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BOB SHORT: I'm Bob Short, and this is Reflections on Georgia Politics, sponsored by the Richard Russell Library at the University of Georgia. Our guest is former Atlanta Mayor and President of the Buckhead Coalition, Mayor Sam Massell. Welcome, Mr. Mayor.

SAM MASSELL: Glad to be here.

SHORT: You know, the Massell name is as much Atlanta as Five Points, Westview Cemetery, Henry W. Grady and Peachtree Street. So let's begin by talking about your father, Sam Massell, Sr., your Uncle Ben, who were pioneers in the growth of Atlanta. Tell us about them.

MASSELL: Well, my dad was born in Atlanta, but my Uncle Ben and the other brother, Levi -- there were three brothers -- were both in Lithuania and came here as children with their parents, who opened a hotel -- well, more retail, I guess, a mixed grocery business in Atlanta, and after school they -- the three of them got involved in real estate development. And frankly, they built most of the apartment buildings on Boulevard and Parkway and Ponce de Leon, that northeast quadrant of Atlanta. In fact, you can still spot their buildings because they had an in-house architect and they had -- each building was designed with a Spanish tile parapet at the second floor. So you can spot them in business properties as well. Their little strip centers, there's several of their stores still standing in Little Five Points, and the Grant Park area and Emory and elsewhere. So, they were major developers and then the Depression came. Actually, it's interesting. I ran across a little catalogue called the Massell Blue Book recently, over a hundred pages of properties that they owned throughout Atlanta, and this was back when the three of them were together. The Depression came and they busted out like everybody else, and my dad then pursued the legal profession, went to Atlanta Law School and he practiced law for many

years. He knew a lot about real estate, but after that, he was nervous about debt and wouldn't buy anything unless he could buy it for cash. He didn't want any mortgages. He didn't want to have to borrow any money and owe it to anybody. On the other hand, Ben, the other brother, went back into business and amassed another fortune building most of the midtown office buildings along Peachtree and West Peachtree in particular.

My dad was a good influence on me from childhood. For one thing, I had a work ethic that was inborn. I just believed, though I was never told I had to go out and work, but I believed I was supposed to work, and I always worked from childhood up, whether it was selling Coca-Colas with a stand at the corner of North Decatur and Oakdale, or whether it was selling flower seeds door-to-door. And there was an old national newspaper -- I wonder if it's still around -- called Grit, and I used to sell subscriptions to that. But I was always selling something, even when I later went off to college at the University of Georgia. I became a business manager of the literary magazine called the Georgia Cracker, and so I made a tidy sum on that at that time. But I mention this because I don't remember ever being told, "You need to go out and make money. You need to earn your way." I wasn't charged room and board or anything like that. I had an allowance like other kids, but that was one good message I learned just by osmosis, I guess, being around my father. He also had a love of politics. He, in fact, as a hobby he edited and published a monthly newspaper for a while called the Atlanta Democrat, and when I was still in high school, I would go to his office and help some with circulation, selling ads occasionally and whatever. It was, like I say, strictly a hobby. It's not a way to make a living, but Dad loved politics. He used to take me around to political campaigns and to meet candidates and -- I

remember once seeing old Gene Talmadge on the back of a pickup truck, somewhere down near Macon as I recall, talking to the farmers and he took off his wool hat and handed it down and said, "Boys, give me a nickel or dime. You know, help me. I would appreciate it. Pass the hat around." And I remember turning to my dad and saying, "You know, that's no money at all." And he says, "You don't understand. If they give him a nickel or dime, they're supporting him. They're going to be for him. They've got an investment." And I teach that to budding politicians to this day, ask for a dollar. Don't be shy, and once you get that, you've got a voter, you know. But anyway, he loved politics. He felt that a Jewish person couldn't get elected citywide in Atlanta, and I remember him discussing that in different occasions, and I remember once asking him, "How do you know? A Jewish person has never run citywide," you know. So I broke the mold, I guess, when I did run citywide for the President of the Board of Aldermen and got elected to that.

But before that actually -- earlier political involvement started -- well, I'm going to tell you a little anecdote because it sounds so good on the tape, you know. No one reviewing this tape will ever have heard of a first quarter freshman in a college being president of his chapter fraternity as a first quarter freshman. And I'll have to explain how that came about. I went to the University of Georgia, started in 1944. I graduated at 16 and went there to get some education before I got drafted -- which I knew was imminent for World War II. And most of the able-bodied men were off at war, so most of the fraternities were closed entirely. The fraternity I pledged, Phi Epsilon Pi, had one member in a little apartment over an office in downtown Athens, and he pledged three of us. And then he failed and left school, and so the alumni had to rush up

there and initiate the three of us and hold an election. And I didn't need but one more vote. I had my vote sewed up, see, so anyway, I won by a landslide. That was my first political coup. But what I was going to tell you, my first really elected office was in a little town north of Atlanta, an incorporated city called Mountain Park, Georgia. It's chartered by the State of Georgia like the City of Atlanta is, but on a much smaller scale. It's a resort area with a couple of lakes and a swimming pool. And at that time, it was the only city in the United States that we knew of where you could vote and hold office and not have your legal residence there. It was chartered that if you were a property owner, you could vote and hold office, which would be unconstitutional now. But I owned a little cabin up there -- I bought a cabin and I was single, and it was sort of a place to get away and rest, and I got on their city council for a couple years. I don't know how much politics you want in this political interview, but it was real grass roots stuff. In fact, I'll start with my introduction when the political bosses, Charlie Johnson and Lee Wolfe asked me if I'd like to run, and I said yes. Election was coming up. The way they run is, everybody just puts their name in the pot and the top five are elected, and I decided to take it seriously and I went to the city clerk's home, Inez Logue, I remember, with my then girlfriend, Doris Middlebrooks, who is now Doris Massell, my wife of 55 years or better now, and started copying down the list of registered voters. There was a couple hundred of them. I was going to take it seriously and write them letters. And she said, "Sam, you don't have a chance," and I said, "Why?" She said, "They found out you're Jewish." I said, "Well, what do you mean? Found out? It's not a secret, you know, first of all, and I only live a few miles from here down in Atlanta. And who is they?" Well, it turned out they are the same two people that asked me to

run. And I went to them and asked them. They said, "Oh, yes. We don't want a Jew on the council." So anyway, long story short, I went ahead and ran. I lost, but a moral victory. I came in sixth out of the ten that were running, or eight. I forget now how many, and the five were elected and I was the sixth one. But a month later one of the five sold his property and moved to Florida, and the other four elected me to fill the vacancy. Now, I will add to this. I don't know that it is any relationship, but my cabin was seriously burned down about a year later. So it was a, like I say, a place that could be pretty rough. Herman Talmadge owned a place up there and some other political people of sorts.

