

Marie Barnes interviewed by Bob Short

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BOB SHORT: I'm Bob Short and this is Reflections on Georgia Politics sponsored by Young Harris College, The Richard Russell Library, and the University of Georgia. This is a part of our oral history series on Georgia's First Ladies. And our guest today is Marie Barnes, 80th First Lady of Georgia and wife of former Governor, Roy Barnes. Welcome, Marie.

MARIE BARNES: Thank you for having me.

SHORT: We're anxious to hear about your life before you became First Lady.

BARNES: Oh, that was so long ago I'm not sure I remember too much about it! Let's see. I was born in Cobb County, but lived in Cherokee County for the first ten years of my life. My parents and I lived with my grandmother who was ailing somewhat and so mother felt she needed to stay there, which was a fun time for me because my grandmother and I played together. I have a lot of fond memories of that. We lived at the edge of a lumber yard and a lot of my friends were the daughters of people who worked in the lumber yard. And of course, you know, we told all the ghost stories about the different things -- panda bears being in the lumber yard and we'd go play in the lumber yard a little bit and then we'd get scared and run home, and so it was a lot of fun growing up in Cherokee County. And then my daddy was a highway department engineer, or as we say now, Department of Transportation, and his office was in the old courthouse here in Marietta. So, he had a long drive every day from Cherokee County to

Cobb County and we decided that we'd move to – it was time to build a house and move to Cobb County so daddy wouldn't have such a drive. So, we moved down here when I was ten, built a house, actually right behind where we're living now, and about two months after we moved here got transferred to Cartersville and was made Assistant Division Engineer in the Cartersville office. But he didn't like to stay in the office so he traveled the roads and traveled looking at jobs and things like that.

I, of course, went to Marietta City Schools and in Westside Elementary in particular and then Hickory Hills Elementary and then back to Westside. They did a bunch of re-districting during that time. My grandson and granddaughter have applied to go there. They have a choice program now where you can choose in Marietta City what schools to go to. So I will be hoping that they're going to go there too, since I went there. Graduated from Marietta High School, went off to Kennesaw for the first two years -- Kennesaw Junior College. Now it's Kennesaw State University. Graduated from there in December and went to the University of Georgia in January of '69.

So that's where I met Roy on a blind date, which I thought was a good idea at the time. I wouldn't recommend now doing a blind date. But we met on a blind date at some friends of our – mutual friends of ours set us up and we went to a dance, and the rest is history. We married about a year and a half later.

SHORT: Tell us about your mother. She had a very unusual nickname.

BARNES: She did.

SHORT: She was the daughter of the depot agent in Holly Springs. Her name was Elizabeth, but I was 15 before I knew that it was Elizabeth because I had only known her as Spud. When she was a little girl she was the youngest of the four surviving children that they had. They had six but they – she was the youngest of four. She loved potato chips, and something I unfortunately have inherited, and they were brand new at the time and there was a store in town that would get a shipment by rail of potato chips. And my grandfather was first in line every day when they came in, because he knew when they came in, to buy her potato chips. And he would buy her every one they had but the manager of the store said "No, you can't do that! We have to save a few packages for everybody else." But he spoiled her in that way and he called her Spud, because he said you're going to turn into a little spud, which of course means potato, and she was spud until she died. You know, it just stuck. And like I say, I was 15 before I knew she had another name, which was Elizabeth.

SHORT: When did you meet Roy's family?

BARNES: Actually I met them – we met and we started dating in the spring, and I think I met them shortly after we started dating.

SHORT: Hmm.

BARNES: You know, when we'd come home from the university on weekends and during the summer we, you know, would date and go down there and he would come up here. Now my daddy was very particular about who I dated so he would ask around town, and there was a man that was from Mableton where Roy was from, named John Lee, who worked at the courthouse. And so daddy went to John Lee and said, "I need to know something about this Barnes boy my daughter's dating." And of course he gave him a glowing report and that made daddy happy and it made me happy and so daddy was happy with that.

Daddy had actually met Roy's father during some highway negotiations about building some roads. He had some property that – now this was before Roy and I started dating. They were building the -- widening Floyd Road and they were building an extension to tie it into Mableton-Gordon Road, at the time -- Mableton Parkway now -- and he met his daddy at that particular time. And so, he knew him – before I knew Roy he knew Mr. Barnes.

SHORT: Well, tell us a little bit about the Barnes family.

BARNES: Hmm. Interesting, curious folks. They ran a hardware store. There were quite a few of them too, but two in particular that I remember and that was Roy's daddy and his Uncle Felton, both of whom ran hardware stores right next to each other in Mableton. And so, that's where everybody went during the time that Roy was growing up. Everybody that campaigned politically came through and campaigned at Barnes Hardware at the Barnes stores. And so,

that's how Roy got interested in politics.

Now, the closest I came to politics growing up was in my teenage years I did work on a few campaigns with some friends of ours who did volunteer work and there was always some cute guys working on campaigns so I kind of volunteered my time too. Little did I know that I would be married to a politician and be doing these sorts of things all my life after that! But daddy loved – he worked at the Highway Department, couldn't get involved in campaigns at the time, so about the only thing we could do is we would go to the courthouse and listen to returns.

Because back then, of course, they didn't broadcast the returns and you got them through going to the courthouse. We would go up there and stay till real late at night and I loved it. I thought it was really interesting and the people were all interesting. Little did I know that Roy's dad and Roy were there too, at the same time. I never met him, but they were there.

