

Charles Campbell 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 and the Richard B. Russell Library at the University of Georgia. Our guest today is Charles Campbell, former Chief of Staff for Senator Richard Russell and a key player in Georgia and national politics for many years and recently chosen as one of the Best 100 Lawyers in America. Charles, welcome.

CHARLES CAMPBELL: Thank you.

SHORT: How does it feel to be named one of the Best 100 Lawyers in America?

CAMPBELL: Well, that selection was made by lawyers, so I guess you have to take that into account, but I felt that it was an honor. Absolutely.

SHORT: Good. Well, congratulations.

CAMPBELL: Thank you.

SHORT: We're very interested in talking to you about your career with Senator Russell, but, before we do, let's take a minute and talk about Charles Campbell. Tell us about yourself.

CAMPBELL: Well, I was born in the old St. Joseph's Hospital in downtown Atlanta, which is now torn down, which is now where the downtown Atlanta Hilton Hotel [is]. We were living in Blairsville at that time and my mother had a sister who was a registered nurse at St. Joseph, so they decided that the birth would take place there. But my father was a County Agricultural Agent for the Department of Agriculture. We lived in Blairsville when I was born and until I was about two years old. We then moved to Pike County, near Zebulon, where my father became County Agent. And I think when I was about five, we moved to Butts County, near Jackson, Georgia, which is where I grew up and went to school before going off to the University.

SHORT: Uh-huh. And how was your life at the University?

CAMPBELL: Well, I went to Emory my freshman year. Most of the top students at our high school, by tradition, if their family could afford the high tuition – it was very high at Emory – went to Emory, so that's where I went. My parents said, "We will pay your tuition at Emory so long as you make straight A's." Well, I had gotten interested in high school debate and Emory had an outstanding debate program, so I started putting a lot of time in debate and I couldn't make A's. I made B's and C's, so during that year, my freshman year, I had debated the University of Georgia at a couple of tournaments. And they had a pretty good program – not as good as Emory – so, after my freshman year, I transferred to the University of Georgia primarily so I could continue to participate in intercollegiate debate and it turned out to be a great move for

me.

SHORT: Senator Richard B. Russell was a great statesman and certainly a great product of Georgia. Let's talk for a minute about Richard B. Russell, the man. What was he like in private?

CAMPBELL: Well, let me give you a little bit of background to help explain. It was pretty difficult to get to know Senator Russell as a man if you just saw him in Washington, and the reason for that was he had so much responsibility. Now this is from December 1965 when I went with him until he died in January of '71. Of course, he was over 65 years of age then; he was not in good health. But he had so many responsibilities. He was Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, he was the ranking Democrat on the Appropriations Committee, and Chairman of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee. He was the ranking Democrat on the Space Committee, on the Joint Atomic Energy Committee, on the Democratic Policy Committee and on the Democratic Steering Committee that determined committee assignments. So he had so much that he had to do that – and then I was in law school at night starting in the fall of '66, and I had to leave every day at 5:30 to go to law school either four nights a week if I went on Saturday morning or five nights a week if I didn't go on Saturday morning; but it so happened that about the time I went with the Senator, Proctor Jones, who was a young really a personal aide (he was the one that had the most dealings with Senator Russell on a personal basis), he went into the military for almost two years. So being the junior person in the office and one of

the few that was not married and didn't have any family responsibilities, it fell to me to start traveling with the Senator, and that was really the opportunity to get to know him.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: And he had a wonderful personality, one of the most interesting personalities. He had a wonderful sense of humor, a lot of it directed at himself. He had a tremendous interest in sports – baseball and football. He could tell you the weight, the school of practically every football player at the University of Georgia and on most of the ones in the pros. In fact, I'll give you a little example.

We always worked half a day on Saturday. One Saturday morning, he and I were engaged in a spirited discussion about the weight of a wide receiver for the Dallas Cowboys. In fact, you might even call it an argument. I was insisting he was wrong and he was insisting that I was wrong. Well, when I came in the next Monday, on my desk was a copy of the Dallas Cowboys football program turned to the page where this wide receiver's name and weight were circled with a note scribbled on it, "For your information."

