

Mike Bowers interviewed by Bob Short
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Mike Bowers

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BOB SHORT: Hello. I'm Bob Short, and this is Reflections on Georgia Politics sponsored by Young Harris College and the Richard Russell Library at the University of

Georgia. We are delighted today to have as our guest Mike Bowers, former Attorney General, candidate for governor, and now a very successful Atlanta attorney.

Mike, welcome.

MIKE BOWERS: Thanks very much, Bob. I'm honored that you would ask to speak with me.

SHORT: Well, you're the one of the career great people in Georgia politics, and we're very happy to be able to talk to you. Now, before we get into your career as Attorney General, tell us a little bit about Mike Bowers and his early life.

BOWERS: I was born in a farmhouse near Commerce, Georgia. I currently live two miles from that farmhouse, and I pass it every time I go home. I grew up though in the Atlanta area, out east of this office in Little Five Points. My mother and dad moved there right at the beginning of World War II. My dad was a bus driver for Greyhound. We lived in an apartment house there, an old house that had been broke into apartments; went to elementary school in Little Five Points, a year of high school there. And then finally mother and dad got together enough money to buy their first house in 1956, and we moved to DeKalb County. And I went to high school out there, Southwest DeKalb. When I graduated, I went to West Point, spent four years there, seven years in the Air Force. Came back, went to Georgia Law School, and then went to work in the Attorney General's office.

SHORT: How did it happen that you chose a career in public service rather than joining a law firm?

BOWERS: It was probably more by accident than anything, Bob. When I graduated from law school in 1973 – I finished in '73, though I was the class of '74 – the State Attorney General's office was well known for being a place to get experience. Plus at that time it paid within \$1,000 a year of what King & Spalding paid. So it wasn't a real hard choice to make. It was a good job that paid well, and it was the best place in the world to get experience. Plus I was a little older, from having been in the Service for several years, and I wanted to catch up as quickly as possible.

SHORT: Arthur Bolton was the Attorney General at that time?

BOWERS: That's correct. He's a great man.

SHORT: What did you do on Mr. Bolton's staff?

BOWERS: Whatever he told me. And the nice thing about working for Arthur Bolton was he always told you to do what was right. And he was truly a student of the law and a student of government and politics, and he tried to make the state law department or Attorney General's office a professional law office. One of the conditions that he took the office from Carl Sanders,

so he told us quite frequently – was that he'd be independent, be allowed to hire and fire whoever worked there, and be the sole legal advisor of the executive branch of government. So it was a great place to work. Mr. Bolton was a wonderful human being for whom to work. And of the handful of people that have most influenced me professionally in life and personally, Arthur Bolton is one of those people. I will never ever forget him. Along with some other folks, I started a scholarship or a professorship at the law school in his honor, and I'm going to see that that's funded if I live long enough.

SHORT: In 1951 you were appointed Attorney General by George Busbee. We know that when a vacancy in an office like that occurs, the governor has many friends and many friends of friends who call on him to make that appointment. How do you think that he decided to appoint you?

BOWERS: I think it was probably two things. I don't know for sure, and I never talked to Governor Busbee about it. I am forever in his debt, and nobody could have been better to me than George Dekle Busbee. He was a wonderful man, and I revere his memory. Prior to my appointment, there had been a big raucous over the resignation from the Supreme Court of Jesse Bowles and the appointment of Hardy Gregory. And it was...just involved all kinds of lawsuits in state and federal court. And Governor Busbee took an unusual interest in those and actually attended -- I think it was the federal trial, sat at counsel table. And I was trying those cases, so we got to know each other fairly well.

And then Mr. Bolton – the second reason was Mr. Bolton recommended me to him and did so in his typical very strong fashion. And I guess that's why I got appointed. But it was obviously for me an enormous break professionally in life to get that appointment. And it was a great job. It was a great lawyer's job, my goodness. You can't ask for – it was exciting; it was interesting, and now and then you got to do things that really helped people.