One of the other things that I think is kind of interesting -- when I was in high school, on Sunday nights we would go to a place called Shaw's Barbecue and it was out on 41, which was the big main road then, and it was the best place to get hot dogs in the whole county at the time. And we would go out there on Sunday nights and eat and Roy's family would go out there on Sunday nights and eat. Never met then either! And then interestingly enough, we get set up by two friends who are not from Cobb County and at the University of Georgia, and then we get married after that.

SHORT: How did he propose?

BARNES: Oh, gee, I don't remember.

SHORT: Did he get down on his knees?

BARNES: No, I think we just kind of always knew we were going to get married after a certain time, you know, it was just kind of – I mean, I don't remember that he did anything other than just, you know, let's set a date and get married. I don't know! But Roy is not generally known for his romanticism.

BARNES: But it's just – you know, we just had so much in common and we were so good with each other and knew a lot of the same political people in town at the time.

SHORT: You were married in 1970.

BARNES: Uh-huh.

SHORT: He was still in law school.

BARNES: Uh-huh, he had finished a year of law school. He's the same age I am, but he finished under grad school in three years and – so it took me four to finish undergrad school. And then he went on to law school right after he finished.

SHORT: Did you think after your wedding that he would ever be Governor of Georgia?

BARNES: I never thought about Governor. I knew he was interested in politics and I knew he probably would run for office, but we were thinking maybe, you know, Councilman – or Councilman or Mayor or something like that, but never Governor. Never did that cross my mind.

SHORT: Well, in 1974 at the age of 26, two years out of law school, he ran for the State Senate.

BARNES: Uh-huh.

SHORT: So what were you doing then?

BARNES: We had a year old child. I was busy trying to learn to be a mother at 20 – what, 26? Yeah. And he came in and said, "I want to run for the State Senate." And I said, "Okay, what do I have to do?" And he said, "Well, basically, you know, we'll just go door to door and speak to people and ask them to vote for me." I said "Okay." So, I ended up – you could have told me I had to cut off my right ear and I think I would have done it. I was so naïve to political life. And I had this child at home and basically I was good with a hammer so I made all the yard signs. And so, I would sit out in the – we had a big room -- playroom at the time at the house we were living

in and I'd sit out there and make yard signs and Harlin would sit on the other side of the room playing with this toys and then, you know, he'd go take a nap and I'd rest a little while because I couldn't hammer too much with him sleeping. But then I would take mother, or Mrs. Barnes, and we would go down the big main roads at the time in his district, and I would go to each business and introduce myself and take – because you took matches and you took fingernail files and you took cards and stuff and they would let you put them – and a lot of times they let you put a sign up in their windows. And so, we would leave these things on the counter. So that's what I did during the first campaign. Didn't have to make any speeches, which was happy – which made me real happy. And still to this day I'm not real thrilled about making speeches. I don't feel comfortable doing that.

SHORT: So, while he was laboring away at the State Capitol – and those of us who know Roy Barnes know –

BARNES: Know he labors.

SHORT: He's a hard, hard worker.

BARNES: Yeah.

SHORT: And he puts everything he has into every job he's ever done.

BARNES: Exactly.

SHORT: But those long hours must have left you with some spare time, except for raising the kids. What else did you – do you have any hobbies? I know you're a good tennis player.

BARNES: Well, I didn't take up tennis, though, until the kids were well into school. I didn't start that because I had to be there for all the events in the afternoon that they had. Of course, those first few years when they were small, it was basically just staying at home. And mother was my only babysitter at that – my father, whom we talked about earlier, passed away a month after Roy and I married. In fact, he was in the hospital in a coma when we married. And I didn't have a lot of babysitters at the time that could keep the kids, so I couldn't do a lot of stuff with them and I had to pick and choose what I wanted to do. Mother didn't feel comfortable keeping – she was a little bit uncomfortable around little kids, because she had a lot of arthritis and she was afraid to pick them up and that sort of thing. And so, until they got to walking around good and she could hand them a peanut butter and jelly sandwich she really wasn't real thrilled about keeping them. So it was my – that was what I was happy doing – happiest doing and that's what I did. And I just was there to make sure that their lives were normal and that they got the time and got my time as much as they needed. And Roy came to as much as he could, but like you say, he was busy long nights down at the Capitol and – but he came home every night to us.

SHORT: Well he served 16 years in the Senate.

BARNES: Uh-huh.

SHORT: And then he decided to run for Governor.

BARNES: Yeah.

SHORT: Tell us about that decision.

BARNES: Well, we both thought it was the right thing to do. I was happy to have him do that. I told him I didn't like – I would not be giving any political speeches, which I didn't do, but I did travel a little bit with him. I traveled a little more. In '98 I traveled a lot more than I did in '90 when he ran. We knew all along that with two big names, Zell Miller and Andy Young, it was an uphill battle. But Roy was very well-known across the state, because he had been such an effective state Senator that he did have a good showing. I mean, he came in third. Obviously didn't make the runoff, but he did well, I think. And I think that sort of prepared him for the '98 race. And of course, in case you hadn't noticed, we lose about every ten years. So, you know. So he ran in '98 and won and lost in 2002.

SHORT: Well, after his running for Governor in 1990, he almost immediately ran for the House

of Representatives.

BARNES: Yeah, actually, that was kind of interesting that this new seat came available. He would not have run back for the State Senate because a good friend of ours had run for the State Senate and had taken his seat when he ran in '90, and he obviously felt that he didn't need to try to run against him because he was effective too.

So, this seat came available and he said, "Well, you know, I'm going to run for the House. I've done it in the Senate and" – he did it kind of backwards, you know, a lot of people do the House and the Senate but he did the Senate and then the House. Of course Mr. Speaker, Tom Murphy, told him that, you know, you should have done this first. You are now in the best part of the legislature.

