers wasn't particularly—I had her doing revenue. And these are all people—we picked them. We really tried to pick ability.

Now, everybody says that, but I think our record shows that the people that we picked—like Dean; he's a perfect example of it. You know Dean, he worked for me, but people worked with him, but he was low-

profile. So we were looking for a chief clerk, because of the turnover and so forth. Well, I don't know, he just really impressed me and I said, "This young man's going to do some good for us." And so I called him in, and I said, "Dean, I want you to run for chief clerk." And Dean said, "Well, aaaah...."

Ms. Kilgannon: You had some reservations, then?

Dean Foster: Well, I had said to the guy who was the assistant chief clerk, "I know you're going to be chief clerk, I support you for that." And all that kind of stuff. Because I hadn't even thought about this as a possibility. I was just out of the military. I had worked with Leonard that last year on the campaign and I had no idea what was going on. I was proud that we had won an election. I hadn't thought about what was going to be next.

Ms. Friesen: Well, Sid [Snyder] was going over to the Senate, wasn't he? [Sid Snyder was Secretary of Senate, May 1969].

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes.

Dean Foster: But Sid was going over to the Senate. So Leonard calls me in and I'm sort of in this box and, I said—well, I don't know if I told Leonard; I think I told Leonard at the time what I'd done. And he said, "Well, he's not going to get elected. This other guy is not going to get elected." I said, "Okay, I'll do it." And so there was an embarrassing situation there that I never got over. But it was—once I took the job—I had had about eight years of experience in the Senate and I had really been interested in the process. John Cherberg had let me do a lot of things on the Floor when I was working there in the Bill Room. So I knew that end of it and Leonard was not into the kind of details that I was into and that worked out really well. Because it was mostly busy work—but important busy work.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, that's all the paperwork, keeping track.

Dean Foster: We had this whole bunch of people who were doing their own thing. And I always used this example, "If people would just do their own job instead of trying to do somebody else's, you'd have a lot better operation." And that's what we had. We talked every day to each other; we knew what was going on but there weren't any turf fights going on.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, that frees up a lot of energy

right there!

Dean Foster: It sure does. It sure does. So we were able to do a lot of that, so I was real lucky to be able to get started that way.

Rep. Sawyer: So, now you see why I selected you.

Ms. Kilgannon: That must have been one of your great strengths—is finding the right people.

Rep. Sawyer: Well, he didn't tell one part of the story that was kind of funny and I have to. We're up there getting ready to go to the vote and the other person who was this assistant came in and said, "Well, Dean's supporting me." That's the first time I knew of it. But anyway, I said, "Well, that's up to Dean." He said, "Dean doesn't want the job; he wants me to have it." And I said, "Well, I don't really get that feeling from Dean, but I'll check with Dean."

So I called Dean and then he told me this whole story and I said, "Well, Dean, do you want it or don't you? And you've got to go ahead and step forward and say 'I want the job.' If you don't want the job, I can't give it to you." So...

Ms. Kilgannon: It's a moment of truth.

Dean Foster: That's the last time I ever made a commitment to somebody, boy, I tell you, because I was in a box. So I took it. It was the wrong thing to do—not taking the job, but what I had done. It wasn't fair to the other guy, but it turned out okay.

Ms. Kilgannon: I understand that he maintained his position as assistant chief clerk. That he wasn't out of a job.

Rep. Sawyer: Yes, and he did a good job as assistant, but I needed something more than that and I saw that in Dean and he developed even more than I thought he would. It's been a real pleasure.

Ms. Kilgannon: So, again, all the pieces coming together: the right people, the right temperament, the right talent. That's what it takes?

Rep. Sawyer: Well, and besides that, I can say one thing about myself, I had had the experience and I sat back and watched a lot. I wasn't worried about making speeches; I was watching what was going on. I had a pretty firm idea of what it took to be successful.

Dean Foster: That word is vision. He clearly had an

idea how the Legislature could operate better in the environment of the Legislature/executive and judicial. And maybe there were some ideas that didn't work, but in the general big picture, he made that change. That was what was important.

Ms. Friesen: And the goal was to make the Legislature an equal partner.

Rep. Sawyer: Which we knew we'd never quite reach, but at least we made a dent in it.

Dean Foster: Well, I don't know. I've been involved in this business ever since that time and I hear every once in awhile, "The Legislature's too powerful. The Legislature has too much information." You hear that from the executive, you hear that from the press, you hear that from the lobbyists, but you also hear, "The staff is too powerful; the members are too powerful." So that's probably a good accusation! (Laughter)

Ms. Friesen: Well, that's good; that was the goal.

Dean Foster: That's right.

Rep. Sawyer: That was the goal and I guess I haven't been around so I don't know the follow-up and I was worried about that. And the other thing I was worried about was whether the staff would get too strong.

Because, like they were back in Washington, D.C. where the tail wags the dog type-of-thing. And it wasn't happening when we were doing it, but I don't know what happened after...

Dean Foster: Well, in some cases it does happen. If you get a weak chair or a weak caucus, or a weak Legislature, the staff fills the void.

Vito Chiechi: And they have the experience...

Dean Foster: They know how to do it. But you get a legislator who's in there a couple of terms, who gets strong and understands the role, and they pull it right back. And the staff is smart enough to understand that that's the elected official.

Rep. Sawyer: Well, that's good. That was one of the worries I had and I hadn't known.

Ms. Kilgannon: With every change, there's always going to be, "What's going to happen? Will this go too far? Will it turn out the way we wanted?" But if you never make those changes, you know you're going to be stuck with these problems. You might as well at

least try something new.

Dean Foster: And nowadays, you sit on the floor of the House or the Senate and almost every member has a computer open, and when a bill comes there, they can ask a question about, "How come this budget projection?" and all of that is because of what we got started. I mean, technology has changed a lot, but it's evolving and Leonard started it. That's what I think is his legacy.

Ms. Kilgannon: Any closing statements?

Dean Foster: I just made mine.

Ms. Kilgannon: I think so.

Rep. Sawyer: My closing statement: I loved my caucus and I loved my staff because they were the ones that created it. You know, they kept saying that I was powerful—they were the ones that were powerful because we stayed together. And when you stay together, it's amazing what you can do.

Vito Chiechi: Anne, too, it was a fun experience. You know what I'm saying? Because you looked forward to going to work because you knew you'd come up with some nutty idea... (everybody laughs)

Ms. Kilgannon: Keeps you hopping!

Vito Chiechi: You had to go out and get it accomplished but that's what was the fun about it. And that's what I said about this legislative process, it's got to be the best game in town. If you've never been in the legislative process—or the political process—you don't know what you're missing. Because it's fun and you meet such great people and you accomplish something. And you get something. And, well, look at what is done! It's an accomplishment.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes, and it stands the test of time.

Rep. Sawyer: One thing that I liked, I wish Robert Charette was here with us because he was a very vital, vital portion of what we did. And so was Bagnariol, and Shinpoch was important and Helen Sommers—to a lesser degree, mainly because she didn't have the experience.

Ms. Kilgannon: She was quite new at that time. She's grown in time.

Dean Foster: She was elected in '72. She was a freshman—her first year.

Rep. Sawyer: So she didn't know the other thing. One of the problems we had with our freshmen there, they didn't know how it was before and so they didn't appreciate the changes.

Ms. Kilgannon: That's always the way, as soon as it's in place, it gets taken for granted.

Rep. Sawyer: It was fun. I enjoyed that very much. The most pleasurable time of my whole life. Doing something!

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, certainly almost everything you did, we still have today and it has transformed the Legislature from what is almost now unimaginable to what it is now. Of course, everything you did now has grown; so it's bigger.

Rep. Sawyer: That's great.

Dean Foster: I want to tell one last story about Leonard. Leonard didn't run for the Legislature; he was away from the process for I don't know how many years. And about five or six years after he left the process, there was some issue that was involving, I think it was involving lawyers and tort reform. Somebody hired Leonard to come down to be a lobbyist. And here's what my point is, it being ingrained in your system. He had the Legislature bollixed up in about two days because he understood the legislative process. And he came down, I think he came down to kill something, but he knew how to manipulate and work the legislative process because he'd had so many years of experience doing that.

Ms. Friesen: He created so much of it.

Dean Foster: I'm not making a judgment about whether this was right or wrong, I'm saying people who understand the legislative process, know how to make it work. He knew how to make it work and he knew how to work from the inside. And that never goes away from you.

Rep. Sawyer: It's people management.

Ms. Kilgannon: It's people.

Rep. Sawyer: A people's game is what it is.

Ms. Friesen: Well, the Legislature's definitely all about people.

Rep. Sawyer: If I've learned anything from Magnuson it is that, he said, "It's a people's game."

Vito Chiechi: And tell her what Magnuson told you the first time as a freshman: "Sit in the back, keep your mouth shut, and vote for all bills."

Rep. Sawyer: Oh yes, he said, "If you're going to be a freshman down there—he asked me if I had any experience, and I said, "No, I've never been down there. I don't even know where the chambers are." And I went down there and he said, "Well, you sit in the back row or wherever they put you and keep your mouth shut. Because you've got to realize, when you get up and you speak on a bill, none of them are one hundred percent." And he said, "You've got to realize that the people that lose, remember. The people that win take it for granted and go onto the next issue. So by speaking so much, you can build up a real base against you." I've watched that one through the years and it's so true.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, certainly you were learning from the master there. You couldn't get any more experience than Senator Magnuson. Let's close.

In this memorandum written just a few years before Speaker Sawyer proposed his reforms, Legislative Council Secretary Donald Sampson outlines several ideas similar to those that would be implemented under Sawyer, but dismisses them as "not feasible politically or not desirable for other reasons." Sawyer adopted the continuing session concept and the continuation of standing committees but found other solutions for modernizing legislative processes, including abolishing the Legislative Council itself.

STATE OF WASHINGTON
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
LEGISLATIVE BUILDING
OLYMPIA

MEMORANDUM

TO:
FROM: Donald C. Sampson, Executive Secretary
SUBJECT: Interim legislative activity.

DATE: April 1, 1967

Problem:

The rapid population growth, the expanding responsibilities of state and local government and the complex problems of finance are constantly increasing the burdens of the state legislators. More complex bills are before every session and the legislators must make major decisions with little opportunity to obtain the background of the factors involved. The various states have all considered this urgent problem in varying degrees. Among suggested remedies have been the following:

1. Continuous sessions of the legislature, or at least regular annual sessions.
2. Continuation of the session standing committees during the interim periods.
3. Adoption of the Oklahoma structure in which every member of the legislature is a member of the Legislative Council and works on at least one committee during the interim period.
4. Large numbers of interim committees, sufficient to make every legislator a member of one or more.
5. Expansion of the working membership of a few major statutory legislative agencies, such as the Legislative Council and the Legislative Budget Committee.

Comment:

The first four of the above suggestions appear to be either not feasible politically or not desirable for other reasons in Washington state.

- (1) The annual sessions would require a two thirds vote of each house and the subsequent approval by the voters. So, not only would it be at least two years before it could be implemented, but it apparently is not yet acceptable to the legislature.
- (2) The idea of continuing standing committees was tried in Pennsylvania and was unsatisfactory in a number of respects. Standing committees with 35 or 45 members are completely impractical for interim activity involving travel, meetings, and substantial staff work. There is also a lack of coordination between the various activities and a lack

April 1, 1967

of central staffing, which Pennsylvania finally remedied.

- (3) The Oklahoma structure has worked well and provides an opportunity for every legislator to contribute to the research program and benefit therefrom, but requires a statutory change in our law. This change is apparently not acceptable to the Senate.
- (4) A proliferation of interim committees is wasteful and inefficient in many respects. It is difficult to acquire professional staffing and there is usually a delay in obtaining a staff member and then orienting him to the problems. There is no central housekeeping or administration set up and there is usually no provision for implementing conclusions by drafting bills. There is not maximum utilization of equipment and space, nor is there any cross check of substantive research.