SHORT: But if you will, for those who might not know, please tell us the duties of the Attorney General in the state of Georgia.

BOWERS: Well, basically three functions: The first and most important was to ensure that all of the agencies in the executive branch of government – and that's all of state government except the legislature and the court system – that that part of government had legal representation for advice, for going to court, or what have you. That was one function.

The second function was to conduct certain prosecutions, usually involving corruption within state government, like the Sam Caldwell prosecution that occurred right after I took office, the old labor department commissioner.

And then the third function was to represent the State of Georgia when death row inmates appealed their sentences. That took up a good bit of time and effort, although it was a small number of cases.

Those are the three biggest things.

SHORT: You have spoken out in the past in favor of the death penalty. Do you feel still that the death penalty is a good sentence?

BOWERS: I think it is a necessary sentence, Bob. My views have changed some over the years. Maybe it's just the process of getting older. I have represented a death row inmate now that I've been in private practice. I still favor the death penalty for one reason above all others: There's simply no other penalty in some cases that is appropriate for the crime that's been committed. I do not believe that the death penalty is a deterrent. I don't think it's going to reduce crime. It's just that for some crimes there's nothing else that society can do that is appropriate in that case. Some of these torture cases, some of these cases where there are multiple murders, there's just nothing else appropriate. And that was a good part of both the political and legal involvement of the Attorney General while I was in office.

SHORT: The new trend as I see it toward life without parole, seems to attract a lot of jurors nowadays.

BOWERS: Yes.

SHORT: But you don't think that's a good substitute for the death penalty?

BOWERS: Well, it may be. That's not for me to say. That's for the people to say. I will make

a prediction: I think in 10 or 15 years we won't have a death penalty because of the phenomena you just mentioned. It's a tough thing to ask a juror to participate in sentencing someone to death, and most folks don't like to do it. And they would much rather sentence someone to life without parole and not have that on their conscience. So I don't think it's going to last long, I really don't.

SHORT: Mike, you've been described as a fast-pitch-swinging Attorney General who was willing to swing for the fences for open government and open records. You have a wonderful record in that regard. Do you recall some of your activities while Attorney General in those areas?

BOWERS: Oh, yeah. I remember a lot of them.

SHORT: Can you tell us...

BOWERS: Some of the most significant memories I have of being in office deal with open records matters. For example, in the '80s after we in the Attorney General's office had conducted an extensive investigation into ticket fencing with the State Patrol and incurred the wrath of Tom Murphy, whose pet agency, the State Patrol, was, and others, I got into a raucous with the state personnel board over the manner in which they had conducted the hearing of Scott Coleman, who was Terry Coleman's brother. So it was all – you know, there's a lot of

relationships involved. And I sued the personnel board.

They then, along with Governor Harris, filed a Bar complaint against me to get me disbarred for suing my client. As a result, the state Supreme Court issued a new Bar rule that basically – it's still on the books. It basically says if you're a full-time lawyer representing government, it's not a violation of the Code of Ethics for you to sue your own client, which I had to do I felt to ensure that they obeyed the open records law or open meetings law.

Had another one when I had to sue the board of regents over the final list of candidates -- I believe it was for the presidency at Georgia State, when they picked the fellow from South Carolina. Nice guy whose name I cannot remember. He was on that list. They didn't want to turn over the list. I sued them. The Supreme Court said they would turn it loose.

The fact of the matter is for me serving as Attorney General, I was a little bit of a renegade in that I didn't have a lot of political allies, both from the standpoint of what I thought was right and from the standpoint of what was practical, political for me, it was easy to be for open government. I mean, it's just that simple.

SHORT: Well, also you advocated a statewide grand jury.