SHORT: So, the 1998 race for Governor was successful.

BARNES: Uh-huh.

SHORT: What do you remember about that race?

BARNES: I remember the long hours and the many campaign stops and things we did. I remember going around the state. I made a lot of appearances. I didn't give a lot of speeches, obviously, but I made a lot of appearances on his behalf and did a lot of parades and met a lot of

wonderful people that I still – we still keep in touch with a good many people from across the state. We had somebody call last week and say, "You know, we're sitting on ready and we enjoyed reading the article that Bill Shipp had in the paper last week. You know, I'm ready when you are." And I'm saying "Well, maybe not so fast here." I'm enjoying my grandchildren now.

SHORT: That's good. Well after one wins the Governor's race there's always the Inaugural Ball.

BARNES: Uh-huh.

SHORT: I'm sure you had a lot to do with the planning for the Inaugural Ball.

MARIE BARNES: Well I don't know that I did in that we did meet with the event planner and we talked about the events, but the staff did a wonderful job of taking care. You know, I really remember being so overwhelmed that I know what I was doing half the time there. And it was so fast. It had to be done so quickly, and it was just, you know -- they were beginning to put me out doing some things even though he hadn't been Governor. Governor Miller's wife, Shirley, was gracious to invite me to go with her on a couple of events and to kind of get my feet wet. I remember the first one was the Mayor's Motorcade where the Mayors across the state gather toys and gifts for patients at Milledgeville's -- or at the mental hospitals across the state. But

they have a big event down there where they bring the motorcade in and everybody comes out and the toys are all brought in and gifts and then they have the Nutcracker. They perform the Nutcracker using some of the patients, and it's very touching -- a very touching event. And I think that was started by Betty Vandiver, if I'm not mistaken, and carried on by each First Lady since. And she was there and Shirley Miller was there and, of course, I was there. So when it got -- that was my first little speech or time to say anything. And so, I thanked them for letting me come and I wished them a Merry Christmas from Mrs. Vandiver from Christmas past, Mrs. Miller from Christmas present, and Mrs. Barnes from Christmas future. And so, they all loved that and thought that was a nice thing to do. And that was actually the last thing I did -- was the Motorcade. So, that was kind of a touching thing for me. I thoroughly enjoyed that.

SHORT: Had you thought about what you planned to do as First Lady when you moved into the mansion?

BARNES: Uh-uh, not really. My interest has always been in children. I was a school teacher a couple of years before -- while Roy was in law school, and then we started having children and he started having campaigns to run and I started having to spend more time at home so that meant that I wasn't teaching. Of course, I had my children of my own that I, you know, felt strongly about their education.

But I had been talking to several people and I had been doing a lot of reading and a lot of thinking about what I would be doing -- what I would like to do if I had something like that to do.

It wasn't because I was going to be First Lady, but I was interested in the fact that 90% of a child's cognitive brain development occurs from birth to three years of age. And all kinds of positive reinforcements or positive experiences lend themselves to this type of development. So, I thought it would be good for me to try and focus on the birth to three years of age, which meant that it would be childcare. It would be early, early childcare – early childhood learning. And they don't have a voice up until that time. I mean, usually it's K through 12 that people focus on. They don't focus on the birth to three years of age.

And so, I thought that might be something natural that I could do in that – and I love babies. I just think, you know, I just could have babies around me 24 hours a day. I just think they're so special and there's so much that you can do with them at the young age of even six weeks. In fact, our grandson was born in July and when he turned six weeks old he was in the swimming pool and he was still – he was swimming. Now, you didn't turn him loose obviously, because he didn't understand about breathing and everything, but he had those natural abilities right there -- that natural beginning. And he's a little fish in water now, because he's been doing it since he was six weeks old. And you think – children are born with the ability to mimic any sounds they hear, so you teach them a foreign language when they're little. You know, my grandchildren watch Dora the Explorer now and that is a bilingual thing and many of my – I mean all – well, I'd say the three that are talking fairly well, because I have two four year olds and a three year old, a two year old, and a newborn -- and so, the three and the four year olds are mimicking the – are speaking some Spanish. Now, me on the other hand, if you were to try to teach me those words, I have watched every episode and I can't repeat any of them. I mean, you know, so the

earlier you start in that field, I think, is so much better for children. It gives them such a better start, and will make it easier if children have these experiences to close the gap in the future when they're in school.

SHORT: Incidentally, is there a protocol for being First Lady?

BARNES: There's nothing in the transition manual that helps you.

SHORT: Did anyone explain to you what was expected of you?

BARNES: Not at all. And I think any First Lady can do the things she wants to do. Obviously, I had a daughter in law school. I had a daughter getting her undergraduate degree. We still had things to do with them that I in particular wanted to take part in. Alyssa, our youngest, was playing sports over at Sanford -- I mean, she was playing intramural sports. So I would go over occasionally and do things with her. I went over and was her mystery reader when she was doing some of her student teaching. And so, I, you know, still wanted to be able to do things with them. So, I did not want it to be a full time job for me.

I loved hosting events at the mansion. I think the Governor's Mansion is a wonderful place to sell the state of Georgia. We brought in, you know, prospective people for businesses. We would do the green carpet and the red carpet tours which would bring in financial people as well as people that wanted to -- were thinking about locating businesses here. That was one of the

stops that they would make on the weekend they were doing it, and I enjoyed that. I enjoyed having the valedictorians from all across the state come in one day. We would set up a big tent, we would have speakers, we would do refreshments for them. It was a six hour – well, it was actually an eight hour day for two hours for us to rest off our feet, because we would stand up for three hours, make pictures, and then eat lunch and rest for two hours and do another three hour period after that.