- (5) Expansion of existing legislative service agencies.

The Legislative Council in the last few bienniums has utilized a practice of appointing special members chosen for their knowledge and ability and their interest in specific areas of study. This procedure was approved by the Attorney General. Such special members receive the same per diem and travel reimbursement as the regular members and attend Council meetings as well as committee meetings whenever their committee work is discussed. The real value of the procedure lies in expanding the capabilities of the Council, reducing the number of committee assignments members must take, and adding to the know how in special fields.

Committees.

The present Legislative Council structure usually calls for twelve committees with membership ranging from 4 - 8. If the Legislative Council would approve, perhaps 54 special members as a maximum might be appointed, each serving on one Council committee. This would increase committee membership to, perhaps, 9 - 13. Presumably a regular Council member would always retain the committee chairmanship. The special members would be non voting on the Council, but would otherwise participate in all discussion and would vote on the subcommittee. In view of the difference in membership of the House and Senate, the special members could comprise, perhaps, 33 representatives and 21 senators.

Cost.

Since the special members would probably serve on only one committee, the additional cost for travel and per diem would, perhaps, run from \$1,000 to \$1,500 each per biennium. The research staff would probably not need an increase unless more committees were organized but there would be an increasing clerical burden which would require one or two additional staff members, with a total cost of, perhaps, \$10,000 per year for this addition. There would also be an increase in postage and telephone of, perhaps, \$5,000 for the biennium.

April 1, 1967

Implementation.

The basic action for adding special members would be carried out by the Council membership, first by the Executive Committee, followed by ratification of the total regular membership. It would not require formal action by the legislature unless a concurrent resolution (if deemed feasible) or a simple resolution to express the policy recommendation should be adopted. Otherwise, it would require informal conference of the officers of the Legislative Council to determine to what degree they might be receptive to the proposal.

Other interim agencies.

The same principle, of course, could be applied to the other statutory agencies, including the Legislative Budget Committee, the Joint Committee on Transportation, and the Joint Committee on Education.

DCS:pf

Chapter 27

Interview with Tim Burke

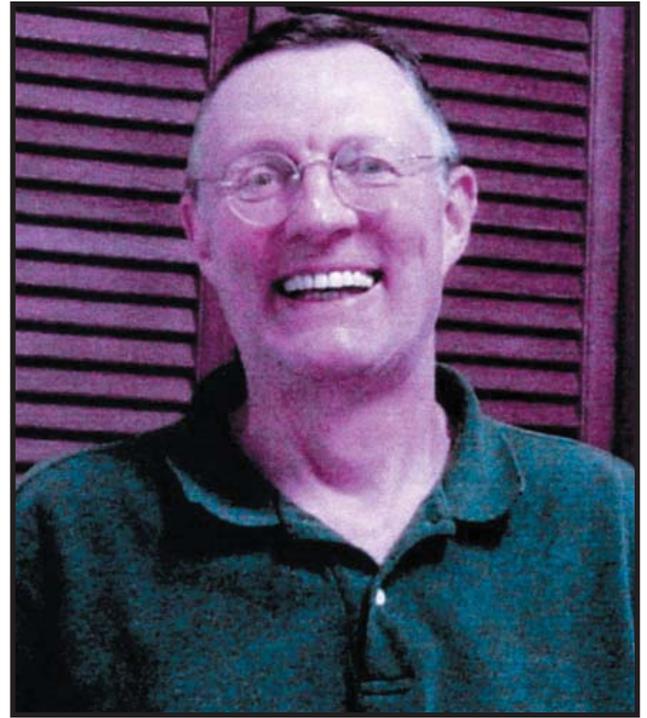
Conducted – September 14, 2004

Mr. Burke is a graduate of Pennsylvania State University and George Washington University School of Law. After law school and serving a clerkship for a federal judge in Washington, DC, he served as a legal counsel with the Legislative Council of the Washington Legislature from 1967 until 1973. In 1973, he was one of the first staff members of the Office of Program Research for the House of Representatives, the office that provides staff services to House standing committees. Until his retirement in 1996, he remained with that office where he provided administrative and legal services.

Ms. Kilgannon: We're going to talk today with Tim Burke about the Legislative Council and how that was transformed in the early 1970s through Speaker Sawyer's reforms to create a new office, a non-partisan research arm of the Legislature called the Office of Program Research.

First a little background. The Legislative Council of the Washington State Legislature was formed in 1947 after several attempts to set up a council. As I understand it, many states across the country were beginning to form these councils in the post-war period. Legislators were coming to the conclusion that they needed more help, that meeting for sixty days for every two years was just not enough to take care of the business of the state. Speaker Hamblen pushed through a bill in 1947 establishing a council. It didn't go into operation right away because Auditor Cliff Yelle questioned its constitutionality. They went to court and decided that, yes, the Legislative Council was permitted.

The Council evolved over time; it began small and then grew in scope. Chester Biesen was the first executive secretary, but then he went on to other things, and Don Sampson was hired, who then stayed with the Council for almost its entire period of operation. When you came to the Council as a staff attorney in 1967 as a freshly minted lawyer, had you had experi-



ence in legislative work beforehand or was this a brand new position for you?

Mr. Burke: This was brand new for me. They were looking for someone who would help with legislative studies, write reports, memos, and draft bills. It was definitely a training period for me. I loved the issues, the issues were very exciting. To be able to work on items that were front-page newspaper stories was very exciting, I think. So it was a challenge, but one I very much enjoyed.

Ms. Kilgannon: How did Don Sampson explain your job to you? How the Council worked and what your duties would be.

Mr. Burke: Don explained that I would be staffing the Legislative Council's Judiciary Committee and probably one other committee. And I did; I staffed Judiciary and the Agriculture committees of the Council. That would involve setting up meetings, writing reports, memos and drafting bills. And generally the Council committees that I worked for met once a month or so. The Judiciary Committee generally met once a month and the Agriculture Committee may have been once every forty days or so.

Ms. Kilgannon: So this was during interim only, that they would be meeting this way?

Mr. Burke: Yes.

Ms. Kilgannon: In the off-years when there was no session, would they meet every couple of months dur-

ing that time?

Mr. Burke: Well, generally there were sessions. There were very few years that there was not a session called. But the Legislative Council's committees would meet during the interim between sessions. During sessions, the council staff would typically go to the standing committees which would have the Council's recommended bills.

Ms. Kilgannon: You followed your work?

Mr. Burke: Yes. And then in my case, I ended up also providing other assistance besides on Council bills and so did most of the other legislative staff. I did a lot of work for the Senate Judiciary Committee, in particular, back in those days.

Ms. Kilgannon: When you came on the Council, were you divided between House and Senate or did you work for both?

Mr. Burke: I worked for both.

Ms. Kilgannon: And would the legislators bring forward the study topics or would you make suggestions to them?

Mr. Burke: No, staff would never bring up topics. Generally, the topics came from legislative resolutions, which were typically adopted toward the tail end of legislative sessions. The resolutions would be study resolutions directing the Council to study some issue and to report back to the Legislature on whether bills were needed and if so, to actually prepare the bills. That was the major way in which Council studies were created.

But another way would be any legislator at any time could request the Council to undertake a study. That request would go to the Council's executive committee and then the executive committee, if it agreed that the study should be undertaken, would assign it to the appropriate Council committee.

Ms. Kilgannon: I imagine those studies could be pretty far reaching. I've seen lists, they go from, really, A to Z, covering almost anything.

Mr. Burke: Yes, it's not unlike the breadth of studies standing committees have, generally, I suppose. What the difference might be is that, in the Council format, the committee chairs were required to give progress reports on their studies periodically. And that was a

little bit of an incentive to do something, keep them moving. But actually the Council committees were very similar to the standing committees. What the problem was, and what really led to the end of the Council, was that the standing committee chairs were not the Council chairs. So there really was not a connection between those legislators who did the studies and prepared the bills, and the standing committee chairs. And that was the biggest argument for continuing the standing committees during the interim, at least the biggest argument from a practical, organizational point of view. There were other straight political arguments.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes, for instance, there was a very large education interim committee in the early sixties on which a lot of members served, who were—not before and not afterwards—on the Education Committee during session, and they would do all this work. I was wondering about the issue of continuity: what happened to that work? Did the standing committees use it, or did they put it on the shelf?

Mr. Burke: If the chairman of a Council committee was politically connected, then the bill might fare pretty well during the legislative session, even when the chair of the standing committee was not on the Council. But clearly, there was a problem here, an organizational problem, and that's what the 1973 reforms dealt with.

Ms. Kilgannon: Could it have been addressed within the Council framework? Could they have made more of a connection with those appointments? It seems like a built-in conflict, otherwise.

Mr. Burke: The only way it could have been corrected within the Council framework would have been to include the standing committees within the Council. Maybe we could have had Senate and House co-chairmanships, joint committees. I mean, that was a possibility. There were all kinds of discussions going on in 1973 and that was one of them. I'm not sure it received much attention, but it was one way to provide for some connection between those who prepared the bills during the interim and then those who acted on them during the session.

Ms. Kilgannon: The Council began with one view of its work and then that changed and grew over time. When they were first established, they didn't even write bills, they just did studies. And then, within a few sessions, I think about three or so, they started to say

that this was a little too abstract. To be effective, they needed to actually write some bill language, because the studies weren't going anywhere, otherwise. Maybe there was some frustration there, I don't really know. And then gradually they did more and more of that, or appear to, in their reports. And then in the sixties, the leadership notched it up a little bit more. They increased the membership by a few and increased the executive committee. I imagine with any institution, there's this struggle with, "Oh, it could work better. What could we do to make this work better?"

And all through this evolution, Don Sampson was the chief staff person. Did he help members think about these problems, what the weaknesses were? Or was that something that was strictly political? Would the staff be of any help with figuring out some of these issues about how to make the Council itself work better, or would you just do what you're told?

Mr. Burke: Well, you pretty much did what you're told. What happens with legislative committees is you generally know where your committee wants to go and you want to facilitate that. And that generally is what we did with the Council, and what people do with the standing committees now. There's an understanding that staff services should facilitate the committee agenda. And then you provide that service. And if you can be creative in providing that service, creative in a way that the legislators appreciate, then that's great.

Ms. Kilgannon: But not too far out in front.

Mr. Burke: No, you have to know where your place is; your place is to facilitate someone else's agenda and not your own.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes, I imagine that would be one of the strongest ethics of the group.

Mr. Burke: It's a very complicated thing, because legislative staff—to do a good job—have to be able to understand where legislators are coming from. And that's not easy for a lot of people. You can be creative and you can take the initiative in providing assistance to legislators, but you have to facilitate the legislators' agendas.

Ms. Kilgannon: So, you would be given an assignment, and where would you go for the information? What sorts of things would you actually do on your job to produce these studies?

Mr. Burke: This is one of the beautiful things about working for the Legislative Council, or working for a legislative standing committee today: your universe of sources is unlimited. As a young lawyer, it was so wonderful for me to be able to go to the University of Washington Law School and have relationships—professional relationships—with faculty there who wanted to help, and who were anxious to contribute. So the University of Washington was a major place for me. But I went everywhere. I never felt even the slightest reluctance to contact anyone. And I think as you know from some of these reports, I never felt the slightest reluctance to pick up the phone and call anyone for information or for leads. That was one of the beauties about working for the Legislature in a research capacity.

Ms. Kilgannon: It sounds like you had a lot of resources at your fingertips. Did you feel you had enough time, enough of these resources so that you could do the job they wanted you to do?

Mr. Burke: I never had enough time.

