

SHORT: Thank you and welcome to another in our series of Reflections. Today we have former governor, Roy Barnes. He is one of our unusual politicians. He had a very successful career as the governor of Georgia. But he's the only governor, since we passed the law in the state allowing governors to succeed themselves up to two terms, who did not get elected. George Busbee was elected to his second term. Joe Frank Harris was elected to his second term. Sen. Miller was elected to his second term. But Gov. Barnes stumbled along the way, and did not make it. He was beaten, as you recall, by Gov. Sonny Perdue, four years ago. He will be with us today. I hope you will give him the Young Harris welcome and ask him any question that you would like to have him answer. Gov. Barnes was born in (Mableton?), Georgia, which is a - used to be a small suburb of Marietta. But now it is a small suburb of Atlanta.

SHORT: So he could - he could be looked upon as an urban governor. The only urban governor we've had since Lester Maddox was elected in 1966. So Gov. Barnes devoted a major portion of his administration to urban problems. And I think as he talks with us today, you will realize that he had a genuine interest in solving some of the problems that were faced by urban metro Atlanta. He was born in (Mableton?). His father had a store there. It was known as (Barnes's?) Store. And every politician in Georgia who entered state-wide office would always go by to (Barnes's?) Store, because in that location, you got a real pulse of the voters of this state. They - they looked upon themselves as being conservative, which in those days, of course, meant that you adhered to Southern values. Those values that - such as racial relations and small government and party loyalty and that sort of thing. And like most Georgians of that era, they were Democrats. They remained Democrats until 1964, when Pres. Johnson passed the Civil Rights Act. Then they began seeing differences between their points of view and the Democratic party. So they slowly, slowly moved toward Republicanism. But as they became national Republicans, they seemed to still favor local Democrats. So Roy Barnes came from that heritage. He was a bright, young student at South Cobb High School. He graduated there, and went to the University of Georgia, where he graduated cum laude in his class. And he graduated from the law school with the - he was the top law student in his class. So he's a brilliant young man, who came back to Marietta, not to practice law in his own firm, which he has now, but as a prosecutor. He found prosecuting people was not what it was all cracked up to be, so he decided that he would then run for the legislature. So he ran for the Georgia Senate. Now, that's a bit unusual as (Carlton?) will tell you, because most politicians sort of climb up the ladder before they jump into the big time. But not Gov. Barnes! He ran for the Senate. He was elected and served eight terms in the Georgia Senate. Most Georgia Senators, particularly when you're young like Barnes, had a hard time breaking in to the society of the Senate, which is, you know, they like to think they're a little bit above House members, but (Carlton?) and I know that they aren't!

SHORT: Barnes immediately fell out into the leadership of the Senate. And he became Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, which is one the major important committees in

the Senate. But after a year there he became the floor leader of Gov. Joe Frank Harris, who spoke of him, I think, when he was here. He served as Gov. Harris's floor leader, until he decided, seven years later, to run for governor. So in 1990, he ran for governor in a crowded field that featured Lieut. Gov. Zell Miller, former mayor and United Nations representative, Andrew Young. It had several other players - Bubba (MacDonald?), who was a counterpart to Barnes in the House of Representatives. (MacDonald?) served as chairman of the House of Appropriations Committee, which is the key committee in the Georgia House of Representatives. So, it was a crowded field with a number of qualified candidates. The - the race in the beginning was very slow until Zell Miller came out with a campaign promise, which won, for him, the election. And that, of course, was the lottery. The lottery for education became his issue. It separated him from the field. No other candidate had any major platform that could compare with that in the minds of the voters. So, Miller staked himself out as the frontrunner in the very beginning. Andrew Young, surprisingly, was a very strong candidate. He ran on the platform of economic development. In a rally once in (Gainesville?), I heard him say to the people there - and I quote, "The people of the United States don't eat all their chicken." (Gainesville?), of course, was the poultry capital of the world. "People of the United States don't eat all the chicken. If you'll elect me, I will market for you the remainder of that chicken all over the world!"