But I enjoyed using the Governor's mansion to show off the state because it is a state treasure, and I think it's just wonderful that the state has that, and we can of course thank the Sanders' for that because they were so instrumental in getting that built. In fact, I know you've talked to Betty. I don't know if she told you that she sold some of her paintings to build that fountain in front of the Governor's Mansion, which I think was very generous of her.

SHORT: How did your children adjust to having a father who was Governor and a mother who was First Lady?

BARNES: I don't know that they ever really adjusted. They would come to some of the events, but they primarily stayed – they were old enough that they could stay away and do their own things. Because like I say, during that time we had one in college and one in law school. Our son was working full time, so it was -- they were gone a lot.

SHORT: So it seems that you did not find it difficult to adjust to the First Lady role and live a

normal life.

BARNES: No, but then again, political families are so open and all of my adult life has been spent in political life, so what's normal for me may not be normal for most people. And it just seemed normal for us to be doing what we were doing, and the kids, of course, if they called and said we want to do so and so, we want to go out to eat or whatever, we would make it happen somehow -- or we want to all get together for an event, you know, come down and swim or do something on a weekend, you know, we would always make it happen. But that was kind of the way it was, though, the whole time that we -- all our married life, while Roy was in -- I mean, you know, they would tell us of events at school and I would put it on Roy's calendar and he'd be there. You know, it was just one of those things where we would make time for the children. And he wasn't there as much as he would like to have been. I don't think all of that was politics. I think a lot of it, too, was just working, because he works so much, as you said earlier. He puts everything he can into everything he does because he thinks that -- you know, he obviously loves what he does or he wouldn't put that much time into it. But the kids are enjoying us being here and in their lives a little bit more now, and, especially now that we've moved to Marietta where they've moved to. Three of my five grandchildren can come out their front door and be in our backyard within two minutes. So, it's not a huge problem to see them now.

SHORT: There's a tremendous amount of entertaining that's required of the Governor and the First Lady.

BARNES: Uh-huh.

SHORT: Tell us about some of your activities as an entertainer.

BARNES: Oh, well, the mansion staff did a marvelous job of putting together the events.

Basically, thank goodness, all we had to do was show up. Now, we kind of – I would put my input into -- "Well, I would like to have thus and such or I would like to do this or that." There were a few interesting things that happened. Prince Philip came to spend the night at the Governor's mansion. We had the Presidential suite, obviously. We had two of his staff members and him spending the night. There were no really nice towels at the Governor's Mansion at that time. So, I went and used my own money to buy some nice towels so that, you know, we could have them hanging on the walls. And we were waiting for him to arrive and I realized the staff had left early that day – the cleaning crew, and I realized that the front porch hadn't been swept off.

So, my son was sent for a broom. He was down there then and I said, "Go get a broom! We're going to sweep off this front porch." So, we're out there sweeping off the front porch before Prince Philip gets there. But he comes in and, you know, we greet him and he was a very nice person to be around, interesting. I noticed that the next morning when he came down for breakfast -- he has his tie – his coat unbuttoned and he's got this big diaper pin as a pin to hold his tie in place. And it's actually an old fashioned diaper pin! And I guess that's why it stays in

place when he puts his hands behind his back like he does and he's got his coat buttoned and his tie always stays in place, and Roy's goes from one end to the other, along with his ruffled hair that he always had problems with.

SHORT: You were an elementary school teacher, you said.

BARNES: Uh-huh.

SHORT: So, I guess that reflects into some of the projects that you undertook while you were First Lady?

BARNES: Yeah.

SHORT: We'd like to know more about your Georgia Early Learning Initiative.

BARNES: Initiative. Well, primarily, that was geared toward childcare facilities in that birth to three years of age area that we talked about earlier. The childcare facilities in Georgia are – there's not a lot of regulations and not a lot of – I wanted to see them brought up to a learning facility as opposed to just a babysitting facility. And a lot of the childcares were just babysitting facilities.

Because so much learning can go on between that birth to three years of age, the standards that

we were setting -- and I was working with United Way at the time -- they were going to give increased pay to teachers who went back and got a two year certificate. For instance, a two year degree as opposed to just having a high school degree. Their pay would be increased, because they're not paid huge amounts anyway and there's a huge turnover in teaching in childcare facilities.

We were striving toward getting NASI accreditation for as many childhood -- as many early learning facilities as we could -- childcare facilities. Offering money to help parents put their children in childcare -- low-income parents to put their children in childcare, because it gives those parents -- well, I'm having a senior moment. Cut that out, obviously! It gives low-income parents, who -- more than likely both parents are working, maybe even two jobs -- a way to have their child given some form of education before they enter school.

A lot of times children of low-income parents are so far behind because they haven't been given positive experiences. I mean, if you've got books and games and toys that are educational in your home because you're a middle-income or, you know, high-income family with disposable time and disposable money, your children are going to obviously have a lot more learning experiences. Well, parents who are low-income do not. And that was why we were focusing so much on childcare facilities, so that -- not that we wanted the state to run them or anything. We just wanted them to be upgraded to a learning environment, because they're spending eight hours of the day there nine times out of ten and there's a lot of things that you can do just in feeding lunch that are positive learning experiences. Start talking about nutrition and start talking about numbers -- counting, you know, the little individual raisins or something like that. You know,

those types of things that you can do with children that are very important toward their development.

SHORT: You were also involved with the wives of other Governors in a program to keep Georgia children alcohol free.