Ms. Kilgannon: Sometimes legislation, even in the interim, may feel rushed. Always the temptation with research is to do more. But did you feel that you had the tools that you needed to do your job properly?

Mr. Burke: Oh, yes. The Attorney General was another place that was very important. It used to be that the assistant attorney generals were farmed out to the agencies and they actually worked in the same buildings as the agencies. They were extremely knowledgeable about agency programs. Not just the strictly the legal aspects of the programs, they knew how the programs worked from the bottom up. They were great sources of information.

Ms. Kilgannon: So say, for agriculture—and I'm guessing you probably didn't walk in knowing much...

Mr. Burke: I knew nothing. In fact, one of the first assignments I had was dealing with the state noxious weed law, drafting a noxious weed law, for the Legislative Council's Agriculture Committee. I had to meet around the state with state Grange organizations. It was a fascinating experience, very interesting. I had no knowledge about noxious weeds, you know, none. But it was wonderful, it was a great experience. I traveled from one corner of the state to the next on

noxious weeds.

Ms. Kilgannon: You became an expert. How many of these different studies would you do at once? Did you get to concentrate, or were you doing noxious weeds at the same time you were doing other things?

Mr. Burke: The Agriculture Committee was not a heavy committee. But the Judiciary Committee was quite heavy. Now, I don't recall exactly the number of studies, but we may have had fifteen or so, twenty studies, maybe more, and some of the big ones really took a lot of time.

Ms. Kilgannon: I have one with me here, the Revised Washington Criminal Code, which looks like a pretty good undertaking, completed in 1970. Could you tell me about what it took to do this study?

Mr. Burke: Yes, this is with the Legislative Council's Judiciary Committee. The system set up to prepare the revised code involved a citizens' advisory committee, which was composed of very talented persons from the judicial branch, law enforcement community, and the defense bar.

Ms. Kilgannon: And who would choose those people?

Mr. Burke: This was set up by the Council's Judiciary Committee and we had a law and justice federal planning grant of some kind—I think we had a \$100,000 grant to do this. We actually returned some of the money. We used this grant not only to fund the citizen's advisory committee but also to pay for a reporter who did almost all the drafting. And then we had someone who provided editorial assistance, John Junker, who was a professor of criminal law. But the reporter, Richard Holmquist—he became the chief civil deputy in King County and I think he might be retired now—he did a fantastic job on the criminal code revision project.

We met—I don't know how often—but we did put together this large document, the proposed Revised Criminal Code in 1970. One part of it was adopted almost verbatim, the sex crimes chapter, because the legislators were concerned, that with the Equal Rights Amendment having just been adopted, that many existing sex crimes laws in Washington State may very well have been unconstitutional since they provided for disparate punishment based on sex. So the Legislature very hurriedly during, I believe, the 1973 or maybe the '74 session, passed the sex crimes chapter. I recall

that much of the remainder of the proposed code was heavily worked over in subsequent sessions and the revised code that passed was very different from the Council's code.

Ms. Kilgannon: In the introduction to the new code, you talked about it as a place to begin and that it gave members something to react to. I imagine even having this all in one place, pulled together, and somewhat worked over would be a great help. And then legislators could work through the issues.

Mr. Burke: If we hadn't done this, we would not have had a Revised Criminal Code for a long time in Washington State.

Ms. Kilgannon: When had it been revised last?

Mr. Burke: I think it was 1909 or something like that, it was way back.

Ms. Kilgannon: Things had changed quite a bit since then!

Mr. Burke: Well yes. A good part of the old criminal code was clearly archaic.

Ms. Kilgannon: And there are whole new areas of crime. New opportunities with the different changes in society.

Mr. Burke: That's for certain.

Ms. Kilgannon: Would you have worked on this for a couple of years?

Mr. Burke: I worked on that from 1967 to 1970, three years.

Ms. Kilgannon: And while you were doing that that would be your major assignment, or just one of many?

Mr. Burke: No, it was one of many and really, I was the person who coordinated this, brought it together. Most of the drafting—most of the really hard work on it—was done by Dick Holmquist.

Ms. Kilgannon: Still, that's something to keep track of, a large project like that. Now, this committee of citizens, what would have been their role? They would give advice; they would help write it; they would bring in their different areas of expertise?

Mr. Burke: For each meeting of the citizen's committee, we would have drafts for a chapter, or for a portion of a chapter. The drafts generally were based on the

model penal code, which was a document that had been adopted by a national organization. Most of what was in this draft was borrowed from this model code, and from other states that had recently revised their codes based on the model code. So the citizen's committee would look at the draft and read the interpretation of the draft that we would present to the committee and that showed what effect the draft would have.

Ms. Kilgannon: So it would be an annotated code—the laws with notes attached?

Mr. Burke: Yes, it was annotated; each section had a comment. Following each section of the draft, we would have a comment that would compare the draft with the model penal code, with the existing Washington law, and with other jurisdictions.

Ms. Kilgannon: Oh, that would be a lot of material.

Mr. Burke: A lot of material, a lot of work. And the members of the citizen committee would have this material and study it before they would meet and then they would get together and decide if they wanted to go with it or whether they would want to amend it. And frequently they would change it. Then we would give the citizen committee's recommendations to the Legislative Council's Judiciary Committee.

Ms. Kilgannon: Then the legislators would also do the same?

Mr. Burke: Yes, go through the same process and we would have new comments. And eventually we had a document. This was a major effort.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, that's a wonderful amount of oversight.

Mr. Burke: Yes, it was a major effort. I doubt today that legislators could ever do anything like this.

Ms. Kilgannon: Because it's too concentrated, too big, they'd have to break it down into smaller things?

Mr. Burke: I don't think the political system would allow legislators to focus today to that extent on a single subject. I mean, it's just not there today, you know, it's more reactive today and more political.

Ms. Kilgannon: There was something in that period where there was a great deal of reform energy. A lot of people were looking at different parts of the Legislature, different parts of the laws and all the processes.

It was a period of great transformation and a lot of energy for big changes. I wonder if these things come in waves. I don't know.

Mr. Burke: I don't know, either. It was a fascinating period because state legislatures were undergoing fundamental change across the country. There was a book published, I think it was in the sixties, I believe, called "The Sometimes Government" by the Citizens' Committee on State Government or something like that. It was a great book. It discussed, generally, the condition of state legislatures, which was deplorable. Legislators didn't have offices, they didn't have staff. [John Burns, *The Sometime Governments - A Critical Study at the 50 American Legislatures* by the Citizens Conference on State Legislatures (New York, Bantam Books, 1971)]

Ms. Kilgannon: They didn't even have telephones.

Mr. Burke: Didn't have telephones frequently. Anyway, state legislatures in the late sixties and early seventies responded to this need to modernize and did so.

Ms. Kilgannon: That was another piece of the work of the Legislative Council, was that it was the body that related to other states and to these national councils of states. There were a couple of different organizations that issued reports and studies and with which you had a relationship, where you could ask other states what they were doing. Where did Washington State stand in comparison on reform and modernization?

Mr. Burke: I think we were leaders. We were leaders in almost every sense. We did so many things here that other states subsequently have come to do also, particularly with our use of computers. A lot of this was not with the Legislative Council. I think it was during the Rosellini administration when this state first really modernized; that was when we got the Central Budget Agency and the civil service laws...although Rosellini, I don't believe, supported the civil service reforms. At least not initially, I think he had some mixed feelings on that.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes, that was a very big change. The state had had patronage employees from day one and then that became not quite as workable, perhaps as government grew. One important thing that you point out, is that if the governor is of such a mind, he can lead on a lot of these issues. But I understand that one

of the purposes of the Legislative Council was that the executive branch was getting very strong and organized and had great staff. And the Legislature, as you noted, had nothing. And so they were looking around for tools to bring themselves back into the picture; some legislators worried that their branch of the government was falling way behind and was only reacting to what the governor was doing and had no program of their own. How much of the Legislative Council would be an answer to that kind of issue? Was that something that you talked about?

Mr. Burke: Oh yes, I think the Legislative Council was important in giving the legislators a voice, a research tool that they didn't have before. But the major organization that was important to give the Legislature a voice back in those days was probably the Legislative Budget Committee, because the staff of that committee had budgeting skills and it was in the budget area that the executive branch truly overwhelmed the Legislature. The Budget Committee staff would split during the sessions, half would go to the Senate and half would go to the House. They were very important in giving legislators some way to understand what the governor was proposing in his budget.

Ms. Kilgannon: I understand legislators had no independent numbers; they only got what the governor gave them. And they could play around with that, but they had no way of finding out if they were good numbers or if there were other interpretations. They were a little bit hamstrung.

Mr. Burke: Yes, it was not a good a system.

Ms. Kilgannon: That gave enormous power to the executive. The other piece that I have read about was—certainly with President Johnson and then Nixon especially—that the federal government was very proactive in handing things down to the states, new requirements, new programs, certainly some good things with money attached, but often with many strings as well. So there was some nervousness among the states that their position in relation to the federal government was weakening and they were trying to strengthen what they were doing, too. So the Legislature was struggling with the governor and the states were struggling with the feds.

Mr. Burke: In the legislative branch, most of the friction there, with respect to the federal programs, I believe

was in the fiscal area. A lot of the very complicated budgetary provisions were designed by the executive branch to enable the state to take advantage of, while at the same time provide for some flexibility in administering, these federal programs that were thrust upon the states.

Ms. Kilgannon: What about another issue, that the other place that legislators got their information was from lobbyists, which, depending on the lobbyist, could be fine or maybe not so fine. They built these relationships over time with these different groups, but it still left them in a somewhat weak and dependent position. And towards the seventies, a push to reform that relationship got underway; with the Public Disclosure Commission coming in and various things, people seemed to be more uneasy, say, with that relationship. Perhaps, they needed more distance there, more independence.

Mr. Burke: It's very complicated. How are you going to regulate people who appear before legislative committees and knock on legislative doors? I'm sure the system has changed—I know it has changed tremendously over the years. But legislators back then, and now, get a lot of information from lobbyists. Not just the business lobbyists—but from the Association of Washington Cities, state agencies, citizens—everyone is a lobbyist.

But while we're on this subject, I'd like to discuss an ethics related issue that has always been on the back of my mind when I think about legislative changes. This is a major change that occurred in the Legislature and I'm not sure it's been to the better. When I first came to work for the Legislature, up through '73, I believe, legislative committees would go into closed executive session to adopt bills, or amendments to bills, or discuss the amendments which they would adopt. Members of the public would be invited to leave. And during these closed executive sessions, committee members would argue and reach compromise. Unless it was some bill like a labor bill or a tax bill, the discussion was generally not partisan. By and large, the members would sit down and they would discuss these bills and the amendments with one another, and party lines meant nothing. The members got to know each other, they liked each other generally. Then what happened was the rules changed so that members could no longer have the closed executive sessions. The idea was that all deliberations would be brought out into the open.

However, they were never brought out into the open; the rules just drove the private bipartisan discussions into even more private quarters, where only members of the majority party participated in the discussions. And the really bad thing about it, in my opinion, was that it made the place more partisan, it coarsened the system somewhat.

Ms. Kilgannon: They were free to say things that they might not have said otherwise?

Mr. Burke: Yes, it just really changed the system and it made it difficult for legislative staff who were providing services on a non-partisan basis, because under the new system the committee chairs would typically just meet with staff and committee members of the majority party. And the legislators would discuss what they were going to do and then they would generally do it, regardless of the minority. I'm not sure that's a good system. Contrary to opening up committee deliberations, the open meeting rules actually made deliberations even more private. And the rules made the Legislature a much more partisan place.