SHORT: That was a pretty good campaign promise. He went to Dalton, which is the carpet center, and told the people there - the workers in the carpet industry, "If you'll elect me, I will be your personal salesman for carpet all over the world." And so Andrew Young struck a pretty good relationship with Georgia voters, and finished second in that race to Miller. And they both went into a run-off, of course, and Miller eventually won. But Roy Barnes is the fellow who really made the most ground in that election. He started off near the bottom, but he started catching fire toward the end, and he wound up in third place, not far behind Andrew Young. So he was defeated for governor. Two years later, back in (Mableton?), he ran for the House of Representatives, and was elected. Still a young man, and then he goes into the House. And he serves in the House, until his opportunity finally came to run again for governor. And then he really had a chance to win. And so he did, in which the same thing happened there! A young politician - up and coming young politician - by the name of Pierre (Howard?), who had served eight years as Georgia's lieutenant governor, and his time came. So he announced his candidacy for governor of the state. Roy Barnes decided he would run for lieutenant governor, since (Howard?) obviously had a pretty good lot going in the field, and so he announced for lieutenant governor. When suddenly, Mr. (Howard?) dropped out of the race, and Roy Barnes changed his mind and ran for governor instead. He ran for governor against a young man by the name of (Massey?). Louis (Massey?), who was a young fellow. Secretary of State, appointed by Gov. Miller. The primary was lopsided. Barnes won handedly, but he was forced into a run-off. And so (Massey?), since he had not done as well as he had expected, decided he would suspend his campaign, which meant that Roy Barnes was elected governor of the State. And so he goes into office with a - with a

strong platform -

AUDIENCE: What year, Bob?

SHORT: Education -

AUDIENCE: What year?

SHORT: What year did - ? That was in 1998. He goes into office with a strong platform - education, transportation, environment, water and that sort of thing. And he immediately moved to get all these programs through. Now, I must tell you that Gov. Barnes became a very controversial person as governor of the state. He did several things that people didn't really approve of, but were beneficial to the state of Georgia at that time. The - his education turn-around offended some of the school teachers, because he - he wanted them to teach school. He changed the Georgia flag, which, of course, upset a number of people. He took off the Confederate battle flag and designed a new flag. That did not sit with a lot of people. He supported an outer perimeter highway, that was to run about twenty, twenty-five miles around the city of Atlanta, from I-285 - which, if you go to Atlanta and get off on 285, you know that highway is - is - has become a major thoroughfare. So, as I look up here - I'm going to tell you a couple things about Roy Barnes that I want you to know.

BARNES: Remember I speak last!

SHORT: We'll remember that. I - I have - we'll talk about some of his major accomplishments - his tax payer (ability?) rights, that sort of thing, as we have our conversation. But I want to quote to you some things that others have said about Roy Barnes. Roy Barnes received the Kennedy Foundation's Profiles in Courage award in - for his work on changing the Georgia flag. He was also chosen as one of the best governor's in the nation for fiscal management by the Cato Institute, which we all know is a non-partisan public policy agency. This is what they said about Roy Barnes. "Roy Barnes has a strong record on spending discipline in a short time. He has also been consistent on tax cuts. His tax cut agenda has been largely focused on property taxes. He has proposed a property tax cut almost every year since being elected, equaling a total of 249 billion dollars. He is even on record as opposing an increase on the state gasoline tax, which is still at 7.9 percent. The second lowest in the nation." The institute also praised Barnes for cutting the unemployment insurance tax that resulted in saving businesses and workers in Georgia more than one billion dollars. We are fortunate today to - to have former Gov. Roy Barnes with us. And I hope you will give him a good and unbiased welcome.

BARNES: Okay, we were talking - I spoke to a group of would-be legislators about a year ago. One of the things I think is wrong with the nation and the state is that politicians worry too much about being elected or reelected particularly, rather than doing something while they're there. Now, I didn't like - I don't like to get deep in my office. I'm very competitive. But if it's a choice between doing some things that need to be done, and getting the lead - this is what we get elected for! It's to do something! We're not indispensable. Politicians are - they think they're indispensable. But the sun will come up in the morning if they get beat, and the government will run. And while you're there, it includes you. The - it may be controversial, but I'm so tired of politicians just skirting the controversy nationwide, (inaudible). We can't continue on with oil - it's killing our trade. We're borrowing money from China to give it to the Saudi Arabians. I mean, that's what we're doing to buy oil. And Social Security, and those are the issues I'd like to hear about. (Inaudible) about the education crisis. And how we're going to compete and all these other things. Congress and the President need to talk about that. And legislature - and the General Assembly here - and governors, they need to be talking about transportation and water and education and these things that - that are necessary for our quality of life and for our very existence, rather than allowing them to be such a crisis that they are insolvable.

AUDIENCE: I guess that your issues were so important at the moment -

BARNES: It was.

AUDIENCE: That you couldn't afford to put it off till the next election.

BARNES: I couldn't, because what I comprehended was that this was going to move right across the - across the border from South Carolina. They - they have a session that goes on forever. And by the late summer, early fall, of 2000, they had made their decision. Rightfully or wrongly! I think it helped beat (Jim Hodges?) there too. (Hodges?) and I, I say we were the last victims of the Civil War.

Laughter