Anyway, after that, my next elected office was a member of the what was then called the White Democratic Executive Committee, which is interesting in that, by its name itself, you can see they weren't allowing blacks to participate. It was to hold the primary. These were the people who established the rules, charged the fees, took the oath of candidacy and so forth, and there were two elected from each ward in Atlanta, eight wards, sixteen members. And two blacks came to the White Democratic Executive Committee to qualify for their ward, A. T. Walden, who was a very prominent attorney, and Niles Amos, who was a very successful druggist. And the committee turned them down, saying, "We don't have black candidates," and so they took it to court and they won. And out of the 16 members, 15 of them quit. It left one member, wonderful person, Margaret McDougal, whose husband was very prominent in road-building in Georgia. But anyway, I contacted Margaret -- I didn't even know her then -- and I learned about this, and I said, "I'll run for my ward and I'll help you find others to run," and we did. And of course we changed -- dropped the name "White", and it's just the Democratic Executive

Committee, and I was the secretary and she was the chairman, and it was with our effort, my motion and she concurred, that we turned the elections into nonpartisan city elections. Prior to that, you had to be nominated in a primary to be in the general election, and there weren't enough Republicans in Atlanta out of the closet that could afford to hold a primary to hire the poller, because of renting the machines and so forth. So they were really kept out of government and I didn't think that was right. I thought for local government, although I'm a Democrat -- have been all my life and expect to be long after this tape is completed -- the policing and filling potholes and so forth is not partisan in my opinion, and so -- and Bill Hartsfield, who was then mayor, agreed with us, so we got the legislature to change it to a nonpartisan election, so that then eliminated the Executive Committee. They were -- like I said, I served on that for eight years, two terms.

My next office was one with President of the Board of Aldermen, and it's interesting on reflection how that came about. I'll share with you quickly, that as secretary of the Executive Committee -- then called the Democratic Executive Committee, I was qualifying candidates as they would come in, and at the time Ivan Allen was running for mayor, and a very fine legislator, member of the House representing Fulton County, Muggsy Smith, was one of his opponents. There were several others too, but Muggsy was, I thought, a real qualified person who had been good to Atlanta when we had three House members and one Senate member, and Ivan was very well-qualified too. So I thought, well, they shouldn't be running against each other. We ought to talk -- we the community leaders, whatever -- ought to talk Muggsy into running for President of the Board of Aldermen, which is now the city council, but it was called the Board of

Aldermen then, and then later he can run for mayor from that steppingstone. And so every time I would see or talk to a major political person, I would suggest this, and I wasn't getting very far with it, but one of those that came up to qualify for Board of Aldermen was Everett Milliken, who had been a state senator, and I mentioned this to him, and he said, "Yes, somebody has to beat Lee Evans," who was the incumbent. Because of his opposition to the -- one of the public housing projects in Atlanta, which Everett thought was a racial effort opposition, and that Lee Evans needed to be defeated. And I had never thought about it for that reason. As I said, I was just thinking that Muggsy ought to be saved, and so I thought about it that night, and I decided I might run. And I asked three people, my wife, I asked A. T. Walden, that black member of the Executive Committee with whom I had become friends, and Helen Bullard, who was the political guru of that era. She had handled Ivan Allen's campaign, Bill Hartsfield's campaigns, my campaigns, Sydney Marcos's. She handled so many good key elections in Atlanta politics, and they all three said go for it, and so the next day I qualified myself and ran for that office and won it without a runoff. Four years later I got reelected over five opponents without a runoff to the President of the Board of Aldermen, so I served that for eight years, and then Ivan Allen was not running for reelection for mayor, and so that was an opportunity then, and it was something I thought I could make a contribution, so I qualified to run for mayor. Now, this nonpartisan thing that I created came back to bite me, because my main opponent was Rodney Cook, a Republican who was a fine person, but you know, otherwise he might not have ever gotten there. So he was my main opponent. There were others too, and I did win that in a runoff, and became mayor. I might mention that in the politics during the years as Board of Alderman, Rodney and Richard

Freeman, who was another Republican who later became a federal judge, who is now deceased, and maybe one or two others -- well, Q.V. Williamson was a Republican, but Richard and Rodney and I were the ones that overturned the ward courtesy arrangement in Atlanta where the council members had veto rights over liquor licenses, and it was a very dangerous situation for corruption, and we were the young turks that took them on and won. And so that was a major victory.

When I was President of the Board of Aldermen I also created the community relations commission because of the frictions between races at that time. I subsequently, when I was mayor making appointments, one of the people I appointed was Andy Young to be chairman of it, and he did an excellent job and he credits me from time to time about giving him that forum so then he could run for office at higher levels, which he did successfully. But in addition to just race relations that the community relations commission could handle, I felt there were other interests, so I appointed someone to represent senior citizens. They had issues also. And I appointed someone to represent youth, and the young man was a high school student, a black student that I appointed to represent youth, who later became a multimillionaire as CEO of Air Atlanta and some other business interests. And I also felt the gay community needed to be represented, and I appointed a person at that time who represented, who was head of the gay rights movement or whatever it was called, the organization. He has since passed away. It was interesting -- and I'm going to have to add this indictment to this interview -- you might want to cut it out later, but when I would make appointments and make other -- issue other directives, they would be announced at my Monday morning news conference, which was a regular feature

in the mayor's office, and I had this list of appointments, and it had the names of the people and what they represented and where they worked. Well, the young man who was homosexual worked for the Atlanta Journal, and Rollie Bryans was the Atlanta Journal City Hall reporter, and he saw that before I had actually verbalized it, and he went to the telephone and called Jack Tolliver, the then publisher of the Journal, and came back and sent me a little note that Tolliver didn't want me to appointment him. Well, I did anyway because I felt that reason was prejudicial and they didn't give me any other reason not to appoint him. The interesting anecdote is that, when they listed all of them in the newspaper the next day, they didn't list that he was with the Journal. It just didn't give him any affiliation, which tells you something, I guess, about how times have changed for sure.

But anyway, on the mayor's race, it was heated. I was able to bring together the black community solidly behind me. Now it's interesting, incidentally, that I had a black opponent even that first time.

SHORT: Harris Tate.