It's interesting, when the governor would meet with his cabinet officials, no one ever said you had to open everything up. For some reason the media in Washington State had gotten this idea that open committee meetings is important. The people that advanced this never really thought it through. But what they've done is driven the deliberative process—the negotiation process—driven it further into a cave, so to speak, and clearly made it more secret and partisan.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well yes, I can see how that would happen. They've got to have those discussions. They've got to be frank at some point. It's also reputedly led to a lot of grandstanding when those committee meetings are open. Things are said and done that are for the purposes of the Press rather than to advance legislation or work well with others.

Mr. Burke: When a member during a committee meeting decides to vote for an amendment or a bill today, it's interesting. The member frequently isn't looking at the other members of the committee; he or she is looking at the audience. They're looking at the TV cameras or whatever, but typically are not engaged in a discussion with other committee members.

Ms. Kilgannon: Committees are still where every-

thing happens—not the hero amendments on the floor, not the speeches on the floor—but in committee is where the real work of the Legislature happens. So as the committee structures are changed, reformed, transformed, would that impact what happened? Does the actual legislation change also? Is legislation now more partisan in nature, less far reaching? You say we can no longer do these big studies, is that a part of this change?

Mr. Burke: I don't know whether the legislation has changed. I think we don't do the big studies because they take a lot of time and focus. Because of the time involved, legislators today would just as soon have someone else do the report or the study—the Bar Association, or—

Ms. Kilgannon: A policy institute?

Mr. Burke: —a policy institute or one of those groups, and then have the standing committees react to it. And they may be right. I think the policy institutes may be doing a lot of those big studies that the Legislative Council did years ago, and I'm sure they do a better job, too. More people, more resources. So maybe when you look at it that way, with the policy institutes, we're still providing the same kind of services we provided during the Legislative Council days, but we're not doing it through legislative staff. Instead, we're doing it through non- legislative entities.

Ms. Kilgannon: But have the legislators again lost their independence when that happens, as an institution?

Mr. Burke: Well, they've lost something, but you know, if the legislators care enough about an issue, they can always become involved once again. Actually, I worked on a few issues that fit into that category, like the Indeterminate Sentencing Act, which the Legislature passed, I think, in 1980 or thereabouts which got rid of the parole system.

Ms. Kilgannon: That sounds like a big study.

Mr. Burke: It was not a big study, it was just a big drafting effort. But it was an example of involvement and creativity on the part of the legislative committees. That was very similar to the revised criminal code in terms of its product. It was a big, complicated product.

The Legislature also put together a health care bill in the early nineties or thereabouts. Dennis Braddock (42nd Legislative District, Bellingham) chaired the

committee and it was an extremely complicated, big bill. So the Legislature can still do it. But it has to get excited about the issue and it has to want to do it. And more typically today, the legislative committees don't want to.

Ms. Kilgannon: Is it because we have a different type of legislator who's not looking at the big picture, but looking at smaller issues?

Mr. Burke: Oh, I think that's definitely true. I mean, one of the things that has happened to legislators is that we had a number of superstars in the Legislature years ago. And while there are stars there now, I don't think we have many Slade Gortons, or Alan Thomp-sons, or Bill Gissbergs, or Augie Mardesichs, or Lenny Sawyers, or people like that today. You know, these were very capable legislators.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes, great pragmatists, being great problem solvers seemed to be the quality that they all shared. They had different ideas, of course, but they were there to solve the problems of the state.

Mr. Burke: Dennis Braddock, whom I did not work for but I have a lot of respect for, was a great legislator. Putting together this health bill was amazing. Mary Kay Becker (42nd Legislative District, Bellingham) was an extremely talented legislator; she put together the Indeterminate Sentencing Act and other important laws. And these bills were put together with an attention to detail and quality—and not just by staff, but by the legislators. And that is a real difference; I mean for a legislator to understand the details of something like that huge health bill or the Indeterminate Sentencing Act, that would be rare today.

Ms. Kilgannon: That's impressive, yes.

Mr. Burke: Helen Sommers (36th Legislative District, Seattle) is one of today's stars. I think Helen probably understands the budget that way and the pension laws.

Ms. Kilgannon: Is it because of longevity, you don't get quite the long careers, the twenty or thirty-year careers, is that what it takes? Or are those people just bringing in their personal training and experience?

Mr. Burke: I don't know, I've given so much thought to this and I don't know what the answer is, or what the problem is today. It used to be the case in Washington State that pillars of the community—important, smart, active people in their community—would run for the

Legislature. And the salary was nothing, it was peanuts, so they were interested in solving problems and they came charged to do this. They were emotionally ready to sit down and spend hours studying and negotiating and drafting bills and amendments. And I just don't think that's true today to the same extent.

Ms. Kilgannon: I imagine it would take a critical mass of those people.

Mr. Burke: Yes. The Slade Gortons of today are not running for the Legislature, they're practicing law, and getting wealthy, and serving on charity boards.

Ms. Kilgannon: And corporate boards.

Mr. Burke: It's a different world. Maybe if we have great problems to be solved again...

Ms. Kilgannon: That would call upon great people?

Mr. Burke: Great people will become interested again.

Ms. Kilgannon: That may be, maybe these things have their natural cycles. Washington State's not old enough for us to be able to chart that.

So, you got to do all these things on the Legislative Council that sound very engaging and substantive, and then, as all things do, the institution changed. In 1971, Don Sampson retired—certainly a legendary figure on the Legislative Council, people respected him greatly. Perhaps you could give us a little sketch of him before we move into the next phase of what happened.

Mr. Burke: Don was a wonderful man; he was not very healthy when I came to work there. He was very issue-oriented and extremely fair. And he was someone that I always felt comfortable going to with any kind of question I had about how to approach an issue or approach a legislator, because I knew that I'd get just a very honest response from him. I felt fortunate to have worked under his guidance from '67 to '71. He had a great reputation and people who worked with him were very fond of him.

Ms. Kilgannon: When he retired, it was not clear to me who replaced him or if anyone did. The records get a little fuzzy at that point because the Council was about to change its whole structure.

In 1972, the Democrats won the majority in the House elections. It had been a Republican majority for several sessions, but then Leonard Sawyer was handily

elected Speaker, and he came in with quite a program of change. He had wanted to be Speaker for a long time and had a lot of time to think about what he wanted to do there. He didn't, of course, do everything the first day, but he had some thoughts on how he wanted it to go. He worked with Augie Mardesich, who had become the majority leader in the Senate, quite happily at the same time. They instituted standing committees in both houses that matched—for pretty much the first time. That was a big innovation. They advanced the idea that these committees should be year-round as well. Sawyer moved towards abolishing the Legislative Council to bring in a different system. He wanted a non-partisan office, he maintained the concept of serving all legislators, but he wanted a program year-round that stayed with the standing committees. He brought in computers for budget work and other tasks. He had some other pieces in his reform program but those are the parts that are most important for this discussion.

During this transition, you told me that the Office of Program Research, as it came to be called, was not brought in immediately. That happened towards the end of his first session as Speaker, is that about right?

Mr. Burke: Actually 1973, when the session recessed in the spring of 1973.

Ms. Kilgannon: They brought in what were called “continuing sessions” so it's hard to say exactly when it ends.

Mr. Burke: It didn't end, because we had a special session. The Constitution had no end to a special session at that time. That was very interesting.

Ms. Kilgannon: That allowed for the continuing sessions, which was a big piece of what he was trying to do. **Mr. Burke:** Yes it was. But anyway, it was in the spring of, I believe, '73 that we actually physically moved from the Legislative building. I think there were four Council staff members who went to the House to work. We moved from the Legislative building to the Health building (now John L. O'Brien Building), which the House had; the Senate had the Public Lands building (now John A. Cherberg Building). Almost immediately the House created an employment committee which interviewed and hired staff for the Office of Program Research.

Ms. Kilgannon: I understand that was a bipartisan

committee. Which was an important innovation.

Mr. Burke: Yes. I had nothing to do with this committee. I had a lot to do with the people they hired, but nothing to do with the committee. But I believe it was bipartisan and they did try and do a good job in selecting people.

Ms. Kilgannon: Leonard Sawyer's idea was that a strong minority would keep the majority party on track and he wanted the Republicans to agree to his reforms and work with him. He wasn't trying to leave them out in the cold. And that was one of his methods to assure them that this would be a non-partisan staff and that they could trust these reforms, he wanted them to have a hand in choosing them. So, in his recollection, he brought them in right from the start and said, “Yes, this is going to be above board.”

Mr. Burke: I think back in those days, as we discussed previously, the Democrats and Republicans talked to each other and where they disagreed, they agreed to disagree. And there were a lot of hero speeches and all these things, but by and large, they were part of the same team. And Sawyer was, I think, effective in dealing with the Republicans.

Ms. Kilgannon: So when you say you had not much to do with the hiring, but you had something to do with the result, could you describe that?

Mr. Burke: Back then, I was practically the only person on the OPR staff with broad research experience. So I ended up helping people. Teaching them how to do reports, write letters...

Ms. Kilgannon: Relate to legislators, a little of that?

Mr. Burke: Yes, right.

Ms. Kilgannon: It's a different world for many people.

Mr. Burke: The people they hired were largely right out of college. Many of them had never written a business letter or a memo. So this period, in terms of legislative staff skills, was a little bit rough, a little bit ragged. I used to keep a log of all the letters and memos that the staff would write, and initially I had to approve everything.

Ms. Kilgannon: You were the screen for quality control?

Mr. Burke: Yes. Well, that didn't last long. People picked up skills quickly. It was an interesting period.

Ms. Kilgannon: Was it also creative? You could set the tone, you could train your people?

Mr. Burke: Yes, I brought with me a Legislative Council background, which was serving Democrats and Republicans, and doing so without becoming identified as either a Democrat or Republican myself. And I tried to instill in the new staff that kind of standard. And by and large, I think it was successful.

Ms. Kilgannon: I would think that would be very key.

Mr. Burke: I thought it was important, that if the organization was going to work effectively, that it maintain an image of political impartiality and establish a trusting relationship with legislators of both political parties. And the Legislature back in those days was kind of split on this. Many legislators expected staff, particularly staff that did a lot of work for them, to help with their campaigns. And there was pressure put on staff to help with political campaigns.

Ms. Kilgannon: Even the nonpartisan staff? They still had caucus staff after all.

Mr. Burke: Oh yes.

Ms. Kilgannon: Not everybody recognized that line?

Mr. Burke: But to Leonard Sawyer's credit, we were able to resist this pressure. We never would have been able to do so without Leonard Sawyer. But I told the staff, when they would get solicitations for campaign contributions or fundraisers, "I wouldn't contribute. If you want to, go ahead, but don't feel like you have to. If you do contribute, it will be difficult for you to deal with members of the other party. And when they come in power, which eventually they will, you may not be terribly welcome around here."

Ms. Kilgannon: "Keep that in mind."

Mr. Burke: I also told them that contributing would make it difficult for them to give staff reports, because members of the minority party might view them as being partial. I never participated in any of these partisan functions. I never felt that I couldn't, but I just felt it wouldn't be prudent and it wouldn't conform to my idea of what kind of staff organization we should have there. To this day, it's still a nonpartisan organization.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes, I want to say this is a reform that has lasted through the years.

Mr. Burke: One of the things that happened is that legislative staff appreciated the fact that if their work was going to be accepted, they were going to have to maintain the trusting relationship with legislators. And I think that appreciation is probably more responsible than anything I did.

Ms. Kilgannon: Certainly articulating that and setting it into the first standard that every one then worked toward would be helpful.

Mr. Burke: Yes. I told the staff that I wasn't going to fundraisers and I got the same solicitations they did. You know, these were young people just straight out of college, many of them with their first mortgages and children. And their thoughts were, "Well, if I don't go to this fundraising function, I may not have a job." And I believe that, outside of Leonard Sawyer, Alan Thompson, and a few other legislators, that most of the partisan people really wanted us to make contributions and to become partisan staff. So Leonard was very good on this.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did he somehow hold that at bay long enough for OPR to establish itself?