And so he was very competitive, interested in a wide range of different subjects. He was the most widely read person I've ever met. In some areas like Civil War, for example, he would have qualified as a top professor at any university in the country – and world history, generally, for that matter. So he was just very well read, very interesting personality, very reserved. Until you got to know him and he got to know you, he could seem a little aloof, but once you got to

know him, he was a very interesting person to know. And one of the most interesting aspects of his personality – which I always found amazing for somebody that was as reticent and reserved as he was – he was by far the most powerful and respected member of the Senate during the time I was there, but when these new senators came to the Senate, he would go out of his way to meet them, to ask them if there's anything that he could do to help them, and to kind of break the ice. And he would use humor to do that.

I remember one example of a Democratic senator from New Hampshire was elected, and there hadn't been a Democratic senator from New Hampshire in a long, long time. And Senator Russell went up to him and said – this guy's name was Tom McIntyre – said, “Tom, I'm so glad that you're here and that New Hampshire sent a Democrat down here to help us.” So he had a wonderful way to break the ice.

Another kind of example involved Senator McIntyre was well. Senator McIntyre after a couple of years was appointed to the Armed Services Committee which Senator Russell chaired, and he wanted to have his picture made with Senator Russell so he could put it in his campaign literature at home because he was getting ready to run for reelection. So they arranged them and the photographer was getting ready to make the picture and Senator McIntyre said, “Mr. Chairman, do you mind if we switch places so that I can have my good side to the camera?” And Senator Russell said, “You're lucky to have a good side.” [Laughter]

But he had a wonderful way of dealing with senators generally, but particularly young, new senators. And I think that was one of the sources of his power in the Senate because those senators liked him. They may not vote with him all the time, but they liked him personally, and I

think that really strengthened his hand in the Senate.

SHORT: Speaking of young people, there are a number besides you who Senator Russell brought into political life. Let's talk about some of those.

CAMPBELL: Well, he had an interesting intern program. Most of the senators, they would have as their interns children of prominent financial backers. Of course, after 1936, Senator Russell never had a race, so he wanted to give rural Georgians – outstanding rural Georgians – an opportunity to experience the nation's capital, so he asked the 4-H Club of Georgia to select his interns, and they selected practically all of them. And all these young people – like Hamilton Jordan (who died recently) ...

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: ...Who was Chief of Staff to Governor Jimmy Carter and later President Jimmy Carter, was one of the Russell interns; Norman Underwood, who became a judge on the Georgia Court of Appeals and is now a prominent lawyer in Atlanta, was one; Buddy Darden, who served in Congress for over 15 years, was another one. And they didn't all go into politics. I mean, Senator Russell wanted this program to be where these people would experience the nation's capital and go back to their home communities and a lot of them did that. We had a Russell intern reunion over here in Athens about three years ago, and not all of them, but most of

the living ones, were here. And you have doctors, preachers, academics, lawyers, businesspeople and, of course, a fair number of politicians as well. So Senator Russell really liked young people and he said on many occasions that he had more confidence in the future because he thought the next generation would do a better job than his generation had done.

SHORT: Uh-huh. He lived a very Spartan life.

CAMPBELL: He did. He was very frugal with taxpayer money. He gave back huge sums to the Treasury by not using it. When I became his Chief of Staff, Bo Ginn was Senator Talmadge's Chief of Staff and he and I used to joke and argue about whether I or he was the 88th or the 98th or the 99th lowest paid administrative assistant in the Senate, and we thought that they had a conspiracy to keep the salaries down. But he was very, very frugal, and he was equally, if not more frugal, in his personal money. And I'll give you a couple of funny stories about that.