BOWERS: Yes. And your friend and mine, Zell Miller, took that on as a project one time and got it past the Senate. And the reason I was for it and still am, one of the things that precludes Georgia from dealing with political corruption as effectively as it ought is a very important right that we have to be tried for criminal matters in the county where the crime occurred. Well, if

you take into consideration we have 159 counties, that's breaking it up mighty fine. So if you're got a county commission that's doing something wrong, they're probably doing it in their home county. Who's going to try them? The folks that elected them to office. It doesn't make sense. And I've always thought that especially for certain kinds of crimes we need a statewide grand jury and prosecuting system to remove the potential taint that occurs from trying prominent people on their home turf. That simple.

SHORT: As I recall, both of those issues were not accepted by the Speaker of the House.

BOWERS: That's correct. But now, if I had proposed the plan of salvation and had a certified copy brought down by the archangel, I couldn't have got it through the House of Representatives, Bob. It was that simple. The Speaker and I just couldn't get along.

SHORT: One of your opinions, as I recall, I think it was in 1989, had to do with the deliberations of the state ethics commission in which you ruled that that information was public, even after they had had their deliberations. Do you recall that opinion?

BOWERS: I don't recall it; but as a general rule, any meeting of public officials in Georgia has to be open. Beyond that, I don't remember that specific one. I remember the one when they filed a Bar complaint against me. I remember that well. I remember the fight that went to Supreme Court with the board of regents. I know there were others, but the one you just asked

me about I don't remember.

SHORT: Do you think that Georgia's ethics laws are strong enough?

BOWERS: As a general rule, yes. Do there need to be some modifications? Yeah, there do.

But as a general rule, the laws themselves are strong enough. It's some of the enforcement mechanisms that need to be stronger.

For example, that statewide grand jury and prosecuting system, that would add immensely.

We've got a provision that applies the Code of Ethics to bodies, boards, bureaus, commissions and such – it's in Title 45 – that are created by general law. Well, county commissions and city councils are not created by general law. If you just change that to make the Code of Ethics applicable and applicable with teeth to county commissions and city councils, we would probably be in pretty good shape. We've got a good open meetings and open records law. And as I understand it now, if government loses one of those cases they have to pay the other side's attorney's fees. That makes a lot of sense.

The time that I spent as Attorney General was incredibly exciting. As I had told you before we started this interview, I wouldn't trade it for anything, but I wouldn't go back to it for anything either. And I suppose part of that is just a function of getting older. What I was privileged to see is some extraordinary people, like Zell Miller, like George Busbee, to get to know some people that have made a difference in how our state functions and to whom you have to give a lot of credit in terms of why Georgia positively -- in a positive way -- stands out. Like Carl Sanders,

he wasn't governor while I was here, but I got to know him pretty well. Carl Sanders is an extraordinary leader. George Busbee is one of the finest men I ever met, just a good guy. Miller, brilliant; absolutely brilliant, best politician I have ever put my eyes on. Nobody can hold a candle to him. And I say that in a positive way. He had a sense not only of what people wanted but what they needed, and the best illustration I can give you as a stroke of true political genius is the state lottery and the Hope Scholarship Program. There are few things with the political brilliance of that.

Roy Barnes, he wasn't governor while I was there, but Roy is one of the smartest folks I ever met in politics and an absolute delight. He is one of the funniest human beings I've ever been around. I like Roy.

Sonny Perdue, a fine man, the perfect transition governor for a state like Georgia. He's not threatening to the general public. He's one of them. And his views are theirs. And if we had had a republican like Mike Bowers become the first governor and create and raise a bunch of cain, it would be a disaster. So maybe the people have a lot more sense than I do.

But I saw this political change. I saw Georgia go from a one-party state, virtually all democratic from top to bottom, and I saw it change in a very short period of time to a two-party state, and now it's become another one-party state with a different party. And it's all happened since I've been involved in politics, a very short period of time, 25 years.

SHORT: Before we get into some of your reflections on politics, I'd like to ask you this question...

BOWERS: Sure.