MASSELL: Harris Tate, and he was articulate, attractive, intelligent, had a following. He had already been elected to the Board of Education. He was head of the Teacher's Guild or something like that, yet he didn't get -- he didn't score at all because the black leadership told him, "We cannot support you. We don't have enough to elect you." And most people still vote along racial lines. Whites do, as well as blacks do, but -- and other ethnic groups as well. But

it's interesting because this first time I ran for mayor, I got 90 percent of the black vote and 10 percent of the white vote. Four years later, I got 90 percent of the white vote and 10 percent of the black vote, because at that time by then the African American community was a majority of registered voters, and they turned out better as well, and they made it clear to me. The leadership told me in advance that, "You've been wonderful. You've done much more than we could have ever asked for. You did things that we would never have anticipated, but we can now elect our own." And I understood that. Didn't like it, but I understood it, and it was very normal and Maynard Jackson ran and won an honest election. It's interesting that we could tell the difference when we got into the runoff when we had a boiler room set up where you have a bank of telephones and everybody's calling down the list of registered voters. And in the white areas where they were calling, seems like every third person was no longer a registered voter, had moved or died or whatever. And the voter registration lists had not been pruned, and so had we known that in advance, we would have known we were going to lose. I still would have run. I believe the same way four years later when a friend, Sydney Marcos, who had been my roommate in college incidentally, ran for mayor. I felt that he didn't have a chance to win and told him so, but I felt the white community needed somebody to run, and you know, just facts of life that they needed somebody to rally around, and for him to go ahead and it would build his stature, which it did dramatically. But anyway, as mayor, there were many opportunities to do things. As an office it has a great deal of power. You know back then, under that charter, it was what you call a weak mayor system. The council had equal management rights over the department heads with the mayor, and so it was where you had to exert your own prowess, your

own philosophy, your own persuasive powers over council members or whatever. And I've shared with some people, they seem surprised, but the mayor doesn't always go to the council member for his or her vote. The mayor might go outside to the person who owns that council member, and that's putting it harshly, but one who has contributed, supported, who's, you know, his ally to get that vote. But anyway, on council -- I mean, as mayor, they were great opportunities because of the power, and I guess the thing I'm proudest of would probably be creating MARTA, of getting it passed. We had to get the state legislature to allow us to put on a sales tax, and at that time, the -- no city, county authority, Board of Education or anybody else had a sales tax, just the State of Georgia, 3 percent. And we had to convince them to let an authority have a sales tax. And then we had to convince the public to vote for it, because it had to be a referendum. And it only passed by a few hundred votes, and so anybody who helped, of course, could take full credit. I did some of everything trying to pass it. I even went up in a helicopter over the expressway during the rush hour with a P.A. system, you know, saying, "If you want to get out of this mess, vote yes," and this being the Bible belt, they thought God was telling them what to do, you know. But we worked hard at getting the referendum passed, and that is not only a brick and mortar improvement, but it's a human improvement of services, of social service, of -- mobility is like man's fifth freedom, you know, and without that, you're imprisoned. The poor are in their neighborhoods. They can't get to shopping or to schools or church or parks or anything else, and so it was extremely important in my opinion and we got it passed and many hundreds of thousands of people use it daily, you know, so it's a good service, and I hope it gets expanded more and more.

But one of my big fights with it was getting the fare subsidized. That was my change. Ivan Allen, my predecessor, had tried to get MARTA with an ad valorem tax and that failed. That's a real estate tax, and so my approach, I repeat, was with the sales tax, but the subsidizer failed. So before they had a private bus company that was about to bankrupt that Georgia Power had owned. It was 60 cents a ride, plus a nickel transfer, and so I said -- I figured mathematically how we could drop the fare -- in fact, I wanted to do it free, and Charlie Brown, who was a county commissioner at that time, opposed that. He wanted it 25 cents. He was concerned that if it was free, the winos, they were then called, not homeless, the winos would sleep on it, and so we compromised at 15 cents. Even then, I remember Henry Dodson, who was a member of the Board of Aldermen, rode around town in a little Volkswagen Bug with a P.A. system on it saying, "It's a trick. If they can't do it for 60 cents, how they going to do it for 15 cents?" You know, and it was hard for the man on the street to understand how we could, but I went around the community with a blackboard and chalk to show the average domestic worker what their weekly salary was and how much their transportation was costing them, and how much it would now cost them the next day, because we were going to buy the existing buses and drop the fare immediately. And they would actually have money to put in their pocket. It would be a savings to them, not another expense. And that was the truth, and it was important. So that was -- another thing I was able to do was make appointments that I guess you'd call it bold back then, it must sound like trite stuff now, but I appointed the first woman to city council in Atlanta's 125-year history. Panke Bradley, who was a city planner, did a great job. And like I say now, it just sounds like nothing. In fact, I gave them an inch and they took over, the majority of the council,

president of the council, the mayor, all of them are women, you know, but -- and they do a good job. But back then, I mean, they said, "Where's she going to go to the restroom?" I mean, it was just shocking to everybody that I would appoint a woman to the city council. I appointed the first black department heads. I had not made any promises or commitments to do so, but then under the charter of Atlanta, the department heads had tenure. They had terms for the six years, and unless one retired or his term was over, you couldn't make appointments like today. They could appoint thousands -- in fact, that's one of the problems. Atlanta back then had about 3,000 city employees. Today they've got about 9,000 city employees, same size population, a city of half a million people, so that's a jobs program which I don't think is the purpose of city government, but that's a political issue. But my first vacancy was in personnel, and I thought what a wonderful place if I could appoint a black head of personnel, that would really create some opportunities for the minorities. And so I called in the black leadership, Danny King and Leroy Johnson and just the whole crew of all the leaders, and I said, "I'll appoint a black if y'all will help me find one that's qualified." And it's interesting, because today in some places, they all appoint my brother or my cousin or this one or that one or whatever. Back then they were as serious as I about trying to find somebody who is well-qualified. And I was one that had to call my chief administrative officer, George Berry, every so often and say, "Hey, call them up. You know, I need to appoint -- I need to fill that vacancy," and push them. Anyway, we finally found a man in New York who handled -- who was head of personnel for the YMCA and he came down and did an excellent job. It was interesting what a good thing that did for race relations, because here were white people who had never worked with a black, much less underneath one,

and he was so good. We had no complaints, no problems, and he served a whole four-year term and went on after that to the state and did an excellent job with -- and the second one was equally as well. Head of public works and so forth. But those are the opportunities you have when you're in public office, and I'm proud of that, that we were able to do things that were considered progressive and bold at the time. Then -- where do you want me to go from here?

SHORT: I'd like to back up a minute, Mr. Mayor, at the point where you were at the University of Georgia, but then you went to Emory.