Not long after I got to Washington, he was going to a reception at the White House one night and I was asked to go down and buy him a shirt, a clean, white shirt. And I had just come from Athens, you know, and shopping at whatever – Stockton's or whatever – was here, and so I went to Woodward & Lothrop, which was a department store in downtown Washington, and bought him a shirt. I thought it was a pretty reasonable price; I think \$5 – maybe \$5, \$6, something like that. And well I could tell when I gave him the shirt and the receipt that he didn't appear to be overjoyed about it. I couldn't tell whether that was because of the shirt or what.

But a couple of days later, another member of the staff told me that Senator Russell had told them, “You know, I’m beginning to question that Campbell boy’s judgment. You know how much he paid for a shirt he bought for me?” [Laughter]

And another example that was funny that happened, when Lady Bird Johnson would be out of town, President Johnson would generally invite Senator Russell down and just the two of them would have dinner. And they’d have a number – a couple – of drinks and have dinner and so forth. Well, on this occasion, Senator Russell had been sick and he’d lost a lot of weight, and every year a clothing manufacturer in Bremen, Georgia – Sewell Manufacturing Company – would give Senator Russell three or four suits. These were very cheap suits. I mean, most United States Senators probably wouldn’t wear them, but they were Senator Russell’s suit supply. Well, he apparently told President Johnson that he couldn’t use the suits because he had lost so much weight they didn’t fit, and President Johnson told him about a tailor that had done some work. Now Johnson had Italian suits that were worth probably thousands of dollars. So, at any rate, I got a call the next day from the White House and they said the tailor’s name and number that Senator Russell and the President were talking about last night, so-and-so. And so we got him down there and he measured the suits and measured Senator Russell and came back a couple of weeks later and there are the suits and fit nice and so forth; but when Senator Russell saw the bill, he was just shocked. And I can’t remember what it was, but probably it was higher than that shirt I bought. But, at any rate, I remember him saying, “God, there’s no wonder this country has gone to hell if the President of the United States hadn’t got any better sense than to do business with somebody like that!” [Laughter] Now I’m sure that tailor wasn’t charging

President Johnson anything. [Laughter]

SHORT: You're probably right.

CAMPBELL: But he was very frugal, both with taxpayer money and with his own money.

SHORT: Let's talk for a minute about the Russell family. Senator Russell came from a very strong political family.

CAMPBELL: Yes. Well, his father, of course, was more known for his defeats than his successes. He did become the Chief Justice of the Georgia Supreme Court toward the end of his life; in fact, he held that position when he died. And he was one of the first members of the Georgia Court of Appeals. But he ran for Senate against Walter George. He ran for Governor twice. He ran for Congress at least once. And he got beat in all of those, and many times he got beat decisively; it wasn't very close. And, in fact, when he ran against Senator George, I think it was a matter of some embarrassment because, of course, Senator Russell went out and campaigned for him.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: But, clearly, he had no chance to win. But he was a distinguished – he was elected to the Georgia legislature and had a very good record in the Georgia legislature. Senator Russell was one of 15 brothers and sisters. Two of them died in their infancy, right after they were born; 13 of them lived. And one was a Federal Court of Appeals judge, one was a doctor, one was a minister, one was a school professor; they were all outstanding people. One of the sisters was a lawyer back in the '30s when there were no women lawyers basically. So it was a really outstanding family and a very close family. The event every year that Senator Russell most looked forward to was the Russell family reunion which took place in June. I was able to go to a couple of them myself. And so it was a very distinguished family, but Senator Russell was really the only one that achieved a whole lot politically.

SHORT: He got into politics early in his life.

CAMPBELL: Yes. He, when he graduated from the University of Georgia Law School, he went back to Winder to practice law with his father, and he ran for the legislature within a couple of years and he was elected to the legislature as a Representative from Barrow County when he was probably 20 – probably 21, 22 – years old. He became Speaker of the Georgia House of Representatives before he was 30 years of age and, of course, became Governor when he was 31.

SHORT: Too young.

CAMPBELL: Very, very young.

SHORT: Yes.

CAMPBELL: Very, very young.

SHORT: As I recall, they had to postpone the inauguration, didn't they, until his birthday?