SHORT: This is moving the clock way ahead, and it's something that has really disturbed me. I get political blogs on the computer all the time, and it seems to me that some of them are unethical, defamation of character, libelous, outright lies. Is there any legal defense for a person who is a subject of those blogs?

BOWERS: Yes. Any time – the answer is yes. Any time anyone makes a statement about you that is false that tends to detract from your character or reputation and they publish that, however it's – publication need only involve one additional person. That is defamation under Georgia law, which makes the party making the statement and publication liable, yes. Yes, there is no question. I've tried defamation cases. They're rare and they're tough cases, but, yes, you can do something about it.

SHORT: Well, if I were a politician nowadays running for public office, I would be tempted to do something about it because they're getting pretty bad.

BOWERS: They are. I'll tell you the rules I follow, if nothing else, Bob, to keep my own sanity with the press: Number one, always call them back. Two, I've made myself available at all times. I've been interviewed in a barber's chair about the flag one time. Three, tell them the

truth; no matter how bad it is, tell them the truth. Four, never read what they write about you, and that pertains to what you just asked about. If you read what the press writes about you and you're in politics, two things always happen: You get your sense of your own importance overly inflated because you're not as good as they say on any given day or you get so deflated you can't stand yourself and you're never as bad as they say. So, I have never...I do not to this day, read what is written about me. And rule five, the last thing, when I was in politics and in government I always tried to do more than they could report on. And you never had to sell a story that way. They were always coming to you.

SHORT: Prior to your last election as Attorney General, you switched from the Democratic party to the Republican party.

BOWERS: Uh-huh.

SHORT: Let's talk for a minute about why you did that.

BOWERS: Well, one reason is, other than Zell, I didn't get along too well with the democratic leadership, and it was particularly the Speaker. He and I could not get along, and I am sure it was not all his fault. I'd like to think it wasn't all my fault. We just didn't get along. I don't know all the reasons, but we couldn't have agreed on anything. That was part of it.

Part of it, I didn't like Bill Clinton. I just couldn't stand him. I still don't. And it's not because

of any misdeeds; it's because he's a draft dodger. And I lost 20 classmates in Vietnam, 20 West Point classmates, and I just don't like draft dodgers.

SHORT: So you switched to the Republican party and sought reelection.

BOWERS: Yep.

SHORT: And you were reelected.

BOWERS: Yep. And I was told I was going to get beat. I was told you're a dead duck.

SHORT: As I recall, the Speaker was very active in that campaign.

BOWERS: He was.

SHORT: And he actually had a good friend run against you...

BOWERS: Wesley Dunn.

SHORT: Wesley, yeah.

BOWERS: Wesley Dunn, who I see every once in a while now, and we're on very good terms. But he got Wesley to run against me, and it turned out pretty good for me. I was pleased.

SHORT: You won very handily. Let's go back for a minute to 1964 when President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act I believe.

BOWERS: Right.

SHORT: And remarked to Senator Russell, you know, "Friend Dick, I'm turning the South over to the Republicans." And yet it took in Georgia some 30-odd years before the Republican party really became the ruling party in the state. How do you think that transpired?

BOWERS: Well, I think President Johnson was absolutely correct. The Voting Rights Act undoubtedly was needed when it came into being. It actually came into being in 1965, but it was effective November the 1st of '64. It has probably done as much to ensure that the South as a block went from being the solid democratic South to becoming the solid republican South, and it did so by making the democratic party so heavily dependent on minority vote. For better or worse, that occurred. And by being so dependent on minority vote, the democratic party could not appeal to middle white America...just can't. And Mr. Obama, or Senator Obama, is suffering some of that today.

Why did it take so long in Georgia as compared to other states? We were probably the last state

in the union to elect a republican governor following reconstruction. I think it's in large part because of the skill and political acumen of the democratic leaders that we had, the George Busbees, the Zell Millers, Tom Murphy -- give the devil his due -- and others. They were very skilled at maintaining coalitions between urban blacks and rural conservative whites, extraordinarily skilled. And they kept the democratic party in power for much longer than it might have otherwise stayed in power.