MASSELL: Well, actually I went to all of them. It's a little embarrassing, explaining how and why, but I went first to Georgia immediately from high school. In fact, enrolled in the summer of 1944, so I could get what I could under my belt before I was drafted. And I got so involved -- I mean, I was running from one meeting to another. As I said before, if you were of the male gender, you could be president of everything on campus overnight, and I was in every organization and every group, and there was just so much that I said -- you know, I couldn't say no. I kept getting more and more involved, and it was eating into my academic responsibility, and so I said, I'm going to quit -- the only way to do it is cold turkey. I'm going to leave and go to Emory. In fact, it was middle of the quarter, because Emory was on the semester system then, but I quit and went to Emory. And for a year I didn't do anything but go to class, go home, study, go to bed. Go to class, go home, study, go to bed. I did that every day for a whole year, and then I was drafted. Then -- and the war about over, I went in the Air Force. I taught school

in the Air Force in administrative management, and I was so anxious to get home, or get to do something. I didn't think I was contributing anything to the world anymore, you know, and so when I got out, I went back to Georgia because I wanted that activity and involvement. And then I got into law school there. I didn't do very well in law school. I started too early, and I said, well, I'll go to Atlanta and go to Atlanta Law School. So I left Georgia and came home to where my dad had a law office and where I could be a clerk or whatever in his office. And I went to Atlanta Law School but I -- also I hadn't finished my bachelor's degree, because like I said, I left the bachelor part -- undergraduate part a little early to get into the law school, which you could do back then. I don't think you can now. But anyway, I came to Atlanta, so I also enrolled in Georgia State. And I -- at one time I was going to two night schools at the same time. Monday, Wednesday and Friday at one, and Tuesday and Thursday or something like that on the other, and working in my dad's law office in the daytime. But then I graduated from Georgia State, and in fact got my bachelor's degree there, and I got my law degree from Atlanta Law School, and then I took a few night courses at Georgia Tech and then I even started a doctorate degree at Woodrow Wilson Law School. And then I got married, and so I quit. Otherwise, I might have still been going to school. I was not a good student through grade school, high school, college or post-graduate. I was not a good student, but I was evidently smart enough to know that if I would just keep going, I'd get something just by osmosis, and I believe in that.

SHORT: Your first job was not in law, not in business, not in real estate, but where?

MASSELL: Well, my first job was -- I don't know if you knew about it, but if this is one you're alluding to but, was chief of publications for the National Association of Women's and Children's Apparel Salesman. I was president of the Atlanta Ballyhoo Club, which was a cotillion group, of which incidentally, a Broadway show was made, called "The Last Night of Ballyhoo". And I was instructing the committee chairman what I expected of him, and each one had a senior advisor, and one of the advisors there after the meeting said he was impressed by my meticulous manner, and would I like to come work for him, and I did. And I started there immediately and he was an interesting, wonderful person, Marshall Matler, who is since deceased. He was called Buddy. Buddy Matler. Talking about Buddy, incidentally, I'm going to go back a few years even before that, because I need to share with you that my high school principal, Hayden C. Bryant, just about a week before I graduated from high school, shook his finger at me -- and he was tall and lanky and towering over me -- and said, "Buddy," -- I was called Buddy at that time. Said, "Buddy, you'll never amount to anything." And that may have been just the challenge I needed, you know, when I reflect on it, but anyway, Buddy Matler who I went to work for with the NAWCAS -- National Association of Women's and Children's Apparel Salesman -- doing his publications for his membership. It was like a guild or like a union somewhat for traveling salespeople around the country, and I remember the first issue of the paper I brought into his -- I put on his desk. When he came in, he said, "What's this doing here?" And I said, "Well, it's my first issue. I thought you'd want to see it before I sent it to the printer." You know, it was dummied up. And he said, "That's not the way I work. I hire you to do a job. If you don't do the job, I fire you and hire somebody else," you know, and I was very

young and scared to death, but I went back to work and made it perfect. But I was going to tell you that two years later -- that's how long I worked for him -- I had come in for the periodic raise I would ask for, and he said, "No, I'm not going to give you a raise, I'm going to fire you." And I said, "Why? I've done a good job," and I started defending myself and he said, "Oh, alright. If you want, I'll give another \$50.00 a month raise, and I'll probably do that every year the rest of your life if you want. But the truth of the matter is, it's time you get out and make a real living and you ought to be in real estate. And I'm going to call Sam Goldberg over at Allen Grayson Realty Company and set up an interview for you." And I went over there and got the job, and the first year I paid more in income tax than Buddy had paid me in salaries, you know.

SHORT: So that was a mercy firing.

MASSELL: Yes. Yes, he was a good person. To throw me out like a bird does its baby to fly, you know. And he was very good for me. So, I was in real estate for 20 years, commercial real estate. I became what I think was the world's only specialist in doctor's office buildings. I did one in Atlanta across from the High Museum of Art called the Strickler Building. Did one in Chattanooga, one in Jacksonville, and if I hadn't gotten bit by the political bug, I think I would have become a multimillionaire like my colleagues and peers and buddies and friends, all of whom were pretty successful. But I did alright. You know, you can look at me and see I'm not starving, and I enjoyed real estate. And then, you know, got involved full-time with the mayor's office, of course, and divested myself of that. When I came out of the mayor's office, I spent 22

years in those different elected offices and got much higher than I ever thought I would, and so I decided I would not go back to that. Don't know if your interview wants me to go further with this, my life. It's a little interesting, maybe to some, but how did I decide what I was going to do after that, because with my big ego, if you've been in office 22 years, you've got to have a pretty good sized ego. I felt I could do anything, but I didn't know what I wanted to do, so I didn't want to go back to real estate. I enjoyed that, but I had conquered that. I had gotten the Alvin B. Cates trophy for the outstanding deal of the year three times. I had been a charter member of the Million Dollar Club. I had done real estate, so I wanted to do something different. I got me some large sheets of paper like accountants use with a lot of columns in them, and across the top in each column, I put something that was of interest to me in going to work. Is it a growth industry? Does it cost much money to get into it? Can I capitalize on a public following? Can my family work in it? Whatever was of interest to me. And I put a yellow section in the phone book and I read every single category. You'd be shocked at some of the things that are in there, and if it sounded interesting at all, I'd list it on the left and then grade it from 1 to 10 in each column. And then I added all these -- and this took two or three months to do this -- and I added it all up. Computers, of course, would do it today overnight, but -- and it came up with five entirely different fields. One of them was editing and journalism. I had done a little of that, I mentioned the Georgia Cracker at Athens, I mentioned my dad's Atlanta Democrat. I mentioned, you know, Buddy Matler's chief of publications, those. And I tried to buy the Fulton County Daily Report, which is a legal organ for Fulton, and had been in the same family for 90 years. And I approached them and they just would not sell. The interesting part of that is that a

year later they did sell to somebody else, but by then I had gone a separate way. One of the five things was public relations. I like marketing and advertising and public relations, but I felt at that time, although a lot of politicians do it, I felt it would be prostituting my name to immediately go out and use those contacts to help people, and so I shied from that. One was -- it's interesting -- one was to operate a florist. Now, I've never grown the first flower in my life, but I believe to this day, had I gone and opened a little florist, I think I would have enjoyed it and maybe made a decent, you know, not a big living, but a comfortable enough. I ended up going into the travel business, and it was -- I didn't make any real money there, but I put a lot of people to work. My wife worked in there, all three children at one time, Cindy, Steve and Melanie all three worked there at one time, and dozens of other people. I developed a large travel agency, but not real profitable because I was experimenting. It was a challenge. I wanted to be the most diversified travel agency in the world, and I did. I could get you a phony passport if you wanted. I could do anything in travel, you know. I even sold a MARTA car without a commission for MARTA because it was transportation travel. Anyway, we did that for 13 years, and it was sort of like a sabbatical. You know, I worked without a tie. I traveled the world. I sold dreams, and it was really very enjoyable, and I'd probably still be there if it hadn't been for a headhunter Korn/Ferry company that knocked on my door and offered a glove that just really did fit. All the things, my experience in real estate and law and politics and truism, all of these really played a role in the creation of this Buckhead Coalition, which is a nonprofit civic group like a chamber of commerce for the northern part of Atlanta. And it was started primarily by a guy named Charlie Lattimer who brought together 12 of his cronies and said, "Looking around Buckhead,