CAMPBELL: I'm not too sure about that, but he was very, very young. And when he was elected to the United States Senate, he was the youngest Senator in the country at that time. So he got started very, very early.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: And they say he served 50 continuous years in public office. From the time he was elected as a Representative from Barrow County in the Georgia House until the time he died, it was 50 years – from 1921 to 1971.

SHORT: How do you assess his ability to move as rapidly as he did into the leadership

role in the United States Senate?

CAMPBELL: Well, I think – and I think Senator Russell said this in an interview he gave on WSB Television not too long before he died, a year or so before he died – part of it was luck. When he went to the Senate, Senator William Harris, his predecessor, had been on the Appropriations Committee. The Appropriations Committee is the most sought-after committee, and generally you wait ten years or so before you get on that committee. But it so happened when Senator Russell went there that Senator Huey Long from Louisiana had resigned all his committee seats in a big fight with the Democratic leadership and was devoting full time to harassing the leadership from the Senate floor. So when Senator Russell was asked by the Majority Leader what committees he wanted to be on, he said, “I want to be on the Appropriations Committee. My predecessor, Senator Harris, was on it, and my people expect me to be on it.” And the Majority Leader said, “Well, Senator, that’s not possible. There are senators that have been waiting here almost ten years to get on that committee. We can’t put a freshman senator on that committee. It’d be unheard of.” And he said, “Well, I’m not interested in any committees if I can’t be on the Appropriations Committee.” And, apparently, the Majority Leader, not knowing Senator Russell, you know, thought, “We’ve got another Huey Long on our hands here, which is the last thing we need.” So they put him on the Appropriations Committee, which was almost unprecedented.

And then another great stroke of luck was that the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee, the person who should have become chairman of it was in a big fight with the

chairman of the committee. They hated each other. So the chairman of the committee bypassed that person and named Senator Russell, a brand new senator, as chairman of the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee, so right off the bat, he was not only on the Appropriations Committee and the Naval Affairs Committee (which was the predecessor to the Armed Services Committee), but had a chairmanship of a major subcommittee. And agriculture, of course, at that time was the single most important economic activity in Georgia. So that was luck.

I think the things that were not luck was the fact that he learned the Senate rules immediately when he went there. He made it a point to know those rules backwards and forwards, and that gave him a tremendous advantage because most senators didn't really understand the Senate rules and some of them were very arcane and pretty soon, not long after he got there, he became know as the authority on the Senate rules. And I think that strengthened his hand.

And then I think he was just a tremendously hard worker. Senator Talmadge said one time that Senator Russell was a speed reader. In fact, Senator Talmadge asked me did I know if he'd ever taken any speed-reading courses. Well, I'd never heard that. But Senator Talmadge said, "He can read faster and retain more of it than anybody I've ever met." And that probably helped him a lot.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: So it was a combination of ability, hard work and luck.

SHORT: Uh-huh. Speaking of Senator Talmadge, I believe Senator Talmadge served 24 years with Senator Russell.

CAMPBELL: That's right.

SHORT: What was their relationship like?

CAMPBELL: Great. Great. It was – I don't know of any two offices in the Senate that worked better together than ours did. I can't ever recall having an argument or a disagreement, which was very unusual because a lot of these Senate offices, even when the senators from the state were from the same party, would be fighting all the time. They'd see who could be first to make a press release about a federal grant. In Senator Russell's areas of expertise, he made the announcement. In Senator Talmadge's areas of expertise, he made the announcement. Senator Russell had great confidence in Senator Talmadge's political ability and judgment, and they just had a wonderful relationship – which was surprising, considering the fact that the only contested race that Senator Russell ever had for reelection to the Senate was when Senator Talmadge's father ran against him in 1936 in a very, very bitter race. But they were closer than any two senators that I saw.

And to give you an example of the confidence that Senator Russell had in him, when Senator Russell finally agreed to have the Russell Foundation established to preserve his papers

here at the University and so forth, he said he would agree to it on one condition, and that is that Senator Talmadge would agree to be the first Chairman. So that kind of gives you an idea of the confidence that he had in him.