SHORT: 1994 was a big year for the republicans in Georgia. That was the year as I recall that you were reelected.

BOWERS: Yes.

SHORT: And that followed a period when the republican party had presented good candidates. Bo Callaway had won the congressional seat in 1966...

BOWERS: Right.

SHORT: No, I'm sorry, 1964. He ran for governor in 1966 and actually won the election, popular vote; but Lester Maddox won in the legislature. And then came along Paul Coverdell and then came along Senator Mattingly, and those I think were -- could be considered the strong components of the republican party at that time. Now that the republicans have succeeded in

taking over Georgia politics, what's on the horizon?

BOWERS: I don't see – in what time I have left, I don't see Georgia changing. I don't see it changing...I don't see us having a democratic governor for a long time. I don't see us having a democratic House and Senate for a long time. I don't see the majority of our congressional delegation or either U.S. Senator being a democrat for a long time. I probably...absent some major scandal or major demographic shift, it is not going to happen.

Now, is that good or bad? I'll leave that for others to say; but it is not going to happen. And it is a function of demographics. As long as Georgia stays about 70 percent white, it will stay republican, and that's just the way it is.

SHORT: You mentioned the governors that you served with, Busbee, Harris, and Miller. I'm sure you remember the legendary battles between Governor Miller and Speaker Murphy.

BOWERS: Yep, participated in a couple of them.

SHORT: Really? You didn't stay neutral?

BOWERS: No. I was on Zell's side.

SHORT: Were you?

BOWERS: Right.

SHORT: Were there any issues before your political department at that time that you had to decide because of the feud?

BOWERS: Yeah. There was one I remember very well, and it really wasn't that close a call. But it involved Miller, Governor Miller...well, he was Lieutenant Governor at the time...Lieutenant Governor Miller, Tom Moreland who was highway commissioner, myself on one side, and the Speaker and others on the other side. And it was over the funding of the Department of Transportation with the motor fuel tax, whether that – what control, if any, the legislature had over the motor fuel tax. And I think the law is very clear--it still is; none, it has no control whatsoever.

SHORT: Speaking of the Department of Transportation, Governor Sanders in 1962 or three got some legislation passed that would remove the board – the choosing of the board from the governor's appointment to the legislature electing them. Do you think that that has kept politics out of the transportation board?

BOWERS: Absolutely not. And someone long before me said this: You can't take politics out of politics. I mean, it is as political as you can get. When you elect the members of a highway

board or a transportation board, they are elected by members of the House and Senate. It can't get more political than that. What it probably has had the effect of doing, Bob, is to make the board of transportation even more powerful than it ever was. And it is in some respects the most powerful entity in Georgia government because it has independent automatic funding that doesn't have to go through the legislature. When you pump gas, DOT gets money.

SHORT: Is there a way to prevent that? Can some program be devised, some legislation be devised that would prevent the members of the General Assembly from electing each other?

BOWERS: Yeah. You could put some prohibitions on who serves on the board. I don't – that ain't going to happen. That's not going to happen in the short term. It would take a constitutional amendment. It doesn't have a lot of sex appeal. That's not an issue that's going to get a lot of folks interested, in my judgment. So I'm not sure it would be worth a political chess it would take to get it through the legislature.

SHORT: In 1997 you resigned from the office of Attorney General to run for governor.

BOWERS: Right.

SHORT: Tell us about that race.

BOWERS: It was stormy...stormy. And it was of my own doing; I'm the captain of my own ship. When I started running, I knew that there were some things I had to reveal, and namely an extramarital affair, which I did. And it made for a stormy campaign. Would I do it again?