we shouldn't take this for granted, this progress and prosperity, and we need to supplement government. We need to have a strong group of powerful people who will help when they're needed." And like I say, they brought in Korn/Ferry to find somebody, and when I met with Charlie and the others, they didn't want to give me but a one-year contract because they weren't sure the idea would work. I wanted a three-year contract because I was going to be leaving my travel agency, and we settled on a two-year contract. Well, here it is 2008 and it's 20 years later. We hadn't drawn that contract yet. I hit the ground working and running, and it's been a wonderful, stimulating challenge ever since. We have 100 members. We limit to 100, it's by invitation, they're all CEO's or equivalent of major firms. The dues are \$6,250.00 a year. That's just a beginning of their financial exposure. If we need more money, we don't go to the public; we go to the members to ask for funds for any program we undertake. Our mission is to nurture the quality of life of the community and help coordinate an orderly growth. We do everything from pave sidewalks in neighborhoods to pay rewards for conviction in heinous crimes, to placing portable defibrillators in churches and hotels and office buildings, and having a street ministry to help with the homeless. You just name it and we've got initiatives every week that are new and different and challenging. And it's got a good history. It's had a good -- we have a waiting list for members. It's by invitation, but -- and we limit it to 100, and I was complimented recently when the City of Charlotte, which is sort of a Best in Class area, invited me to come speak to their Chamber of Commerce of how we marketed Buckhead because they have an area called South Park that they would like to emulate what we had done, and it is similar somewhat to Buckhead with the big shopping mall and offices and then high-income

residents around it. So, I'm still healthy and happy, working hard and playing hard.

SHORT: Let me ask you a question about Buckhead. As you know, Sandy Springs and Johns Creek and Milton have separated from the county and become cities. Do you have any interest in having Buckhead be a city?

MASSELL: Oh, actually there's a group that's trying to push that idea, which is a terrible idea for Atlanta. First of all, they are racially motivated, which I cannot tolerate. But put that aside. What they would do, and incidentally Atlanta is already in a city, where these others that you mention were not. They were in unincorporated areas. Atlanta's in the city of Atlanta already. I mean, Buckhead is all within the city of Atlanta, and Buckhead is -- no question about it, being the best part of Atlanta is -- by as far as income, as far as education, as far as job opportunities, just you name it, academic level, whatever index you could use, Buckhead is the best part. Well, if you take that out of Atlanta, what you do to Atlanta is, it would devastate it. It would -- first of all, it would bankrupt it financially, because Buckhead, although it only has 15 percent of the population of Atlanta and about 20 percent of the land, it pays about 45 percent of Atlanta's ad valorem taxes. And if you take that out of the city, and think what a headline that would be in the New York Times. But every index would worsen. I mean, if Atlanta is now 13th in crime, it might be third in crime. Doesn't mean more crimes. If you take out the place where there's less crimes, then the stats become negative. It would be the -- you know, it would have the worst pollution. It would have the worst illiteracy. You just name it. Everything about it would be

worse, and that would just stop growth entirely. Nobody -- who would want to live in a place like -- who would want to move there? Who would want to open a business there? And you know, that's thinking so negatively to think that you would want to, you know, move away from them where you should think of the whole. Now, I focus all of my attention on Buckhead day and night, weekends, holidays included, but I'm still part of the whole, and whenever there's something that we work together with the Midtown Alliance and Central Atlanta Progress and Metropolitan Chamber and Atlanta Convention and Business Bureau, we work with all of these people all the time when there's a mutual interest. But it's a terrible idea. Incidentally, we didn't even lose our name, because there's already a Buckhead, Georgia out on Interstate 20, 60 miles from here. So we'd have to go back to Erbyville [ph], I guess, which is what we were in 1837, I think. But the -- Buckhead's older than Atlanta, incidentally, as far as its identity, but -- and not as a city, but we weren't even taken into the city until the '40's -- '50's. But it can't be done anyway because it would have to go through the legislature that created an authority to do that -- excuse me -- and Ed Lindsey, who is our representative for this area, says he won't introduce it. But if he did, he'd be hard pressed to get a second vote, and it's got to -- you'd have to have majority of the local delegation. No way that's going to happen. If somehow it did happen, you'd still have to have a vote, a referendum that would include all of Atlanta. They're not about to give up Buckhead. So it's not going to happen, but it's just a terrible demagoguery where they're telling people they'll cut your taxes in half, which it won't. Nobody's made that study, and people have to understand anyway that there's no way in urban America that you can get a dollar service for a dollar of taxes. If you did, then the lower income areas would not have

any police protection, wouldn't have any potholes filled or any of the other services that are needed. So, we do help beyond our boundaries, but it's not going to happen.

SHORT: What does all this mean to the County of Fulton, losing jurisdiction?

MASSELL: Well, it changes it dramatically. The jury is still out as to just how that's going to end up. There is still a little unincorporated area south of Atlanta that Fulton has. Of course, Fulton itself still exists as you understand, and all these cities are still mapped in Fulton County, although there's a move afoot to take out part of Fulton north of Atlanta and make that Milton County like it used to be long, long years ago. All of that's going backwards instead of forwards. You know, we've been preaching for years that we needed fewer governments, not more governments, and this is just a wrong approach entirely in my opinion. But I don't know that I can predict exactly how Fulton County will come out. They -- I've had some ideas I've shared with Robb Pitts, who is a commissioner at large, and John Eaves, who is the chairman at, you know, they might look at giving -- at providing services to these cities, including Atlanta. Paving streets, when I was on the city council at Mountain Park, Georgia, the County of Fulton paved one of our streets. Now, we had an arrangement with them. I don't remember exactly, but we could not have afforded to do it, and so maybe the County can use its tax money to do things for cities.

SHORT: Uh-huh. In Nashville, Tennessee and in Jacksonville, Florida, they operate a metro

government. That will never happen here, will it?

MASSELL: Doesn't look it, and -- but they're not all successful either. They're -- you know, there are buzzwords like merger and authority and privatization and -- I mean, I can go down a dozen of them that sound good to the public, but they're not always good. And there are examples of consolidated governments where they didn't work. But I don't think it's going to happen here anyway. I mean, I'm not against them; you just have to look at what you have in front of you.