SHORT: Let's talk about that '36 race for a minute between Russell and Talmadge. That's a little bit before my time, but...

CAMPBELL: That's six years before I was born too.

SHORT: Yeah. But as I recall, the main issue in that campaign was President Roosevelt.

CAMPBELL: Yes. Yes. Gene Talmadge ran against Senator Russell basically claiming he was a stooge for Roosevelt because Senator Russell had voted for all the New Deal programs up until then and was very close to Roosevelt. Roosevelt was Governor of New York when Senator Russell was Governor of Georgia. Of course, Roosevelt came to Warm Springs. Senator Russell saw him frequently. The 1932 Democratic Convention, which was the first race for President, Senator Russell gave the nominating speech for Roosevelt, so they were very, very close. And Talmadge I think thought and he played the race card by saying there were gonna be all these black postmasters that Roosevelt was going to be appointing that would supplant all the white postmasters in Georgia and that Senator Russell was a tool[ph] of him and was going along with him, that kind of thing. And so it was a very bitter race. In the end, Senator Russell

defeated him pretty handily.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: Senator Talmadge – Senator Herman Talmadge, Gene Talmadge’s son – maintained to the end that his father would have won the race had he not made Roosevelt an issue.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: Now whether that’s true or not, I don’t know, but after that ’36 race, Senator Russell never had another contested Senate race.

SHORT: Who were some of his better friends in the Senate?

CAMPBELL: Well, certainly, Senator Talmadge would be one. I just read an oral history here at the Russell Library recently of Senator Milton Young of North Dakota, who was a Republican Senator, and I knew he was a very close friend; but he described, in this oral history, Senator Russell as his closest friend in the Senate. So certainly he’d be on the list.

And I’ll tell you a little aside that was in his oral history that’s interesting. In 1952, when Senator Russell was running for President – for the Democratic nomination – Senator Young was

up for reelection in North Dakota at that time, and he made the statement to a newspaper reporter that if Senator Russell got the Democratic nomination, he was gonna vote for him. Well, that just created a firestorm in North Dakota, and he was in danger of getting beat. Senator Russell wrote him a handwritten letter that said, "Dear Milt. If I had to have the confidence and friendship of Milt Young or be President of the United States, I'd rather have the former." And that letter got released in the media. So certainly Milt Young would have been one.

John Stennis of Mississippi certainly was. He succeeded Senator Russell as Chairman of the Armed Services Committee.

Senator Henry Jackson of Washington state. He was on the Armed Services Committee, and I read an oral history interview of his here recently – and I had never heard this – but he said Senator Russell had encouraged him in 1970 to run in 1972 for the Democratic nomination and that's one of the main reasons he did. Of course, Senator Russell died in January of '71.

Senator Leverett Saltonstall of Massachusetts, a Republican. He was the ranking Republican on the Armed Services Committee. They were very close.

Senator Russell's committees were interesting and they were totally bipartisan. There was no partisanship on the Appropriations or Armed Services Committees, and I think one of the reasons was that Senator Russell was genuinely close friends with the Republicans that served on those committees.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: So those would be a few of the Senators that I would say that were good friends of his. Of course, Lyndon Johnson, obviously, when he was in the Senate, was – they were very close friends and worked together a great deal.

SHORT: Well, he was Lyndon Johnson's mentor.

CAMPBELL: Yes. Yes.

SHORT: They had a very strong relationship. In fact, he's given credit for making Lyndon Johnson the Majority Leader, which led I guess to his vice presidency and his presidency.