Yeah, I'd do it again. I learned a lot. I'm a better person. My wife and I have a better marriage because of it. I don't have any regrets, Bob. Life's too short, and I've been very fortunate. I've been able to be reasonably successful practicing law and made more money than I ever dreamed I would make, so I don't have any regrets at all.

SHORT: Your opponent was well know and well financed, yet you almost beat him.

BOWERS: Yeah. And, you know, almost ain't good enough in politics. It's kind of like baseball. If you almost hit it over the fence, it don't count. It's not a homerun. But, I mean, it was a wonderful learning experience, learning this state. I benefit from having run now...I benefit in terms of my business here in this law firm.

SHORT: Well, with the exception of the Speaker, how did you get along with the members of the House? How'd you get along with Denmark Groover?

BOWERS: Well, very well. I like Denmark Groover, and I think he liked me. I got along with all of them, and I bear no ill will towards the Speaker. I had talked to his daughter before he passed away, and I told her, for what it's worth – she and my wife are on a commission together.

And I said for what it's worth, I forgive; I hope there's no hard feelings on the part of your family...life is too short to bear grudges. And when you do, you're letting the other fellow run your life, and I'm not going to do that. I don't – I look back on it and laugh about things more than anything else. It was an incredible learning experience. It was a chance to do things as a truck driver's son – my dad never finished elementary school. I've been able to do things he would have never dreamed of...I never dreamed of. And I don't bear any ill will. I got along with most of the members of the legislature. I'm sure there's some that disliked me intensely. Are there any that I dislike intensely? No. Are there some that I don't trust? Yes. Are there some that I wouldn't particularly want to represent? Yeah; but if they paid me, I probably would.

But all in all, it was incredibly exciting on a day-to-day level dealing with legal issues -- just beyond belief. I got to argue in the U.S. Supreme Court a case involving –

SHORT: Yeah, I was going to ask you about that.

BOWERS: Oh, it's an unbelievable experience for a lawyer. I got to know judges and lawyers all over Georgia. When I first got hired, Arthur Bolton had me prosecuting judges for the Judicial Qualifications Commission. Just an unbelievable experience for a young lawyer. I got to meet President Carter while he was governor and met with him after he got elected. That's not things that many folks get to do. So on a day-to-day level, it was interesting, exciting, and frequently very worthwhile. We got to help some people along the way.

On a political level, I saw Georgia change from a one-party democratic state to a one-party republican state almost while I was sitting there watching it go on around me. And all of that's just fascinating, fascinating.

SHORT: Let me quote you something I read in the *Georgia Trend* Magazine, which has chosen you for many, many years as one of the 100 most influential people in Georgia. Here's what they say: "Even though the former Attorney General Bowers and one-time gubernatorial candidate, says 'I will never run or serve again,' he still swings with plenty of statewide clout." You have no interest in running for public office again?

BOWERS: No, I don't. And it is not out of bitterness; it is not out of any factor other than I have a family, I have a farm, I've got eight grandchildren – my wife and I do – and I'm more interested in that and this law firm. This law firm has been so good to me, and I've tried to be good to it. I work with an extraordinary group of young lawyers, men and women, and I just...I don't want to do it, Bob. And plus, I'm too old. I'm 66. Life moves on. Now, am I saying John McCain's too old to be President? No. He's a different fellow than I am. But for me with my family circumstances, I'm too old and not interested. Will I continue to be interested in what goes on around me? Yes. Do I care about good government? Absolutely. And I'll try to support good candidates. I'll speak out on issues when it is appropriate, but I enjoy what I'm doing and I wouldn't trade this whole experience for anything.

SHORT: Well, as you look back at your career both in and out of public life, what is your fondest memory or memories?