Mr. Burke: I think he did. One of the people that did put a lot of pressure on us was John O'Brien, Speaker Pro Tem.

Ms. Kilgannon: He didn't quite understand the new system?

Mr. Burke: Well, he thought that—like Rosellini did initially with the civil service act—that the spoils belonged to the victorious. If you're going to be legislative staff, if you're going to work in this environment, you should reward those who hired you with your political contributions and doorbell ringing or whatever. But Leonard Sawyer, I think, was the person who was mainly responsible for our staff continuing through the years to be largely nonpartisan.

Ms. Kilgannon: Did you work with the Chief Clerk? The Chief Clerk is the administrative officer for the House. Did he or she have any oversight or were you a completely separate organization?

Mr. Burke: Well, it's a complicated thing. OPR staff would work for everyone. And that's probably why OPR has managed to survive so long and so well. No one really had a knock-out punch. There was a Chief Clerk a number of years ago, Tim Martin, who

wanted to get rid of the Office of Program Research; he wanted a partisan staffing situation. And he couldn't do it because he had the Employment Committee to deal with and he had the Speaker. And very quickly his efforts fell apart.

And it's very complicated for OPR staff to work under those kinds of circumstances, because you work for your committee chair first, and you certainly work for the Speaker, you work for the Chief Clerk, the staff director, and you have responsibilities to any legislator who comes and asks for your help.

Ms. Kilgannon: So you could never turn down work?

Mr. Burke: I never turned down work.

Ms. Kilgannon: That would be a tremendous service if the legislators knew they could count on you, your group of staff people, to respond as timely as you could. And I imagine your range of requests was everything from "quick and easy" to quite complicated.

Mr. Burke: Yes, if something was really complicated that you were working on—say, a major bill like a budget bill—and someone would come and ask you to do a job that took two days to do—and in the meantime, you're drafting amendments for this budget bill that has to be out...

Ms. Kilgannon: Highly critical.

Mr. Burke: Highly critical, when the bill's going to be out of committee that evening, well obviously, you can't do it. So you sit down and tell the member your problem and see if there's some other way it can be done, either by other legislative staff or postponing it. But you know this happened all the time with legislative staff and legislators. The ideal situation is for legislative staff to share the workload when it gets really heavy. One of the great things about OPR as a central staff is that we did this all the time, and very effectively. If you have a situation where you have each committee being independent and without any kind of central administration, such as the Office of Program Research and the staff director, then you have a problem getting staff from other committees to help legislators and staff on committees that are particularly busy. Personally, I've been all over the place working with different committees during heavy times, particularly during the tail end of sessions. I've always done budget amendments.

Ms. Kilgannon: You would develop a real wide range of abilities, to understand everything that's going on.

Mr. Burke: And that's true for most legislative staff that've been around a while; they're knowledgeable about all kinds of issues that are outside of their regular committee assignments.

Ms. Kilgannon: Originally, the idea was that they would get all these young people and they would come in, work for a few years, and then they would go on to different parts of government service. And to some extent that happened, but to a greater degree than they anticipated, people stayed and made this a career, and loved it and built up areas of expertise and experience, even greater than some legislators. Did that get to be an issue, if staff knew more than legislators? They're still the legislator, but what if you actually have a greater experience and knowledge of legislative matters?

Mr. Burke: Well, that happens with every new legislature. And what you try to do with the staff is instill in them a kind of idealism that this is a very important service they're providing. You can look around the world and you can't find a good, strong democracy without a viable legislative branch. And these legislators are the ones who are responsible for this. We're there to facilitate their exercising of their constitutional roles. When you look at it in the big sense, in an overall sense, then I think it's not hard for most legislative staff to want to help new legislators, to want to enable them to make a contribution.

Ms. Kilgannon: It's very vital.

Mr. Burke: Well yes, if a legislative staffer doesn't get excited about legislators exercising their constitutional role in a democratic system, then they shouldn't be legislative staffers; they should go elsewhere. The major constraint on the legislative staff should be recognizing where their duties and obligations leave off and those of legislators begin.

Ms. Kilgannon: That would be probably one of the most important things for them to learn is where that line is, what their role is. I imagine that if you've been there for a while, you get very close to certain legislators and very involved in their committees, and their work, and their vision of what they want to do. And you know, you're human, you would have affinity for some more than others, better relationships. Could you

maintain that impartiality over time?

Mr. Burke: My experience is I've never had any difficulty getting along with legislators whose values were different from mine. As long as they were nice people to deal with, I could really care less what their political philosophy was. I drafted so many bills, and have done so much work where I wasn't particularly fond of the objective...

Ms. Kilgannon: I imagine you would develop a perspective of how this would play out over time. Could you see different new legislators coming in and think to yourself, "That person's really going to rise, that person's got what it takes." And other people, you could see might not have long careers in the Legislature that they didn't bring enough to it? Would that be part of the interest?

Mr. Burke: It was always very exciting to see a legislator grow, to see someone who came in with very little knowledge of state government and then blossom to become so knowledgeable on the issues. That was always a joy.

Ms. Kilgannon: Were you able to help that process to some degree with your reports and staff support?

Mr. Burke: I think so. Legislators, particularly new legislators, frequently don't appreciate the complications of bills and the proposals that they might have. And the really good ones like it when you show them that it's not practical to go the way they want to go, but if they would just change their proposal a little bit, that it would accomplish the same result, that it might work, or whatever. So it, again, is facilitating their agenda.

Ms. Kilgannon: What about legislators who come in and they want to create a program, or law, or whatever and it's been tried before, but didn't fly? Would you help them understand what had happened the session before or whenever it was, and then maybe what they might do differently so this time it will work?

Mr. Burke: Yes. One of the advantages of having staff that's been around for a while is that they'll have some institutional history. And one of the things that OPR has provided legislators with is institutional history. I think fairly recently there were some problems at OPR where the turnover was just fantastic. But now, I believe, there is more stability.

Ms. Kilgannon: I would think that would be a real

strength in that program if they have that longevity. Legislators come in with new ideas, but a lot of these things have deep roots and so it would be helpful to them to have some insight.

Mr. Burke: On the negative side of this, it's also possible legislative staff who have worked these issues before will have ideas—firm ideas—about the issues. And a staff person with firm ideas may actually prevent the Legislature taking a fresh look at the ideas.

Ms. Kilgannon: Be kind of a wet blanket on the whole thing?

Mr. Burke: Well, if you've worked an issue and you've seen it fail and fail and you know the actors, you can't help but feel some emotional pull one way or the other on the issue. Sometimes it's really good to have someone who's not been connected with an issue in the past to work on the issue now.

Ms. Kilgannon: Sometimes, it's just the right political moment, certain things come together and then it's the time. And maybe the last couple of sessions weren't the time and now it is, so you'd have to be able to see that somehow.

Mr. Burke: That's right, but it's a challenge. And for staff directors especially.

Ms. Kilgannon: To keep fresh?

Mr. Burke: To keep fresh, to keep the staff from becoming jaundiced and maybe callous on some issues.

Ms. Kilgannon: How would you do that?

Mr. Burke: Staff will differ. Some people will never, ever become callous or turned off on an issue, at least that anyone will be able to discern, and others very quickly will. So you just simply want to provide guidance and help and maybe make staff changes.

Ms. Kilgannon: So maybe re-assign people? If they're really burned out on a certain group of issues, maybe they should go try something else, a different committee?

Mr. Burke: Yes, right.

Ms. Kilgannon: Earlier, for the Council, you talked about calling on the University of Washington and other places where you could get background studies. Did you continue to have all those resources with OPR?

Mr. Burke: Yes. Here's an interesting point. As the system became more political, the state agencies with

whom you dealt with became more careful in giving responses. And also as the system became more political and there was a sense that the participants in the system weren't as interested in doing a public good, perhaps, but were interested, really, in getting re-elected more so than in the past. As a result of this, the willingness of people to respond to legislative staff requests for information diminished. You want to help someone who's trying to do a public good but you may not want to help someone if you think that they're not trying to do a public good as much as they're trying to get some political advantage. So I think that there probably was a difference—you know, it used to be that you'd call someone from the University and they were so anxious to help. They worked these issues, and they knew what was right; they'd been talking about the issues for years, and now they're talking to someone who could make a difference—or who might actually give their opinions to legislators and turn them into something—they would be excited. But I'm not sure that's as true today.

Ms. Kilgannon: So where would you go then for good information, for good studies and good analysis? Would it have to be more in-house?

Mr. Burke: You mean in recent years?

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes, as these things changed over time.

Mr. Burke: No, I'd still go to the same places but I wouldn't have the same success. Another interesting development is that the Attorney General's Office probably became over the years less helpful to legislative staff because that office became more involved in providing pure legal services to the agencies and wasn't as involved in the programs so much as they were before.

Ms. Kilgannon: When did that change?

Mr. Burke: That happened during the Eikenberry administration; they pulled all these assistant AGs back from their agencies and put them in the Highway/Licensing building. To me it was a disaster to do that.

Ms. Kilgannon: So they were no longer in touch with their agencies?

Mr. Burke: Yes. I always thought that was a mistake to pull them away from the agencies, and it resulted in the agencies going elsewhere for daily counsel, too.

The Attorney General's opinions also used to be very helpful. When Slade Gorton was Attorney General, there were so many opinions out there that his office drafted.

Ms. Kilgannon: Would they be interpreting law?

Mr. Burke: Yes. There was one assistant attorney general, Phil Austin (1930-2015). This guy probably did more to answer legal questions in the state of Washington than any Washington judge. He wrote so many opinions. He retired about twenty years ago (1985). So the Attorney General's Office was a very important source for information back in those days.

Ms. Kilgannon: It never went back to the old system, did it?

Mr. Burke: No.

Ms. Kilgannon: So agencies had to work differently, too. Any time part of a large system makes a change, it ripples through. Did agencies become more or less responsive or have better information, or better staff, or resources that they could work with you? Did they also have their corresponding changes that they went through, with different administrations?

Mr. Burke: Oh yes, but typically there would be exempt employees that would hang over from one year to the next and those people who continued on were important sources. Also, the assistant AGs would continue on with their agencies. So there was a lot of stability in the executive branch. I think there probably still is now.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes, you started in '67 with Dan Evans as governor and then you worked through several administrations, Dixy Lee Ray, Spellman, Gardner, and Lowry. Some Republicans, mostly Democrats. Would each administration—even though you worked for the Legislature—would they have an influence on how you worked in any way or is that just part of the landscape?

Mr. Burke: Oh yes, definitely. The Evans Administration was very activist and had a lot of bills.

Ms. Kilgannon: He had all those executive requests.

Mr. Burke: A lot of executive requests. And Lowry was very active. Governor Ray was not particularly active in the Legislature. I think she had become so controversial, with the media particularly, that when she

had a bill she would disguise it as someone else's bill.

Ms. Kilgannon: So she would rather go to a legislator and get that person to introduce it under their own name, not as a governor requested bill?

Mr. Burke: This is what I understand, I saw very few of Dixy's bills.

Ms. Kilgannon: Interesting. Did the Legislature go through phases or periods of strength, periods of relatively less strength, when an executive would be stronger?

Mr. Burke: Oh, yes.

Ms. Kilgannon: Was that a constant struggle, to maintain their own viability?