SHORT: Let's go back to politics for a minute. In your race for president of the Board of Aldermen, what do you remember about that race?

MASSELL: Well, the second time -- and then I'll go back to the first one. The second time, I was so sure of myself that I spent all of my campaign money being a proponent of good government and getting people to vote. I ran copies of the ballots -- not my name, but of the whole ballot in the newspapers. I paid for the ads, and I was almost acting like I was chairman of the League of Women Voters, instead of a candidate for office, you know, even though I had, I think it was five opponents that time, and won without a runoff. But the first time, it was a hard-fought campaign. I remember even then I also got a heavy black vote. Back in those days, the black community had tickets, most particularly the Atlanta Negro Voters League. They had a strong ticket. If you won that ticket, that was almost tantamount to election, and they were

very careful, printing them the day before the election and distributing them that night, I mean, so nobody could counterfeit them and find out what they had and change it or whatever. And you didn't know until then if you were on the ticket. But the black community did not have enough men to elect, but they had enough to elect. Now I'll tell you why I'm saying it that way. They didn't have enough to elect their own, because the white influence will offset it, but they had enough to make the difference in anybody's election, even though you might have a bit heavy white turnout, there were enough blacks in a block, as they were called then, to make the difference. So, it was extremely important and they had a lot of black rallies. The black churches were very active, and a lot of people fault them for being political, but you know, and I would agree in the best of worlds, it would be good separate religion from politics, but in that case in those early days, they needed all the power they could muster to finally become part of the community with equal opportunities. So, it was very important in these rallies. And they also had screening committees. In the rallies I remember -- most of which, I repeat, were in black churches -- there were some in the white organizations, maybe neighborhood associations and different things, but in the black ones, they would have so many you'd have to run from one to the other. In fact, I had one volunteer in my office who used to get a stack of Gulf Oil maps and just mark on the map that night where I was going from this one to this one to this one, so I could take off like a bat from one to the next one to get there in time, and they'd have three or four in a night of these rallies. But I took the approach realistically that I felt that I could understand the black pressure, the needs, the problems and faults better than my opponents because I was Jewish, that I had felt some prejudices myself. Now, I couldn't feel what a black

could feel, but I felt I could feel it better than my opponents. I meant that, and I made that message clear to the audiences.

I remember something where Helen Bullard helped me tremendously. The blacks also had screening committees where they would decide who they were going to endorse or add to their tickets, and you'd be invited to a group and there would be seven or eight of them in a room, leaders from that church or whatever, and it was almost like what they just called the hot box in a college fraternity or something where they would be pledging. You'd sit there and they would fire questions at you. And I remember going to Helen Bullard, who I introduced earlier as the political guru of that era who handled my campaigns for President of Board of Aldermen and also for mayor and saying, "Helen, prepare me for -- I'm going to my first screening." She said, "Well, what do you mean, prepare you?" And I said, "Well, they're going to ask me tough questions, you know. Shouldn't we practice and think about them?" And she said, "Well, like that?" That's back in the early '60's, you know, 1960's. And I said, "Well, what if they ask me what do I think about mixing white blood and black blood, you know, in the hospitals or whatever?" And she paused and she looked at me and she said, "Well, what do you think?" And it was just like picking, like lifting anvils off my shoulders, because then I realized, well, of course, what I need to do is just be me and tell them what I think, not try to second-guess them. And if I win, I win. If I lose, I lose, but -- and that's what -- from then on, I didn't have to prepare. In fact, I used to have, when I was mayor, I had a call-in show on Channel 11 television on Sundays where we didn't even have a screener. They could ask anything they wanted to ask, because you know, I'm a pretty candid guy, maybe because of my ego. I feel I can do it, and if

you don't like it, I'm sorry, but you know, so anyway, that was the effort for the campaign was strenuous. It was heavy, running from one place to the next, getting to know people, getting to learn big city politics because there are a lot of phonies out there. I remember one -- there was a guy named Smith who ran several times for different things, who was one of my opponents, and I remember once at the Druid Hills Country Club in the men's room -- and I don't know why we would have a rally out there. It's outside the city. But there was a -- maybe the Voters Guild or somebody held a session there. And he asked me, he said, "Sam, are you an opportunist?" And he meant it sarcastically. And I thought a second -- maybe less than that -- and I said, "Yes, I am." You know, when I reflect on it, many of the things that I've achieved in my lifetime have been because of an opportunity that presented itself and I grabbed hold, and continue to do that. Talking about Ivan Allen as mayor and me as President of the Board of Aldermen, I had gotten the legislature to add the title Vice Mayor, so I was President of the Board of alderman and Vice Mayor. Just two titles; it didn't change the office because even without that, or maybe not. Excuse me. I've got to correct that. This added to that. The Vice Mayor in the absence of the mayor was acting mayor, and so, indeed at times I signed proclamations and, you know, took various positions for the city as its acting mayor when Ivan was out of town. But Ivan and I were on good relations, except that I knew he was not the same -- of the same liberal leanings as I, but I knew him to be a person of integrity and honor and intelligence and commitment. And he had a good agenda for the city and he was good for the city, so I didn't have any problem. The only time that I would call it we were actually at odds was when he did the Peyton Wall, which was a foolish thing. He admitted later the way he tried to stop integration of a

neighborhood by building a wall across the street, a barricade, like that would stop them from buying the next house or the house after that, and I publicly opposed his action. But we otherwise were, you know, we understood each other. Helen Bullard, who I've mentioned a few times, a political consultant, represented both of us, so if we had any differences, she would bring us together. I remember one time incidentally with Ivan, where some of the black leaders called him about some problem and asked if he would come over to the Butler Street YMCA where they were holding a meeting, and he asked me to go with him, which I did. And Rollie Bryans who was a city hall reporter for the Journal was sitting in the reception and he said, "Rollie, you want to go with us?" "Yes," and so we go over there. We're the only three whites in the room, and I don't remember the issue now, but Ivan was getting ready to say something and he pointed at Rollie and said, "Now, Rollie, this is off the record," and then he went ahead and said his statement. Rollie didn't make any notes, but he had them all up here, and the next day, front page of the paper, and Ivan went ballistic. He called him in, he's screaming. He said, "I told you that was off the record," and Rollie said, "Yes, but I didn't agree. You didn't ask me to." And of course, that was sort of a, you know, splitting hairs there, but Ivan did not have a lot of political experience, I guess is what I'm alluding to, is that he was naive in that way. But he had a lot of business experience. But even the business experience used to shock him, in the difference between that and political activity. When he'd have a -- I mean, right at first, first few months, when he'd want to do something, and he's tell his staff to do it and they'd say, "Well, wait. We can't do that. We've got to go through this committee or that commission or this authority or whatever," and he just wasn't used to that, you know, with running a big company,