BARNES: Exactly. This is something that I think with as many – in particular now, with as much as we see children getting killed in cars from speed a lot of times, but often times there's alcohol involved. And their bodies are still developing, their brains are still developing. You must strive to keep children alcohol free. Now, I've noticed a big problem in colleges. There's all these binge drinking parties and stuff. There were parties when we were at the University of Georgia and whatever and there was alcohol involved then, but it was nothing, it seems like, compared to what there is today. And in fact, I have a good friend who went to a funeral last week for a friend of hers whose child had been binge drinking and passed out and evidently had acid reflux and died -- aspirated it back down, and that is so sad. So, we have to strive to make children aware that this is not something they need to be doing -- not only for their health but for their safety as well. So, that was part of the reasoning behind that.

SHORT: You also provided leadership in a program called Safe Kids Georgia.

BARNES: Uh-huh. That's one of the leading causes of death in children -- are accidents that

can be prevented. Car seats that aren't buckled in correctly. Now, I was a little distressed to hear -- when we started having grandchildren, of course, that was the first thing I did was went out and bought a car seat, and had to buy two actually because we had two a month apart. So, my children went to the fire station to get it checked, because that's where we were told to go, and they said, "We're sorry, we don't check it any more. We're not allowed to check them anymore." So, I was appalled! I think they have a number of a places that they can get them checked, but if people can't go to a place and get them checked regularly, Safe Kids used to provide -- in different areas -- used to have a day of fun activities where they talked about all kinds of things, but they would check car seats as well, you know, to make sure they were installed properly. Because if they're not, they're pretty much useless if they're not installed properly. Their child's going to fly out the window anyway. But there are so many ways children can get hurt and be killed or die from accidental poisonings, accidental -- a lot of different things.

I remember a time when Harlin was little, our son, and we were having the house painted. And my fear was that the painters would leave the windows open and that he would fall out the window. Well, in the back of the house it was really far down. So I had cautioned them, if you're going to paint the windows leave them cracked, only that, just a little bit. So, they did. They were very good at that. Well, I had been so good at teaching Harlin how to brush his teeth, that he thought the white paint was toothpaste. And so, I saw him get his toothbrush and walk out of the room and I thought, "Now, what is he doing?" So, I followed him in there and he was fixing to put his toothbrush in the paint and put it in his mouth. And I thought, "This is oil-based

paint. This is not something he should be putting in his mouth!" And so, I run and grab him, you know, before he can do it.

But even little things like that that people don't think about. See, I had not thought about it. And so, I was really concerned that people become aware of all of these things and given opportunity to learn about these things. They provided, like I say, these fun events that -- they would teach children how to get out of burning house or how to -- all different types of things like that.

SHORT: Hmm-mm.

BARNES: But primarily, they had this one vehicle that the kids could go in and they would put smoke in it and show them how they would become disoriented if they didn't have a plan to get out of a burning house or, you know, and show parents that too. So, it all goes back to trying to keep children safe.

SHORT: It was Safe Kids Georgia -- is the program.

BARNES: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

SHORT: As First Lady you were also heavily involved in women's health issues.

BARNES: Uh-huh. Roy actually created the Office of Women's Health, which -- the direction

that it was meant to take, I think it kind of got off its path, was -- a lot of health issues for women are different than they are for men. For instance, heart attacks present themselves different in women than they do in men. And a lot of times women will go to the emergency room or not even go to the emergency room, because they think they may have a sprained back from picking up a grandchild or something like that, when in actuality they're having a heart attack -- because their pain presents in the back and not necessarily down the arm, not necessarily in the front of the chest. And so, the Office of Women's Health that -- when we created -- or when Roy created it and I wanted to work with it to bring it -- to bring to light these different issues, the different ways that these same diseases that both men and women have would present themselves differently in women than in men.

SHORT: Let's get back now, if you will, to your husband's term as Governor.

BARNES: Hmm-mm.

SHORT: His platform when he won in 1998 was education.

BARNES: Education.

SHORT: And healthcare reform, which you and I have talked about here. So it sounds a lot like what your agenda would be if you were running for Governor.

BARNES: Well, that won't happen, just to put that clear – make that clear. That won't happen. But I think everybody -- I mean, you have – education has to be the first priority, because you cannot run a state or a nation without its population being educated. Jobs will not come to areas where people are not properly educated. This was the biggest focus Roy had -- was because he feels so strongly about Georgia being the capital of the South, being the state of the South where the -- engine of the South, so to speak -- in that jobs will come if our people are educated. And there's so much that needs to be done in Georgia and Roy just had this burning desire that he just had to do it all in one term, which may have been a little bit of a problem. But education is the key. I know that is such a trite expression, but education is the key to anything anybody does. If you can't read, you can't follow directions, so you don't know how to even fill out a form. So, that has to be the main focus of every Governor, of every President, of every leader everywhere in order to make – and one of the things that we quickly learned was that it's not just a national – we're not competing against Alabama and New Jersey and North Carolina and whatever, we're competing against other countries. And, in a lot of the other countries, the focus on education is much greater than it is here, even though we spend a lot of money on education. But their focus is much stricter, much harder. They go more – in Japan, for instance, they go more days a year to school and so their – it's sort of engrained in their culture, that education is something that has to be done. We take it for granted, because we've had it for so long. We've had public education for so long. And I think we take it for granted that it's always going to be there.

And you can't legislate what parents do, although that is a big part of what needs to occur!

When you have education you need a partnership between the education – the state and the parents, or the counties, the cities, and the parents. You need that coming together that a lot of parents do, but a lot of parents don't have time to do. I mean, it's not that they don't want to.

But like I said earlier, if they're working two jobs just to make ends meet, then a lot of times they don't have time to put the emphasis on education that they even would like to.