CAMPBELL: That's correct. And I think properly so. Senator Russell – and this has been documented – was they wanted him to be Majority Leader and he said, "I'm not gonna accept that because I'm not gonna agree in advance to support the program up and down the line of any administration. And so I'm not qualified to be Majority Leader." And so he recommended Johnson. He said, at that time he said, "Senator Johnson's not the most brilliant senator. He's not the best speaker." And he went through a number of things, "But he has the best combination of all those qualities." And that was what got Johnson started. And then when Johnson became Majority – that was, I think he became Minority Leader first because the Democrats were out of power – but when he became Majority Leader, he insisted that Senator

Russell move his seat in the Senate and sit right behind him so that, if parliamentary issues came up, that he could consult with Senator Russell on the rules. But, certainly, Johnson would be in that group as well.

SHORT: You visited the White House quite often.

CAMPBELL: Yes.

SHORT: Dined with the President and with Sam Rayburn, the Speaker of the House.

CAMPBELL: Yes.

SHORT: And that seemed to be a fairly strong friendship, the three of them.

CAMPBELL: Yes, absolutely. Senator Russell liked speaker Rayburn a lot, and Speaker Rayburn was kind of a father figure to Johnson. Johnson started off in the House, and another reason I think he and Senator Russell hit it off right away was he was on the Naval Affairs Committee in the House which was chaired by Carl Vinson of Georgia.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: And I'm sure that Congressman Vinson also spoke favorably of Johnson when he was elected to the Senate.

SHORT: Uh-huh. Despite their friendship, though, Senator Russell often differed with President Johnson on some of the country's policies. For example, Vietnam.

CAMPBELL: Yes, absolutely. Absolutely. He was, well, Senator Johnson himself earlier in the '50s was opposed to getting involved in Vietnam. It was interesting, when Eisenhower was President, there was a big meeting at the White House and the proposal was to send not troops, but advisors. This was right after the French were defeated in Vietnam, and the proposal was to send advisors to help the South Vietnamese government. And Senator Russell and Senator Johnson were the two most outspoken opponents to it. "Absolutely not. We should not get involved in Vietnam in any way."

Now by the time Johnson became President, of course, we had troops there and, of course, he escalated the war greatly and it's ultimately what destroyed his presidency. There's no question about it. Senator Russell I think lost a lot of confidence in Lyndon Johnson over the Vietnam War because Senator Russell felt like we didn't have any strategic interest in Vietnam. That, if the President of the United States hadn't stood up at press conferences and said how important it was, it wouldn't be important at all. That, once you put your credibility on the line, of course, then you're kind of creating, but that he felt like that Johnson should either take the military steps that were necessary – some of which were risky because there was a concern that

China would intervene on behalf of North Vietnam if it came to North Vietnam seemingly being defeated – or just get out. Senator Russell would have supported just getting out.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: And, in fact, I think Senator Russell thought that if Kennedy had lived, that Kennedy was going to get out by either engineering a coup of some kind or having the South Vietnamese government ask us to get out.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: But when Johnson got in – and he admittedly was faced with a very difficult situation that was not of his own making, but, you know, a lot of escalation took place on his watch – and it basically just tore the country apart and destroyed his presidency.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: And I think Senator Russell lost a lot of confidence in Johnson over the Vietnam War.

SHORT: Senator Russell had an agenda, as I see it, that was headed by national defense

and Agriculture.

CAMPBELL: Yes.

SHORT: Can you tell us about some of the programs that he supported in those two areas?

CAMPBELL: Well, when he started out, I think agriculture was the most important. I've already talked about that he became immediately Chairman of the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee. He was a leader of practically every one of the New Deal agriculture programs – the creation of the Farmers Home Administration, rural electrification, conservation. Of course, he started the School Lunch Program, which really was a way to provide nutritious meals to students, but also to deal with the tremendous problem of agriculture surpluses that existed at that time. One thing most people don't know is that he started the forerunner of the Food Stamp Program also. So agriculture was very important to him. Senator Russell thought that it was a very dangerous trend in this country to have more and more people moving into the cities and off the farms. He thought in the long run that was going to be very problematic. So he had a lifelong interest in agriculture. Even after he got involved heavily in national security, he maintained his interest in agriculture.