Mr. Burke: The Legislature reacted strongly when it had strong leaders and there was a strong executive. If legislators felt that they were being overwhelmed by an executive, and not able to get ample opportunity to be creative on their part, they tended to adopt the programs that would enable them to better deal with the executive branch. And this is exactly what happened with Speaker Sawyer and Mardesich in the Senate. They responded to a strong executive and did a lot of things. I mean, not just a continuing legislature and legislative staffing, but also the veto power limitation.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes, let's talk about that. That's certainly something that happened in that early period, where Dan Evans repeatedly used his veto power—more and more, and more creatively you might call it, and very controversially, to alter legislation and change the legislative intent to some degree. It was in the early seventies when this reached a crescendo with the Landlord and Tenant Act, where there's a reaction. There's a lot of grumbling and then finally some kind of line is crossed. But you were assigned to study the veto power of the governor and provide the grounds or ammunition for the fight that went to court to change that, redefine that power. So what would have been your staff role in that struggle; who would have brought that to you as an issue?

Mr. Burke: Leonard Sawyer was the person who involved me in the veto study and I did a report for him. But some background on this: there was universal agreement within the legislative branch that the veto power had been abused. Legislators were sitting down until the wee hours making compromises and

negotiating on bills.

And they would finally reach an agreement by two, three o'clock in the morning. And then the governor would take that bill and cross out one or two words and completely change the bill, perhaps in a way never contemplated by the legislators who had gone through this horrendous process to reach agreement.

Ms. Kilgannon: Would you say by 180 degrees sometimes?

Mr. Burke: Yes. Sometimes the governor would veto the bill in a way which took out a word or two that just eliminated one side of a compromise. Legislators realized that if the legislative branch was ever going to become truly independent, something had to be done about this veto power. The report that I did for Speaker Sawyer gave the perspective of the legislative branch. And it was not designed to argue about pros and cons of the governor's item vetoing, but rather to look at the justification that the executive branch made for the vetoes and the extent of the vetoes.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes, it's quite a study.

Mr. Burke: Yes. I felt very good about that. I don't think anyone previously had looked at this issue in that kind of comprehensive way.

Ms. Kilgannon: It really brings it together. Of course, people had been talking about it, but that wasn't the same thing as pulling it all together, and organizing it, and laying it out, and then providing a remedy. Wasn't a suggestion for a constitutional amendment included in the report?

Mr. Burke: Yes, I had a recommendation for amending the Constitution in there that reflected legislators' concerns, but unfortunately that didn't pass.

Ms. Kilgannon: That's a difficult thing to do.

Mr. Burke: Instead, a version that a Senate caucus attorney drafted passed. It was poorly drafted and resulted in a lot of litigation. But Len Sawyer liked that report, he bandied it around everywhere; every newspaper in the state had it.

Ms. Kilgannon: He once was involved in a face-to-face debate with Dan Evans on the veto power, I think, at a Bar Association conference. Did your report come in time for his debate?

Mr. Burke: Oh yes, absolutely.

Ms. Kilgannon: So it was the background. That was a highlight for him.

Mr. Burke: And he would have news conferences after Evans vetoed bills in a big way. He would always discuss the vetoes, and how out on a limb they were, how unfair they were, how they conflicted with the notion of having an independent legislative branch.

Ms. Kilgannon: It's definitely one of those turning points. Well, it was all part of Sawyer's and Mardesich's goal to elevate the Legislature and regain some balance. They're both lawyers; they cared a great deal about how they thought government was supposed to work. They were concerned that if the Legislature was weak that the whole system would fall apart and that we wouldn't have true representative government.

Another thing that they were very concerned about was to keep a citizen legislature. That means different things to different people. If you have this independent research capability in the Legislature, does that allow legislators with all their varying backgrounds—true citizens—to come in and do an effective job? Was the creation of OPR part of that goal?

Mr. Burke: OPR does assist in the continuation of the citizen's legislature. If you have a legislative staff that is nonpartisan and well run, legislators can feel comfortable in getting assistance and there is less need for legislators to become experts on each issue.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, there are so many issues.

Mr. Burke: There are so many issues. If you had a full-time Legislature, it shouldn't be that important for legislative staff to be there all the time because the legislators themselves will become experts. So I suppose Sawyer was saying that by having a strong legislative staff, a nonpartisan legislative staff, it enabled people to come to Olympia, serve as part-time legislators, and be able to carry out their constitutional duties with the assistance of staff. If they didn't have the nonpartisan staff treating them fairly and providing information to them, they wouldn't be able to operate nearly as well.

Ms. Kilgannon: That was the critical word for him: information. He felt handicapped by the lack of information. He knew as a legislator what he wanted to do but he didn't feel that he had good sources of different kinds of information so he could make the decisions.

He knew that was his role but he was missing that piece. He didn't like the idea of making decisions in a vacuum, by the seat of his pants, so that was a big piece of it for him.

Mr. Burke: You know, one of the things that he started is the comprehensive orientation program at the beginning of legislative sessions. It was really quite innovative and it was well done. Sawyer and other House leaders would come up with the bills they thought were going to be the most important bills during the session. And then they would have the Office of Program Research—I don't know if the Senate did this, but in the House we did this—perform staff studies for a presentation to the legislators at the beginning of a session on each of these issues. So for example, medical malpractice was a very big issue during this particular year. At a specified time, House members would come and hear a presentation on malpractice in some hearing room. The presentations were very helpful for legislators. They asked questions and the information wasn't given with a political slant. The presentations were balanced and they would deal with the big issues. By the time members were voting on these issues, they had some understanding of them, whether or not they were on the committees that considered them.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes. They'd still have to vote on it ultimately.

Mr. Burke: But they would have a much better understanding than they would have had had if they received only the analysis of partisan staff and the arguments of lobbyists.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, they heard both sides then and could compare them for themselves.

Mr. Burke: Yes. I also think that our staff, OPR staff generally, because we worked these issues over a period of time and did not have an agenda, provided the highest quality analysis.

Ms. Kilgannon: And I gather you could put them into language that a new legislator could understand?

Mr. Burke: Yes.

Ms. Kilgannon: You would know both the expert arena and the legislative arena and be able to mediate between the two.

You had a long experience with the Legislature.

Although you didn't work a long time for the Legislative Council, it's where you started and it helped shape your perspective. And then you worked for the Office of Program Research until your retirement in 1996. And of course, nothing stays the same; over time you went through different administrations, different legislators, and different staff people. Could you make some kind of evaluative statement about the changes and whether OPR was able to fulfill that original mission and keep it, even in light of all the changes?

Mr. Burke: Well, I think OPR is in at least as good of shape today from talking to people—and I do stay in touch with people there—as it was when I left. And it may be in better shape. If you have the support of legislators and you have a good staff director, it will be a successful operation. And I think that's why it's proven to be successful over time.

Ms. Kilgannon: Would you ever have gone back to a Legislative Council situation?

Mr. Burke: Oh no. The alternative today is a majority/minority staffing system. But I don't think those systems are very effective and they're very expensive. Perhaps if you had completely full-time legislators it might work out, but there are some very serious problems with partisan staffing, if it spreads over to standing committees in a part-time legislature. The first problem is that the partisan staff tend to be insulated, the members they are close to tend to protect them regardless of competence. And that is a very serious problem. It happens in OPR, too. If you have a staffer who becomes very close to a chairman, it's very hard to apply office standards to that person. But when you have an OPR type setting, with the staff director responsible for the staff, that tends to prevent the kind of close insulating relationships that tend to arise between staff and committee chairs or other legislators. With the partisan system, political loyalty is frequently expected to result in staff insulation.

Ms. Kilgannon: Well, they might be campaign workers or there are reasons for being there.

Mr. Burke: Right. You're rewarding someone for what they do for you as a staffer or as a doorbell ringer or whatever.

Ms. Kilgannon: A partisan staffing system would be more chaotic as that could change with every election.

Mr. Burke: You know, it's an amazing thing, legislators don't know about OPR when they first become elected and they may not have any reason to feel any loyalty, but the more they use the staff, the more they appreciate the staff's professionalism, knowledge, and general impartiality and they become OPR supporters.

Ms. Kilgannon: So that was quite an important vision to come up with this and put it in place?

Mr. Burke: Yes, I think Leonard did a good job. He was clearly one of the more influential Speakers in terms of legislative organization. His model has been followed for thirty-some years, since 1973, without really any great change.

Ms. Kilgannon: Sounds like it's still intact.

Mr. Burke: Intact and it's still strong.

Ms. Kilgannon: Yes, most of his reforms, other than continuing session concept, are in place today.

Mr. Burke: And that's been replaced by the annual legislative session.

Ms. Kilgannon: Thank you for your time today and helping us understand this important legislative development.

Chapter 28

Speeches and Correspondence

An overview of reform measures given to the Associated General Contractors for their industry publication in 1973. Courtesy of Leonard Sawyer.

ARTICLE FOR THE ASSOCIATED GENERAL
CONTRACTOR'S QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

August 22, 1973

BY: Leonard A. Sawyer, Speaker of the House
House of Representatives
State of Washington

Much has been said and written about the new plan for legislative reform initiated by the Democratic Caucus and begun during our last session here in Washington State. Our plan for continuing sessions was born out of a desire to rid ourselves of an antiquated, insulated system and have in its place one which could much more readily allow us to meet the needs of our constituents. Our goal in planning our revisions was to preserve the concept of a part-time citizen legislature, to make our committees more effectual, and generally to allow the legislative branch to be more responsive to the desires of citizens. Specific objectives included governmental spending reform, tax reform and a more responsive and effective administration of governmental programs.

The Pacific Northwest, and Washington in particular, has grown and changed dramatically in the last several decades. As our society became larger and more complex our law-making responsibilities increased proportionately. But, for eighty-four years, the legislative processes were not significantly changed. Inevitably, the legislative branch was weakened while the executive branch gradually usurped the balance of power. In order to fulfill its responsibilities as a viable component of the check and balance system the legislative branch had to be revitalized and strengthened.

The importance of retaining a citizen legislature is readily apparent in these times of turbulent politics. Many states which have adopted a full-time professional legislature now regret it. The shift from a citizen legislature to a professional one is often accompanied by a drift away from the close "grass roots" contact which provides the greatest opportunity for all citizens to participate in governmental decisions and directions. Our reform plan calls for intermittent sessions and committee meetings in Olympia, while allowing ample time for lawmakers to return to their home districts. This way legislators can follow their chosen professions, actively participate in community affairs and receive input from local citizens.

When the legislature adjourned on April 16, 1973, it did so earlier than in any regular session in the past ten years. This was possible due to increased efficiency, greater coordination between the House and Senate, and more efficient committee structure. Specifically, we established identical and coordinated committees in the House and Senate, continuation throughout the biennium of standing committees (formerly different interim committees were set up) and the replacement of interim committee staff with permanent non-partisan research technicians assigned to assist all committees. These changes will result in the best use of the sessions planned for September and January.

Spending reform was an integral part of our plan for legislative improvement. Performance audits will now be regularly conducted to determine if appropriations are spent according to legislative intent and with the greatest possible efficiency.

Last session our reform plan paid off and many important pieces of legislation in the areas of labor, legal rights, consumer protection, education, and health care were approved. We now have had several monthly weekend committee meetings. These, too, appear to have been very productive. The bills we studied and discussed in these hearings are still "alive" for action during the September and January sessions. Several controversial and complex measures are nearing resolution as a result of the increased time for research and study.

"A powerful and independent, creative and competent legislature distinguishes a democratic system for more authoritarian forms of government."

So states Larry Margolis, Executive Director of the Citizen's Conference on State Legislatures, in their publication The Sometimes Governments. Increasing the effectiveness and strength of the legislative branch in order to more adequately serve the needs of the people was our priority. In implementing the reforms in the legislative process last session, we are well on our way toward establishing an inquiring legislature, finally capable of challenging administrative proposals, actions and expenditures. This will result in better government for all of the people.

(Article for the Associated
General Contractor's Quarterly Magazine)
August 22, 1973

Text of speech given to State Democratic Convention in 1974, describing the achievements of the reform program.