the Ivan Allen-Marshall Company, he knew how to execute and he wasn't allowed to do that here. But he was very efficient, and unlike me, I'm just the opposite. I've got -- I might be efficient, but I've got stacks of papers. He didn't have any paper. In fact his desk was a library table. It didn't even have drawers in it. And he had an in basket and an out basket, and as soon as something hit that in basket, he grabbed it and initialed it or whatever, instructions, and put it in the out basket, and that was his day's work. I mean, the rest of the time, he'd be putting in his office with, you know, a glass to put a ball in there, and he did his work quickly and didn't spend a lot of time. He didn't -- he was a little jealous of Bill Hartsfield, who preceded him, because Bill was so well-known. He was a mayor's mayor. He's been the mayor of the city of Atlanta for 20-something years. The first time Ivan went to one of these national meetings of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, all he heard was, "How's Bill Hartsfield? What's Bill Hartsfield doing? Bill was a great mayor. We sure did enjoy Bill." He heard so much of it, he came back to Atlanta and he said, "I'm never going to another meeting," he said, "Sam, you can represent me." And so from then on, I went to all of them of the U.S. Conference of Mayors. In fact, became President of the National League of Cities.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

MASSELL: And the only other mayor from Atlanta that's ever done that was Bill Hartsfield. But Ivan learned as he went along. He was courageous to go to Washington and testify in the civil rights legislation, which brought the wrath of his friends at the Piedmont Diamond Club. I

mean, they just couldn't stand it that he would do that, and they said some ugly things behind his back, but he was doing what was best for Atlanta. Now, he may not have felt that was right, but he felt it was the right thing to do, and I respected him for that. And incidentally, we became much closer after he left office and I left and we were friends and would discuss politics and things of issue. In fact, I met just yesterday for an hour with Beau Allen III, who is a grandson of Ivan's, who wants to go into politics when he gets out of college, so I was consulting and advising.

SHORT: You mentioned liberal. Back in those days, a liberal was a person who believed in equal rights and equal opportunity, as opposed to a conservative, who believed in racial segregation. That was before the black community of Atlanta really made its wishes known politically. How did that transition occur?

MASSELL: What do you mean by the transition?

SHORT: Well, from being an electorate that could not elect one of their own.

MASSELL: Oh.

SHORT: But could elect someone that they united behind.

MASSELL: Well, as I remember, because they grew in numbers. The black population just kept increasing, and the registration kept increasing, and their courage too increased. Their determination, I still marvel at the young college students who did the sit-ins, who knew they were going to go to jail. I remember my father, you know, as a lawyer at times when I was a child, saying how sad it was that this client or that client was in jail or something. That seemed like the most worst thing that could happen to somebody was be in jail, and yet here these young boys, knowing they would go to jail for this, because the law at that time was clear, that blacks could not have public access. And so that was extremely courageous, and you have to, in my opinion, admire people who have the much commitment to bring about change. Well, I am a liberal, and in fact I will share with you that Cynthia Tucker, the editor of the Atlanta Constitution, Journal-Constitution now, mentioned in one of her editorials about two or three years ago, I think, that I was a moderate, or identified me as a moderate. And I wrote her a letter admonishing her. I said, "Don't you call me a moderate. I'm a liberal and proud of it." And she sent me back a real nice handwritten note apologizing. She won't do that again, she said. But most of my friends are much more conservative than I. It seems they've gotten even more conservative, and most of it, I think, is motivated by money, by wealth, that it does make a difference with people.

SHORT: You're a religious man.

MASSELL: I -- it depends on the definition, I guess. I don't go to services very often, but I am

very proud of my religion and what it has meant to me, and I believe in God and I, you know, I have respect for all religions.

SHORT: I'd like to talk to you for a minute about 1962. Several historical events in Georgia, changed the political reality forever. First of all, the demise of the county unit system, which certainly penalized your city of Atlanta and others. Secondly was reapportionment, which increased the power of urban areas, and thirdly was the election of a young state senator, a very progressive young state senator by the name of Carl Sanders. What do you think about that period?

MASSELL: Well, that was an era of great pride to those of us who were believers, you know, that there could be a better life, that Atlanta should not be ostracized and treated as a stepchild. I was involved in those days in different ways. I was very close to Morris Abram, an attorney who played a role in defeating the county unit system, and I -- just at random, I was treasurer for Adlai Stevenson when he ran -- Fulton County Treasurer -- when he ran for president. I was very involved. Maybe the only noticeable politician in the write-in vote for Ellis Arnall, that ended up with Lester Maddox being our governor, but I believed in Ellis and -- but Carl Sanders -- and incidentally, Helen Bullard handled his campaigns too, and had to overcome -- they were calling him "Cufflink Carl" because he was sophisticated, you know, Dapper Dan sort of, and she made him chew chewing gum one time on television while he was being interviewed to try to overcome that other image. But I still see Carl around from time to time, and we're friends

and he brought a lot of credit and honor to our state. We've had some good governors from time to time and we've had some sorry ones, and the -- I'll tell you an anecdote about the media one time where the legislature had given me the power to put on this sales tax for MARTA that I was mentioning earlier, which was very unusual and I wanted to say thank you. There had always been frictions between state government and the city of Atlanta's government -- always. And I said, you know, they've done a wonderful thing for us. I want to say thank you. And the press didn't buy that. They weren't interested in that at all, and my Monday morning news conference, I said, "Let's thank," and no, they wouldn't. So I forced it on them. I planned -- I called a news conference on the front lawn of City Hall facing the state capitol. During the night I had a flatbed truck drawn in there with a full-size billboard on it covered with sheets. We unveiled it, and it said, "Thank you, Georgia lawmakers." And then we dug a hole in the ground and we said, "If there's ever been a friction between us, we're going to bury the hatchet," and we put the hatchet in there. And then we sent all the secretaries from City Hall in pink hot pants -- couldn't do that today, but -- over to the state capitol with a little key to the city for every member of the House and the Senate, and then we sent over proclamations thanking them for their help and inviting them over for peanuts, because Carter was there and chicken because Maddox was there as lieutenant governor, and Coca-Cola, because everybody's Atlanta, you know. And they came over for that, and that forced the newspaper's front page. It had -- must have been an eight-column picture of that "Thank you, Georgia lawmakers." So sometimes you have to push, you know.

SHORT: Let's go back to 1969 when you became a candidate for mayor. What persuaded you to run?

MASSELL: Well, I thought I could make a contribution. I thought I could do some things that, you know, I'm independent enough. I don't have to be mayor. I don't have to be the president of the council, I don't have to be president of the Buckhead Coalition. I'm that independent. Not that I'm independently wealthy. I claim I'm wealthier than any of my friends, but it's not money. It's a state of mind, and that's a wonderful asset, if you're independent. And so that was one of those things I wanted, was if I had that power, I could do some things that hadn't been done, such as the appointments that I told you about, bringing in women and bringing in blacks and also appointed a great, you know, to the city council. I would reach out always to try to improve our conditions, and I had the power to do that as mayor.