But it can be done. It's been proven with different things. KIPP Academies, which was one thing Roy was real interested in. They do some absolutely phenomenal things in these KIPP academies that -- they have kids coming longer hours in a day. They have kids coming on Saturdays. They have parents that have signed agreements that they're going to make sure they're there everyday on time and everybody can learn and everybody has the opportunity to learn and, I mean, there are some phenomenal things going on in education out there in different areas. It's just putting it all together into one program that's always the hardest.

SHORT: In my mind, there are three major contributions that Roy Barnes made to the state of Georgia. One is our new flag.

BARNES: Uh-huh.

SHORT: Had he not done what he did we would not have the flag.

BARNES: Uh-uh.

SHORT: Secondly, was his willingness to take on Georgia's transportation and education problems, and thirdly, his formation of a commission to solve our water problems. Now those are what I think were his accomplishments. What do you think were his greatest accomplishments?

BARNES: Well, I agree with you about the flag. I do not believe anybody else could have made that happen. Maybe that was his intentional – his intention for being there. Who knows? I definitely believe that the transportation and the water situation was something that had to be addressed and still needs to be addressed. Obviously, with the drought that we've been having Roy had online something like five reservoirs coming online in the next few years. That all got put on hold and the transportation is still a problem.

These are just all parts of a huge net that we as the state together as one viable entity, and unless it's done and done quickly – well, first of all, it takes a long time to build a reservoir; it takes a long time to build a road. You can plan for it today but it may be ten years from now, and by that time your population has grown, and enlarged so that you need to do more. So you have to take on these issues and you have to address them. Otherwise, it just goes undone and the state goes lacking in their resources and in their growth.

And what, idealistically, we would like to do or like to have seen was that these reservoirs be put all over the state, so that transportation be carried out into the state so that growth could occur all

over the state as opposed to just in the Atlanta area, even though the area -- the Atlanta area runs the rest of the state. But that brings jobs to south Georgia, it brings jobs to north Georgia, it brings jobs to anywhere in Georgia if you've got the infrastructure built and worked on. That's something that every Governor has to address in order to bring these jobs to different parts of the state, not just in Atlanta. And Atlanta is so tightly put together with so much that goes on in this area that there's not a whole lot of room for other growth to occur. So, it's got to be in areas further out from Atlanta.

SHORT: What did he like to do with the family? Did he play tennis with you?

BARNES: Oh no. Roy likes to read. Roy likes horseback riding. But primarily we just like to get together and have the kids around us, have the grandkids around us now, and we eat together, we watch TV together, we watch movies together, we do things like that together. Primarily the movies we watch now are Little Einstein's and Wiggles. And let's see -- Dora, Handy Manny. Those things are our life now. But that's a great, great time.

SHORT: Well, then came 2002.

BARNES: Hmm-mm.

SHORT: Ran for re-election.

BARNES: Hmm-mm.

SHORT: Tough campaign.

BARNES: Hmm-mm.

SHORT: What do you remember about that campaign?

BARNES: I remember Roy being made a rat, which I guess I was just – I'm still to this day astounded by that video that was put out showing him a rat stalking Atlanta. I didn't think it was as funny as some people did. But I remember we still had that same group of good friends and good supporters that were still behind us and that would be there tomorrow if he were to decide to run.

*Audio Break

BARNES: So we're picking up with negative advertising.

SHORT: 2002.

BARNES: It's awful. I think it's harder on the families than it is on the candidate by any stretch of the imagination. I mean that video, even though it only aired on the Internet, is out there for my grandchildren to see. That is not their father – grandfather. That is not my children's father. That is not Roy Barnes. He did not stalk Atlanta. He did not eat steak while Georgians were losing jobs. He was concerned for the state of Georgia from the time he was elected till the time he came home from the Governor's mansion – or from the Governor's office. And it breaks our hearts to see that and I'm sure other families that have to live through this. It does the same thing to them.

In fact, I was interested to see this past week, the letter that the Bush girls wrote the Obama girls was so touching and so absolutely on point about all the – not just negative advertising but negative press in general, and how hurtful it is to the families. They told the Obama girls to remember that – remember their father, that it was not the father they would see in the press, it was not the father they would see drawn in cartoons, it was not -- it would not be the father that they would see other people make him out to be. And so, that's what we have to focus on with negative campaigning. I hate it. I absolutely do not like it in any way, shape, form, or fashion. Now, there is a difference in negative campaigning and pointing out your issues as opposed to your opponent's issues. And that is a way to disagree and that is what should be pointed out. But when you get down to making somebody a rat, that's just totally uncalled for.

SHORT: Character assassination.

BARNES: It's character assassination in its rawest form and I personally just think it's very distasteful.

SHORT: It has nothing to do with the records or accomplishments.

BARNES: Because Roy has probably had more accomplishments than any Governor that I know of in recent history, except possibly – well, I don't know. I think Roy was a very effective and a very good Governor, and naturally I would, I'm his wife. But there again, I saw what went on down there and I saw how effective he was in getting bills passed and getting things done and things for the better. But I'm just appalled by some of the character assassinations I see. For instance, to have made Max Cleland out as a traitor, I mean that was character assassination at its worst, also.

And I was very pleased last week during the inauguration and during the time that – the transition -- Obama talking about wanting to bring civility back into politics. I mean there's just none of that left anymore. You're unpatriotic if you don't believe the way I do. You know, that's not true. And it really does make my blood boil, so to speak, with all the negatives that have gone on. On both sides now, I'm not saying -- I'm not trying to say that one or the other is worse. But both sides have created this massive negative attempt.

Can you hear my stomach growling? I'm sorry. Oh, can you cut it out? Okay. I just knew it was growling and I thought I'm either going to have to get up and eat something or he's going to be able – have to be able to cut it out.