HONORARY CO-CHAIRMEN

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Commissioner of Public Lands
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HOUSE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE

Post Office Box 2581

Olympia, Washington 98507

August 12, 1974

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Dan Van Dyk

TO: MEMBERS OF THE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

FROM: LEONARD A. SAWYER

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

John Bagnariol
Robert L. Charette
William "Bill" Chatalas
Paul H. Conner
John L. O'Brien
Robert A. Perry
Leonard A. Sawyer

RE: SPEECH TO DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION

Enclosed is a copy of the speech I gave before the Democratic Convention in Richland earlier this summer.

As we prepare to fully "gear up" for the 1974 campaign, I think it is important to recall the message I tried to convey to the delegates from our caucus.

This should be a good year for the Democrats -- not because of the troubles the Republicans have managed to get into, but because we have done a better job for the people.

We have shown that legislative reform can work, that by revising and streamlining our procedures we can deal more effectively and knowledgeably with the critical problems that confront our state.

This legislature has accomplished more, in less time, without increasing the cost of our operations. We have been able to do this by ironing out our differences in the caucus and coming out to work hard on a united program.

We can be proud of our achievements, and I am confident that by presenting our record and program to the people as united Democrats, we will have an overwhelming victory this fall.

DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

A. A. Adams
Eric O. Anderson
Albert Bauer
Del Bausch
Rick S. Bender
Donn Charnley
Art Clemente
Jeff Douthwaite
Wayne Ehlers
John Eng
Eleanor A. Fortson
Robert E. "Bob" Gaines
P. J. "Jim" Gallagher
Marc Gaspard
H. A. "Barney" Goltz
Frank "Tub" Hansen
Joe D. Haussler
John R. Hawkins
Margaret Hurley
Elmer Jastad
Doris J. Johnson
Hugh Kalich
Charles D. Kilbury
Walt O. Knowles
Eugene L. Laughlin
Edward T. Luders
King Lysen
John Martinis
Peggy Joan Maxie
William J. S. "Bill" May
Geraldine McCormick
Charles Moon
Frances North
Mike Parker
Robert Randall
Charles R. Savage
A. N. "Bud" Shinpoch
Rick Smith
Helen Sommers
Georgette Valle
Frank J. Warnke
Al Williams
Shirley Winsley
Lorraine Wojahn

SPEAKER SAWYER'S ADDRESS TO THE
STATE DEMOCRATIC PARTY CONVENTION JUNE 29, 1974

It is a pleasure to talk to a Democratic convention today, because these are strange political times--times that I don't think even Ripley would believe.

When the people cry out for honesty in government, what does our Republican Governor suggest? He wants to give amnesty to the president, rather than a complete and honest disclosure.

When the people cry out for better public servants, what do a dozen Republican legislators do? Instead of making the system work they quit, complaining that being a legislator is too much work.

When the people cry out for more responsible institutions, what does the Republican party do? Instead of making reform work, they want to abolish reform and turn back the clock.

I hear that when the Republicans hire a secretary nowadays, they test her to see if she can erase 120 words per minute.

That's what I call really moving backwards.

Well, with the Republicans doing and saying what they are, it should be a pretty good year for the Democrats. This convention must plan for that victory.

We must set an example. Let's iron out our differences here today and leave this convention united and together. Let's all be moderate and wise with each other.

Now, I hope that this convention will forget the name calling. Let us unite for the people's sake. In the Democratic Caucus in the House of Representatives, we have liberals and we have conservatives. We fight in our caucus, but we unite on a program and then we come out and we work hard to push that program through, and that is why we have been an effective legislature.

Now, I would like to say just a few words about legislative reform, and go over some of the Republican criticisms because I am extremely disappointed that they would rather quit than fight to make a strong, independent and effective legislature.

These critics seem to be taking the advice of an old law professor who once said: "When arguing a case, if you have the facts on your side, hammer them into the jury--if you have the law on your side, hammer it into the judge--but if you have neither the facts or the law, hammer the table."

Page 2

The critics of legislative reform don't know the facts, don't understand the meaning of our constitution and don't care about the interests of the people. They are just hammering the table for the benefit of the press.

It is true that legislators are underpaid. It is true that the legislature means hard work, but the people must be served and not neglected. Turning back the clock is not the answer. We well know that the Republicans are used to being paid a lot of money for little work, but we Democrats are used to working very hard for little pay.

But, I have to say that taking care of the peoples' business is a time consuming and difficult matter, and as the budget of the state grows, so do our responsibilities.

In spite of the fact that the critics apparently want our legislature to meet less often, spend less time, work less, hold fewer meetings and give the people less chance to participate and study the problems, the constitution of this state and every state spells out an equal partnership between the branches of government. That is the law.

When one branch has too much power, the people suffer. Without reform the legislature cannot perform its constitutional duties. With reform we can. But it takes hard work and much time. The danger of an executive with too much power is a great danger, and we can all thank one man for making this issue perfectly clear.

The interests of the people of Washington are best served by a modern-day legislature and the 43rd Legislature moved toward that goal by instituting a number of structural and procedural reforms.

We now have flexible sessions which allow us to take the peoples' problems as they occur. Problems and decisions don't wait until January of every odd year. Every month of every year the federal government hands down a bill, an appropriation, or an executive order that affects the people of this state. It requires the legislature to make policy decisions.

Committee weekends may be inconvenient for the legislator, but they are vital to the people. These meetings allow us to carefully consider legislation and to hear the opinions of the citizens at a time when people are calling for more participation--the Republican critics want to close the door.

Instead of 29 joint interim committees, as well as 18 Senate and 16 House committees, we now have 17 permanent standing committees in each house. Their responsibilities are clear. Their members are not shuffled every two years. They can study problems and be accessible to the citizens the year around. But the Republican critics want to return to the old, ineffective system.

Page 3

We now have permanent professional staff. Not only do they support -- committee work during the sessions, but they research and study long-range issues for legislative action. Are the critics so well informed that they don't need information and research?

What has this reform cost the tax-payers? It has cost the taxpayer nothing, and in fact it has cost the taxpayer less. While passing more bills and studying more problems, the 43rd Legislative Budget will cost less than the 42nd Legislative Budget. The 43rd Legislature has already reverted \$1 million to the General Fund, and reduced its budget 8 percent. What other branch of government is spending less?

However, reform has demanded the time of each legislator. Maybe that is the heart of the critics' complaint--too much work. Well, there can be no place in Olympia for legislative loafers. And I say to the Republican quitters, if the shoe fits, wear it.

As I hear their departure speeches, I wish they had taken the advise of James Russell Lowell, who said over 100 years ago: "Blessed are they who have nothing to say and cannot be persuaded to say it."

Instead of quitting, they should have helped to make reform work. We are just beginning to shape a modern legislature. It will take time; we need to experiment. No one has all the answers despite what the Governor says.

But we will not turn back the clock. We cannot afford to. I hope that I can count on the Democratic Party of this state to agree with me on that.

Letter sent to Governor Evans with suggestions for reform of budget procedures that would strengthen the position of the Legislature.

FORTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE
1971-73

SESSIONS SERVED:
HOUSE: 1950 EX., '51, '51 EX.,
1951 2ND EX., '53, '53 EX.,
1955, '55 EX., '57, '59,
1959 EX., '61, '61 EX.,
SENATE: 1963, '63 EX., '65, '65 EX.,
1967, '67 EX., '69, '70 EX.,
1971, '71 EX., '72 EX.

COMMITTEES

CHAIRMAN: COMMERCE AND
REGULATORY AGENCIES
CITIES, TOWNS AND COUNTIES
CONSTITUTION, ELECTIONS AND
LEGISLATIVE PROCESSES
PARKS, TOURISM, CAPITOL GROUNDS
AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS
TRANSPORTATION
WAYS AND MEANS
(REVENUE AND TAXATION)



SENATOR
AUGUST P. MARDESICH
THIRTY-EIGHTH DISTRICT
4712 MERMONT DRIVE
EVERETT, WASHINGTON 98201

Washington State Senate

November 28, 1972

The Honorable Daniel J. Evans
Governor of Washington
Legislative Building
Olympia, Washington 98504

Dear Governor Evans:

For the past several years one of the primary problems encountered by the Legislature has involved a review and analysis of the executive budget. Under normal circumstances the Legislature must wait three to four weeks from the date of its submission until analytical information becomes available to the various appropriation committees. In no small measure, the delay in the transmittal of budgetary information has substantially delayed and complicated the entire legislative process. As you are well aware, the complexity of state programs has increased from biennia to biennia. Coupled with the increasing complexity has been the changing nature of federal programs which has substantially complicated the Legislature's attempt to understand the various budgetary aspects and ramifications.

While we can understand the necessity for confidentiality of budgetary information and, thus, the reluctance of the Executive Branch to transmit such information prior to the convening of the Legislature, it is also apparent that a continuation of this policy will result in needlessly elongated legislative sessions. We would, therefore, like to respectfully request that the executive budget document be transmitted to the Legislative Budget Committee upon the date of its completion or at such time as the final budgetary decisions are made rather than waiting until the convening of the legislative session. It is our understanding that this procedure would place the budget document for all practical purposes in the possession of the Legislative Budget Committee from two to three weeks prior to the convening of the legislative session.

The Honorable Daniel J. Evans
November 28, 1972
Page Two

In turn, we would offer our assurances that the information contained in the budget document would be regarded as strictly confidential and would be available only to the Legislative Budget Committee staff. Further, it would not be released to any member of the Legislature or the public until the day after the budget message is delivered to the Legislature.

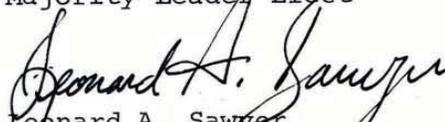
Our primary interest in making this proposal is to expedite the business of the session and assure that meaningful rational, and useful budgetary hearings can begin on the date the session commences. This would hopefully be a way of possibly shortening the time needed to successfully complete our budgetary deliberations and, in turn, the legislative session.

We look forward to your response to our request.

Respectfully submitted:



August P. Mardesich
Majority Leader-Elect



Leonard A. Sawyer
Speaker of the House-Elect

APM:LAS:dv

In this memorandum written just a few years before Speaker Sawyer proposed his reforms, Legislative Council Secretary Donald Sampson outlines several ideas similar to those that would be implemented under Sawyer, but dismisses them as "not feasible politically or not desirable for other reasons." Sawyer adopted the continuing session concept and the continuation of standing committees but found other solutions for modernizing legislative processes, including abolishing the Legislative Council itself.

STATE OF WASHINGTON
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
LEGISLATIVE BUILDING
OLYMPIA

MEMORANDUM

TO:
FROM: Donald C. Sampson, Executive Secretary
SUBJECT: Interim legislative activity.

DATE: April 1, 1967

Problem:

The rapid population growth, the expanding responsibilities of state and local government and the complex problems of finance are constantly increasing the burdens of the state legislators. More complex bills are before every session and the legislators must make major decisions with little opportunity to obtain the background of the factors involved. The various states have all considered this urgent problem in varying degrees. Among suggested remedies have been the following:

1. Continuous sessions of the legislature, or at least regular annual sessions.
2. Continuation of the session standing committees during the interim periods.
3. Adoption of the Oklahoma structure in which every member of the legislature is a member of the Legislative Council and works on at least one committee during the interim period.
4. Large numbers of interim committees, sufficient to make every legislator a member of one or more.
5. Expansion of the working membership of a few major statutory legislative agencies, such as the Legislative Council and the Legislative Budget Committee.

Comment:

The first four of the above suggestions appear to be either not feasible politically or not desirable for other reasons in Washington state.