BOWERS: It would be a handful of cases where I felt fortunate enough to have made a difference in that case, and making a difference in that case made a difference in somebody's life. I can tell you real quick there's not many. One was the U.S. Supreme Court case, getting to argue that case. I had worked on it with a Special Assistant Attorney General, David Walbert. He had argued it the first time it went to Supreme Court; I argued it the second time. I think what we did in that case overall is to limit the impact of the Voting Rights Act, which, before the case, the Justice Department was essentially saying meant that states such as Georgia had to maximize minority voting opportunity, minority electoral opportunities, gerrymander to ensure the maximum number of black congressmen or what have you. That case changed that interpretation. So that's important.

Another case was the prosecution of Sam Caldwell. I had -- still to this day have nothing personal against him, his memory, or his family. But that case helped clean up Georgia government. And it sent a signal if you do this kind of thing somebody's going to prosecute you other than the federal government. And I think we made Georgia's government a little better.

I had a case after I came in this law firm where eight ladies came to me that were being discriminated against on the basis of race. One of them was a first cousin of mine. We took the case, had no idea it would turn out as it did and we got a \$24 million verdict. We collected 18.5 and made all of them millionaires, did pretty well for me and some of my law partners. And I'll

never forget the jury coming back with that verdict. It was just – I thought I was going to cry.

I represented a family four or five years ago from down here in Butts County whose property had been condemned 35 years ago and they were left with a 45-acre tract that they couldn't get into right next to the state prison at Jackson. And they had come to me when I was Attorney General, and I couldn't figure out a way to help them. They came to me later, and one of my young partners, David Marmins and I figured out how we could help them. And we got them access, and it was – I'll never forget when the jury came back with its verdict, it was a wonderful feeling.

And the last one I'll mention occurred in December. I represented a young man who was accused of some crimes. He'd been a police chief over in Jefferson in my home county, Jackson County. And he got indicted three times, and we beat every indictment. And when that grand jury the last time came back with a no bill, that was thrilling, just absolutely thrilling. He just cried so bad I threw him my handkerchief. And he was crying, and he gave me these handkerchiefs. I don't carry engraved handkerchiefs, that's not me. But he gave me these MJB-engraved handkerchiefs for Christmas last year because I gave him a handkerchief at the grand jury. And, yeah, those are some of the most poignant memories. There are a lot of others. I could go on for hours. I've been – I have had some of the most interesting cases that you could ever, ever imagine. Some won, some lost; but I wouldn't trade it. And I hope there will be some more, hope there will be some more.

SHORT: Your biggest disappointment?

BOWERS: Personal. Not living up to the standards I should have and disappointing the family. But it worked out, and I'm thankful. I have no excuse, but you asked; that's it. Professional disappointment, I was disappointed to lose the republican nomination for governor in '98, but as I look back and as it has turned out, it was the greatest blessing imaginable. I would – I would – on a higher level, political level, I would like to see a little more attention by government to the legal system. It's so delicate. It doesn't have any army, doesn't have police, it can't appropriate money; and yet it's the last place to protect our liberties, the last bastion of liberties, the jury trial, so on, and making sure that we fund it in a way that will attract bright people. I can't imagine why somebody wants to be a judge today; it doesn't pay anything. My wife and I have a 44-year-old son that's a judge, and I think why are you doing this? You don't make didley. But he does, and he loves it. Making sure that the judicial system is funded in a way that will attract and keep good people, I'd like to see more of that. I'm a little disappointed. My party is not really fond of lawyers, judges, and the legal system, and that's not healthy.

SHORT: How would you like to be remembered?

BOWERS: I would like to be – that's easy. I would like to be remembered in the same breath as Oglethorpe's motto: "Nescit Cedere." "He did not know how to give up." That's how I'd like to be remembered.

SHORT: And that's how you will be remembered.

BOWERS: Well, I don't know. That isn't for me to say.

SHORT: Thank you, Mike.

BOWERS: Thank you, Bob.

SHORT: I really appreciate it.

BOWERS: Well, I'm delighted to get to chat with you.

SHORT: Well, thank you.

BOWERS: It's an honor.

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