CRAIG BREADEN: We can do amazing things with the audio.

BARNES: Oh good. Okay.

SHORT: Well, he failed to return to office in 2002, but he remains one of the state's most respected Governors and he's got plenty of life left.

BARNES: Oh yeah.

SHORT: Do you think he will ever seek public office again?

BARNES: Well, that's for him to decide. I think that's the best way I can answer that.

SHORT: So what if he said this to you: "Marie, should I run for Governor?" What would you say?

BARNES: Whatever you want, dear.

SHORT: How often do you say that?

BARNES: Not very. But no, that's something that he has to decide no matter what -- we just broke a few minutes ago and we were talking about how the kids were really against him running, because they have kids of their own now and they see him more and they get -- the grandkids get to see him more and they want their kids to be around him and to learn from him and everything. And so, they're being very selfish in what they do. Obviously they want him here. Sacrifice is something that our family has lived through. It's just something that you do if you're the family of a politician, especially one that's a good one. You sacrifice time; you sacrifice a lot being in that situation. I mean, it's something he's got to make up his mind about, because if he doesn't feel it, if he doesn't want it, then it will show. It will show through. And I would never tell him he couldn't do it, but I'm perfectly happy playing with my little five grandchildren.

SHORT: How did you and he adjust to life after politics?

BARNES: Well, actually probably pretty good. He went off and worked in legal -- in legal aid for about six months, had the time of his life. He really enjoyed what he was doing. Unfortunately, he couldn't continue to do it on the -- I mean he wasn't getting paid. So, we had to make a living so he had to come back and make a living. But if we could have afforded for him to do that for the rest of his life he would have been so happy. He got involved in cases that normally a legal aid attorney would never have gotten that involved in. I wish I could give you some examples right off the top of my head. I can't think, you know, of -- I mean I can think of a

few but there's something – there was just an extra sparkle about his being, because he was doing something that he loved and he was able to help people. And that's what he's enjoyed doing the majority of his life and that's what you do a lot of times in politics is you're able to make things better and lift up people that can't lift themselves up ordinarily on their own.

SHORT: Before we go, let's talk for a minute about the Barnes children.

BARNES: Okay.

SHORT: You have a son and two daughters.

BARNES: Uh-huh, and a daughter-in-law and a son-in-law.

SHORT: Good. Well tell us about them.

BARNES: Well, Harlin, our oldest child is a computer geek, for lack of a better word. He would not probably like me saying that. But anyway, he works for a company that – I'm not really sure what they do, but he works on their computers! And our daughter-in-law, until Will was born, worked full time in the carpet business. She sold commercial – she was a commercial carpet rep and now they have two children, Will and Libby, and they are just the cutest two little kids I ever saw besides the three other grandchildren that I have. Then we have a daughter,

Allison, who is an attorney, and her husband, John, who is also an attorney. They both work at the Barnes Law Group. We have a daycare, which was -- one of Roy's big initiatives early on was tax breaks for onsite childcare, and so he's practicing what he preaches. He put an onsite childcare. We have a nanny and she brings her daughter and we have our two girls -- soon to be three girls -- in it. We did have another lawyer in the firm that had a little boy that was in it. She's no longer with us. But it's available for any of the lawyers that have small children that need childcare. They're about a block off the square so the nanny can -- we have one of these great big carts that seats six kids, so the nanny can buckle them in and take them up to the square, play in the park, and get a special nanny treat when nanny goes along. And the kids get to go down and see them. Roy gets to see them everyday. Occasionally, our son's two children take advantage of it and get to come up there and play. Then our youngest daughter is working on her PhD in Special Ed Policy and Law.

SHORT: Ah!

BARNES: And she's actually finished her course work. She's standing her comps this spring, and then -- much to my chagrin -- she's spending 10 months in South Africa starting in August.

SHORT: Oh.

BARNES: Working on her dissertation. When apartheid ended there they mainstreamed

everybody. They mainstreamed typically developing, they mainstreamed developmentally disabled children, so she is studying the effects of that versus what we do here in the United States -- or in Georgia in particular. So that's going to be part of her -- that's going to be her dissertation and she's looking forward to going. She loves Africa. She's been once before and we went with her and spent a couple weeks. But she's going to be spending ten months. That's an awful long time for me not to get to see my child.

SHORT: So, none of them have been bitten by the political bug?

BARNES: No, but if anybody has it would be her.

SHORT: Hmm.

BARNES: Now that her daddy's not in politics anymore she doesn't feel obliged to keep her opinions to herself, so she has shared quite a few in the newspaper. She wrote one in the Red and Black about -- well, we won't get there, but she wrote -- she had one published in the Red and Black and it sort of made its way to the local paper. But no, none of them have, especially the two older ones.

SHORT: Well, you certainly had a very exciting life, Marie. As you look back over it, is there anything that you would have done or is there anything that you didn't do that you would like to

change today?

BARNES: No, not a thing. In fact, that was the one thing I told the staff when – in the Governor's office when Roy got elected, I said that I wanted to do as much as I could and still have time with the kids and I wanted to do as much as I could with Roy. Because I could contribute a little to his life there, whereas, in the legal profession I don't contribute that much. And I felt like if I could contribute and do some things there, I wanted to do them. Because I didn't want to wake up in four years if he didn't get re-elected, which he didn't, I didn't want to wake up the morning after and say, "I wish I had done that." You know? And I don't. And I think that made coming home a lot easier, because I think Roy did a great job, I did a fairly decent job. I wouldn't say that I was – I was not the most effective First Lady, but then I did what I wanted to do. And I look back with it fondly, because it was the most wonderful experience I think I could have had. I think it was a good experience for the children, even though they didn't participate in a lot, they still got to do some things that other children wouldn't ordinarily get to do. And it's a once in a lifetime thing, but I tease about the fact that I'm really not the 80th First Lady; I'm really the 79th First Lady, because wasn't it Dick Russell that didn't have a wife?