SHORT: Did you know then who your opponents might be?

MASSELL: No. When I first announced for mayor, I don't believe I did know. I don't remember knowing.

SHORT: Well, your most formidable one was Rodney Cook.

MASSELL: Yes.

SHORT: Whom you mentioned.

MASSELL: Uh-huh, yes.

SHORT: He was a Republican.

MASSELL: Uh-huh.

SHORT: Who had been in the legislature.

MASSELL: Yes.

SHORT: And on the Board of Aldermen.

MASSELL: Uh-huh.

SHORT: And who had run very well among the black population of Atlanta during those elections. But you were able to overcome his popularity and quite handsomely. It seemed to me, and I'm no expert on Atlanta politics that Cook's attempt was to put together the old Hartsfield coalition of businessmen and others -- and if I'm not wrong, and you can correct me if I am. I

think Mayor Allen was involved in that.

MASSELL: Yes. Rodney had the business power structure. He had the newspapers. He had the -- Ivan Allen supported it, and you know, there were some overtones of anti-Semitism that entered the campaign. There was a cross burned on my front yard during that campaign. My brother, who was a rounder -- a bachelor, playboy, had gotten a lot of adverse negative publicity and his behavior, and the -- never did anything illegal, but I mean, you know, just hanging around with some of the bad actors, and that was what the opposition used to -- in fact, Ivan asked me to withdraw from the race, and that, I think, probably helped my campaign rather than hurt it. But anyway, you know, they lost and I won. Four years later I lost and they won. And Jesse Hill was the one that told me, "Sam, we can't support you anymore. We thank you but we can't support you anymore." And it was just not very surprising.

SHORT: But it's understandable.

MASSELL: Yes.

SHORT: You understand it.

MASSELL: Yes.

SHORT: And Maynard Jackson, the eventual winner, had had the courage previously to take on one of the most powerful United States senators in the country.

MASSELL: Yes.

SHORT: And was defeated terribly, but I think that his people got confidence in him.

MASSELL: Uh-huh.

SHORT: As you look back on your 12 years in the city hall of Atlanta, what do you think was your most outstanding accomplishment?

MASSELL: Well, probably MARTA, creating MARTA, but you know, the -- building the Central City Woodruff Park with no cull on the taxpayer, building the first enclosed arena, the Omni, with no cull on the taxpayer. Now, that was a situation where, I mentioned earlier about my background that helped me. I used my legal background and my real estate background to structure that Omni program, that development, where the taxpayers would not have to pay anything, even if they never sold a single ticket to the events. In other words, we got Cousins to pledge income from the parking decks that were already there, to underwrite the bonded indebtedness and his rent was equal to the monthly note and the taxes -- I mean, not -- and the maintenance and management of the building, so we had no expense. We had this big, new

building for events, and his benefit was that he had no taxes to pay because really we owned it, even though he had control of it. And secondly, he had a very low interest rate on the loan because it was -- they were city revenue bonds. So, like I said, I was able, with a sharp pen and paper to work out a good deal for the city.

SHORT: That was very clever. That was the time when arenas were being built by taxpayers' money all over the country.

MASSELL: Yes. This was a first. In fact, more recently, the Philips Arena was built similar to that, and they overlooked the fact that I had already done that before.

SHORT: Well, if you had it to do over, would you have done anything differently?

MASSELL: Well, I wouldn't have appointed the chief of police that I appointed. He turned out to be much more conservative than we had been led to believe, and it was important in the black community that we have somebody who they trusted as well to manage public safety, and that was a mistake. But I had letters from prominent judges and district attorneys and other law enforcement people that pledged, you know, that praised him and I was just misled. I'm sure there were other mistakes along the way, but I don't --

SHORT: That's the one that sticks in your mind.

MASSELL: That's the one that -- yes.

SHORT: I'd like to talk for a minute about party politics. Great change in Georgia, Republicans have taken over the governor's office and the legislature, and every department head now is a Republican, and most state employees are Republicans. And it seems that Democrats are losing ground. Some believe that it's because the party is too dependent upon minority voters and labor unions, and that is destroying the party. Do you believe that?

MASSELL: Well, I'll be honest that I have not analyzed it. I've taken a -- I'm probably the leader in the nonpartisan arena. As I mentioned earlier, I actually created that for Atlanta's elections, and to this day, I mean, here I work with an organization, the Buckhead Coalition, made up of CEOs of major firms. As you might imagine from that profile, they are mostly conservative Republicans, but they knew when I came on board that I was a liberal Democrat, but we avoid partisan politics. Now, we get involved in city elections because they are nonpartisan, but we do not take any position or in this boardroom discuss any partisan races or partisan issues. So, I really can't answer you as to how it has come about, but it has been quite a change. Of course, the Democrats of yesteryear in Georgia were pretty conservative, so the title identity of Democrat versus Republican is not a very clear line, and you have to make sure when you're talking, which year are you talking about when you describe them. But I -- some of my friends that are staunch Democrats wouldn't appreciate me saying this, but there are some

Republicans that are decent people, you know. I just have to admit it right here on camera that there are indeed, and some of them have done some good jobs. I mentioned Rodney Cook and Richard Freeman, the Republicans elected to the Board of Aldermen, were two of our best members, no question about it. And so, you know, I'm just not bogged down by party title. I try to find some good in everybody.

SHORT: One final question. How would you like to be remembered?

MASSELL: I don't plan to leave.

SHORT: [Laughter] Well, in the event you ever do.

MASSELL: Oh, I see.

SHORT: How would you like to be remembered?

MASSELL: Well, I've not thought about that either, but I've -- you know, I don't attach much importance to that. I guess that sounds odd. I may be the first person you've interviewed that ever phrased that that way, but I -- like today even, people that -- two or three well-meaning, maybe one or two, have suggested a -- some kind of honor for me or street name for me or a statute or something, and I turned those all down because I say first of all, I've got my own

policy that you shouldn't do that for people who are still in life, but I don't even look for something after I'm gone. I'm going to do my work when I'm here, and I continue to work. I'm -- well, I must be at least 70 years old now, and I'm still at it day and night, you know, and I plan to continue. You know, I don't know how to answer that question.

SHORT: Well, I'll tell you this. One of your former colleagues this morning told me that Sam Massell is one of Atlanta's best mayors ever. So, you might not know how you want to be remembered, but a lot of people will remember you.

MASSELL: Well, that's kind. Thank you. That's very nice.

SHORT: Thank you for being with us.

MASSELL: Thank you for this.

[END]

**3525 Piedmont Road, N.E.
Eight Piedmont Center, Suite 310
Atlanta, Georgia 30305
800-872-6079
FAX 404-873-0415
www.wordzx.com**