- (1) The annual sessions would require a two thirds vote of each house and the subsequent approval by the voters. So, not only would it be at least two years before it could be implemented, but it apparently is not yet acceptable to the legislature.
- (2) The idea of continuing standing committees was tried in Pennsylvania and was unsatisfactory in a number of respects. Standing committees with 35 or 45 members are completely impractical for interim activity involving travel, meetings, and substantial staff work. There is also a lack of coordination between the various activities and a lack

April 1, 1967

of central staffing, which Pennsylvania finally remedied.

- (3) The Oklahoma structure has worked well and provides an opportunity for every legislator to contribute to the research program and benefit therefrom, but requires a statutory change in our law. This change is apparently not acceptable to the Senate.
- (4) A proliferation of interim committees is wasteful and inefficient in many respects. It is difficult to acquire professional staffing and there is usually a delay in obtaining a staff member and then orienting him to the problems. There is no central housekeeping or administration set up and there is usually no provision for implementing conclusions by drafting bills. There is not maximum utilization of equipment and space, nor is there any cross check of substantive research.

(5) Expansion of existing legislative service agencies.

The Legislative Council in the last few bienniums has utilized a practice of appointing special members chosen for their knowledge and ability and their interest in specific areas of study. This procedure was approved by the Attorney General. Such special members receive the same per diem and travel reimbursement as the regular members and attend Council meetings as well as committee meetings whenever their committee work is discussed. The real value of the procedure lies in expanding the capabilities of the Council, reducing the number of committee assignments members must take, and adding to the know how in special fields.

Committees.

The present Legislative Council structure usually calls for twelve committees with membership ranging from 4 - 8. If the Legislative Council would approve, perhaps 54 special members as a maximum might be appointed, each serving on one Council committee. This would increase committee membership to, perhaps, 9 - 13. Presumably a regular Council member would always retain the committee chairmanship. The special members would be non voting on the Council, but would otherwise participate in all discussion and would vote on the subcommittee. In view of the difference in membership of the House and Senate, the special members could comprise, perhaps, 33 representatives and 21 senators.

Cost.

Since the special members would probably serve on only one committee, the additional cost for travel and per diem would, perhaps, run from \$1,000 to \$1,500 each per biennium. The research staff would probably not need an increase unless more committees were organized but there would be an increasing clerical burden which would require one or two additional staff members, with a total cost of, perhaps, \$10,000 per year for this addition. There would also be an increase in postage and telephone of, perhaps, \$5,000 for the biennium.

April 1, 1967

Implementation.

The basic action for adding special members would be carried out by the Council membership, first by the Executive Committee, followed by ratification of the total regular membership. It would not require formal action by the legislature unless a concurrent resolution (if deemed feasible) or a simple resolution to express the policy recommendation should be adopted. Otherwise, it would require informal conference of the officers of the Legislative Council to determine to what degree they might be receptive to the proposal.

Other interim agencies.

The same principle, of course, could be applied to the other statutory agencies, including the Legislative Budget Committee, the Joint Committee on Transportation, and the Joint Committee on Education.

DCS:pf

History of Washington State Legislative Council Activities Given

Association of Washington Industries News

The Washington State Legislative Council was created by a 1947 law (RCW 44.24.010.070) some fourteen years after the establishment of the first Legislative Council in Kansas.

It consists of 21 members, including the President Pro-Tem of the House and the Speaker of the Senate and the Speaker appointing the remaining nine Senators and the Speaker appointing the remaining ten Representatives.

The membership must include at least one individual from each congressional district, and no more than twelve of the Council members can be members of any one political party.

Senate members are confirmed by the Senate, and House members by the House of Representatives. If appointments are not timely made, members are elected by the respective Houses.

The vacancies of Senate members are filled by appointment by the remaining Senate members, and the same procedure is followed by House members. Vacancies must be filled from the same political party as that of the member whose seat was vacated.

The term of office of all members is from the time of confirmation or election until their successors have been confirmed or elected, or until they cease to be members of the Legislature.

The Council's powers and duties include: (1) Interim Studies. To perform through the council as a whole, or through subcommittees, duties and func-

tions customarily delegated to special interim legislative committees; (2) Improve State Government. To study administrative organization and procedure of all agencies of state government and to recommend improvements.

(3) Hearings. To make other studies of state government and to hear complaints, hold hearings, gather information, make findings of fact. Prior approval of two-thirds of the membership is required to authorize public hearings.

(4) Legislative Matters. To attend generally to business addressed to, or affecting the Legislature during the interim between regular sessions.

(5) Reports. To make periodic reports to members of the Legislature and a biennial report ten days prior to each regular session.

(6) Interstate Cooperation. To cooperate and function with similar Councils in other states and the Council of State Governments.

The executive committee serves as administrative body for the Council, and in addition occasionally undertakes research assignments. It is composed of the chairman, vice chairman and secretary of the Legislative Council.

The Council operates through subcommittees numbering, during the last few years, approximately twelve. They parallel the major standing committees of the sessions.

It ordinarily has a permanent research and clerical staff which prepares materials and reports for the Council and its subcommittees and places all

recommendations in actual bill form for introduction in the Legislature.

The Council frequently utilizes other members of the Legislature as special committee members and has, on occasion, established large advisory committees representing various organizations in the state to assist in its major projects.

Regular meetings are held at least every three months and subcommittee and other meetings number in the hundreds during a biennium.

As in the other 41 states which now have Legislative Councils, it is recognized that a 60-day session, once every two years, is inadequate for the scope and complexity of present state government, the Legislative Council, which has continuity and time to study and appraise major problems, is one method of assisting the Legislature.

In addition to the long-range development of proposed legislation, the members and ex-officio members of the Council become well informed on matters of public assistance, education, natural resources, and other areas in which they work.

Although, as previously stated, the Council was established in 1947, it did not have a professional career staff until 1953. During this time the Council has:

1. Carried on continuous research on taxation, institutions, public welfare, natural resources, commerce and industry, agriculture, education, local government, etc.

2. Functioned as Commission on Interstate Cooperation and as

contact point for Council of State Governments, other states, public agencies; receiving, in return, reciprocal service.

3. Drafted legislation designed to improve state and local government and to implement request from reputable agencies and organizations; served as objective information, source to news media, the public and state officials;

4. Published numerous factual reports on assessment, junior colleges, judiciary, taxation, water resources, re-apportionment and scores of other subjects;

5. Assisted in orientation courses for new legislators, provided individual research assistance to all legislators, both during sessions and in the interim, and staff assistance to standing committees and helped to develop expert knowledge on the part of legislators on the Council.

As previously reported, Governor Rosellini vetoed the \$177,741 appropriation made directly to the Council by the 1963 Legislature to cover its expenses between sessions of the Legislature.

Prior to the veto the Council had an experienced staff composed of from 6 to 7 members. After the veto the Council decided to maintain its program with a limited staff and pay its expenses out of an appropriation made for the House of Representatives. The staff was then cut to three persons.

On June 27, 1963, Attorney General John J. O'Connell approved this financial arrangement by the Council, but on December 17, 1963, he reversed his opinion contending that the wording of the Supreme Court decision which upheld the Governor's veto, cast a doubt on his original opinion. As a result, the Legislative Council was deprived of the balance of its staff.

It All Has a Purpose



DONALD C. SAMPSON, Executive Secretary of the Legislative Council, points out some of the background material necessary to the Council's work. Sampson says that the information in the Council's affairs is the most up-to-date material to be found anywhere. The large box behind Sampson contains material necessary for a study on the various retirement systems.

State Employee, March 1962

Puyallup lawmaker Leonard Sawyer brought Legislature 'into the 20th century'

STAFF WRITER

SEPTEMBER 02, 2015 11:24 AM

Leonard Sawyer, a former speaker of the state House who helped reform and modernize the state Legislature, died last month at the age of 90.

Sawyer, a Democrat from Puyallup, served as House speaker from 1973 to 1976. During that time, he revamped the Legislature to employ teams of full-time, nonpartisan staff who could advise lawmakers and research policy issues throughout the year.

House members later credited Sawyer's reforms as putting the Legislature on more equal footing with the governor's office, which previously had greater access to year-round professional staff and researchers.

"He modernized the Legislature, no question," said Bill Baarsma, a former Tacoma mayor. "It became far more professional and far more effective during that period."

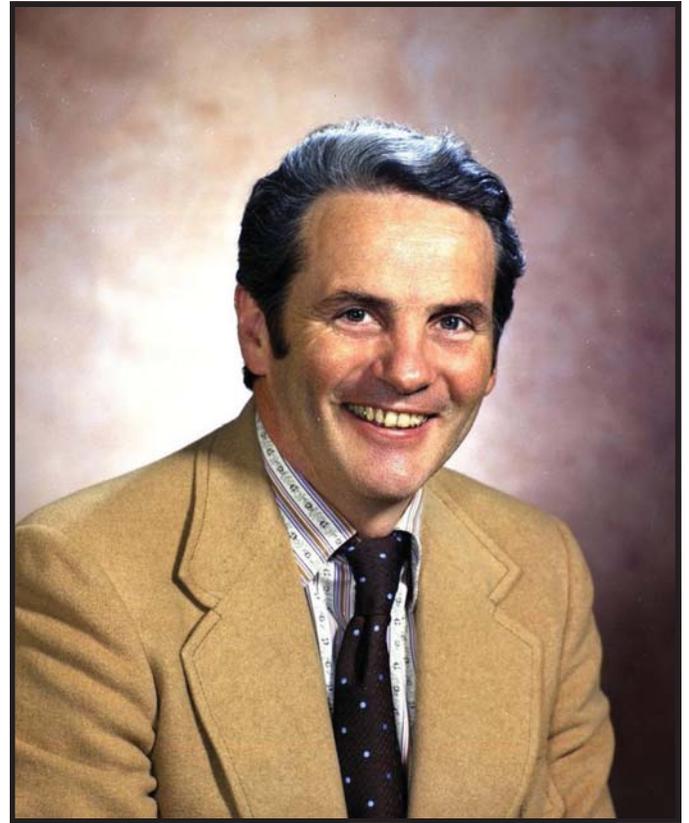
Born and raised in Puyallup, Sawyer represented Pierce County's 25th Legislative District for 22 years, including the two terms he spent as House speaker. Among colleagues and friends, Sawyer generally went by Len or Lenny.

Sawyer is survived by his wife, Dawne Friesen Sawyer, as well as five children and eight grandchildren.

During his time as House speaker, Sawyer championed the use of computers and data processing technology to help lawmakers analyze policy proposals and spending plans. That gave the Legislature access to even more information that previously was available only to the governor's office, according to a 1988 House resolution passed in Sawyer's honor.

In the honorary resolution, House members praised Sawyer for how he "helped correct the power imbalance between the legislative and executive branches."

"Before Speaker Sawyer's reforms, legislators had to rely upon the executive branch for expertise and even upon lobbyists to provide some research services," the House resolution said. "...Now, legislators have



independent expertise and research capabilities in their own staffs."

House members further credited Sawyer "with ushering Washington's legislature into the 20th century."

"He was a gentleman," said Brian Ebersole, a former Tacoma mayor and past House speaker who introduced the resolution honoring Sawyer in 1988.

In a phone interview, Dawne Friesen Sawyer described her late husband as "an innovator" who was determined to see his ideas through. Several of the reforms he enacted in the Legislature took years to develop and put in place, she said.

"He'd get a hold of one of those ideas and he wouldn't stop until he achieved it," Dawne Friesen Sawyer said.

An informal reception to honor Sawyer will take place from 2-4 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 9 at Toscano's Italian Grill, located at 437 29th St NE in Puyallup.

Donations in Len Sawyer's name can be made to Mary Bridge Children's Hospital in Tacoma.

Melissa Santos: 360-357-0209
 melissa.santos@thenewstribune.com
 @melissasantos1



Representative Leonard A. Sawyer
Speaker of the House, 1973 - 1976



Washington State Legislature
Oral History Program