SHORT: He didn't have a wife but his mother –

BARNES: I know his mother did, but he didn't have a wife so actually I could be considered the

79th First Lady! No, I'm only kidding. But I used to tease Roy that I was the 79th. He was the 80th Governor, but I was the 79th First Lady! And it's just like when the day – one of the days we moved – right after we moved in. Of course, Roy and I cut up a lot, that's just something that we do. We are smart aleck back and forth to each other sometimes, and one of the things -- Shirley Miller had left a box about the furnishings and it had keys to the mansion in it. So when I found it I picked them up and I went into Roy and I said, "I have the keys to the Governor's mansion so you better be nice to me." And Roy was reading the newspaper and he never looked up and he said, "But I have the National Guard."

So we kind of left it at that! But no, it was an interesting time and we tried to enjoy it as much as we could and I don't regret anything. I have three happy, well-adjusted children and five grandchildren now and I could not ask for anything better.

SHORT: We've certainly enjoyed having you.

BARNES: Well, I've certainly enjoyed being here. I hope you cut a lot of it!

SHORT: And I want to thank you on behalf of Young Harris College and the Richard Russell Library, the University of Georgia, and myself.

BARNES: Well, good.

SHORT: For being with us.

BARNES: Well, I've enjoyed it. Thank you.

Audio Break

BARNES: Two of the things that I'm most proud of that we did while I was there --WSB did a special on all the living Governors and First Ladies at the Governor's mansion. They called it *The House that Georgia Built*. And historically, there's so much that went into and with all the living Governors that were there at the time, it meant so much to have that much history in one place -- to me, and in particular to Roy because he is a history major. But, they interviewed each Governor and First Lady and then we all sat around the dining room table and talked about life in the Governor's mansion. Some of the Governors at that time had not lived in the present Governor's mansion. It was to be -- it was talking about building that present mansion. So they talked about how it came about and all of the work that went into doing it.

Then the other thing that I'm proudest of was the newborn hearing screening program that Roy implemented -- I will have to say at my nudging. Our youngest daughter played basketball with a young girl who was deaf. They called the plays in sign language. Alyssa learned sign language as a result of it. It's part of how she got into Special Ed. And her story was that her parents did not realize she was deaf until she was almost two years old. And it goes back to that birth to three years of age, if a child can't hear what you're saying to that child, the child doesn't

know how to form words, does not understand commands, does not understand a lot in learning.

Now, there's a lot you can do.

Primarily, the biggest thing is the cochlear implant -- that if you find out a child is profoundly deaf that can be put in early on. I think that the FDA has approved it -- I know to 12 months; it may be approved now to nine months. I'm not real sure about that. But the cochlear implant can give them an early start on hearing, and by the time they're in school, really, they don't understand that they didn't hear. They are hearing normally like you and I hear. The older they get the harder it is to transition to because they haven't heard these sounds and what they have perceived as hearing over the years is not the way they actually hear. So that was one of the things. I heard story after story after story of parents who did not realize their children were deaf until they were about two years old.

Now there is a little bit of a controversy. There are a lot of hearing impaired families that believe that hearing impaired children are not -- it's not a handicap. And it really isn't because they can perform well in society without it. But it's an opportunity for children who -- for families to make a decision.

But that and one other thing that I was doing with early -- with newborns. We were working with March of Dimes and the Department of Human Resources, primarily with Public Health, to increase metabolic screenings on newborns. At the time, I think Georgia was only testing for eight metabolic disorders, which a lot of times can be treated with just changing the diet of a child -- that will allow them to grow and develop normally as opposed to having a lifelong problem all their life. In some cases it can lead to death. If a child's lactose intolerant,

you don't find out about it until two, three months later, that child could die in that amount of time. They were – we were trying to get it increased to 30 metabolic disorders, but not only do – I mean, just testing is a part of it, but there has to be a network set up for parents to learn how to treat these disorders, to learn what to do, and that – so, buying the machines, which were expensive – they were about \$500,000 a piece – was not the hardest part. The hardest part was setting up that network for parents -- to notify them, because a lot of parents would have a child here. Maybe they might be gone into labor from another state and they delivered at a hospital and their child was tested, then you've got to follow-up with that child. You've got to notify those parents, you know, that that child has this disorder and get them a way of getting some help. So, we were working on that. Now, I don't know where that is now. Unfortunately, I've been out of the loop for too long, but it was well on its way to being put into place and I was real pleased about that.

So, those were actually three things, not just two, but three things. In fact, going back to the newborn hearing screening, the Miss America that was deaf -- Heather Whitestone, I believe was her name -- she came to – when we kicked it off at Kennestone and they were not doing it routine; they were just doing children that they thought might be at risk. But they didn't test her children to see if they were hearing impaired. They didn't test her child, but she was pregnant at the time and she said this one will be tested because of this program. And, of course, all of my grandchildren were tested and they were all fine. And there may not be but 1 in 500 children born that's deaf, but that's one child that can be given the gift of hearing and of learning that might not otherwise – might hold back those other 500 children, because of problems that that

child incurs from being upset about not being able to hear, not knowing what's going on -- all kinds of things. Disruptions in the classroom that can be caused from that sort of problem. But anyway, those are some of the things that I'm proudest of. Okay?

[END]

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