In the national security area, he was appointed, as I said earlier, to the Naval Affairs Committee which later became the Armed Services Committee, and he just worked his way up

on that committee. And by World War II, for example, he was considered to be probably the authority in the Senate, even though he'd been in the Senate just ten years, on national security. He led a delegation of senators that toured the world during World War II and went to every war theater and then filed an extensive report that became kind of the blueprint for the post-War policies. And, of course, he later became Chairman of Armed Services, conducted the General Douglas MacArthur hearings during the Truman administration, and just had a very distinguished career.

One of the things that struck me when I got there in late '65, the Defense Authorization Bill was probably almost half the federal budget and it never took one single day for it to go through the Senate because there was basically no debate. Senator Russell would get up and give his speech on behalf of it and the ranking Republican on the Armed Services Committee would say that, "Republicans on the Committee agree," and it'd go through. And it wasn't until Senator William Proxmire came to the Senate, which was after Senator Russell – it was about the time Senator Russell gave up the Armed Services Committee and became Chairman of Appropriations and the Vietnam War started becoming very controversial – that the Defense Bill was ever questioned. People simply didn't know what was in it. Senator Russell was the only one that really knew what was in it.

SHORT: What would he think about our current world policy if he were with us today?

CAMPBELL: Well, he would be very opposed to all the foreign aid that's done. He

became very dis – and it's interesting because he was an avid supporter of the Marshall Plan and the establishment of NATO after World War II; he was one of the key supporters of those policies – but he became disenchanted with foreign aid because he thought it was wasted that we gave all this aid to people, basically trying to bribe them to do things, and it generally didn't work. And so I think he would be opposed. First, of course, he'd be opposed to the tremendous deficits, which is another reason I think he lost confidence in Lyndon Johnson because, with all the expenditure on Vietnam, Johnson was doing all the Great Society programs; and that was kind of the forerunner of these huge deficits that we've been kind of plagued with ever since. So I don't think he would be very supportive of that.

I'm not sure on national security now. I'm just not; things have changed so much. But he certainly would support a strong military.

SHORT: Uh-huh. And the War on Terror?

CAMPBELL: My guess is he would. I don't know that he would have supported interrogation techniques that violated the Geneva Convention. I don't believe he would have supported that. But, you know, when he was in the Senate – this is kind of an illustration of how much power and influence he had – when they set up the CIA, he was kind of the sole oversight of the CIA for the first ten years, and the reason was because they were concerned about leaks and the more people that knew these secrets. So Senator Russell was kind of a one-man show, which probably is too much power in any one person's hands, but he was a strong supporter of

the CIA but I'm not sure he would be very supportive of some of the things that have come out recently.

SHORT: Would he have advised George W. Bush to invade Afghanistan?

CAMPBELL: I don't know. That's a tough one because of 9/11. He certainly would have felt like we had to do something in response to 9/11. Generally speaking – and this was his problem with Vietnam – he, in fact, he made a statement one time, “I can't think of a worse place to fight a land war than Vietnam, unless it's perhaps Afghanistan.” So I think he would have probably been concerned about American troops in Afghanistan. Is there any way to accomplish our goals without getting bogged down with troops there? But I don't know. I don't know. The issues are so different that I don't know what his...

SHORT: How about Iraq and the oil question?

CAMPBELL: Yeah, I mean, his basic philosophy was that we should use military power only where our strategic interests are involved and there's no reasonable alternative to the military power. And then it should be done by air, if at all possible, and not ground troops.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: Now, World War II was an example where there was no choice, and so he became a vigorous supporter of Roosevelt's World War II policy and Truman's post-War policy. But I think he would look for every way he could to avoid sending ground troops, and particularly into areas where it's not an up front fight but counterinsurgency and guerrilla warfare and all that kind of stuff.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: That was one of the problems he had with Vietnam, and he never thought we could win in Vietnam. And, in fact, he said – huh, this is something that really upset Johnson. He was on “Meet the Press” one time, and this was during the height of the controversy over Vietnam, and somebody asked him on “Meet the Press,” they said, “Senator (or Mr. Chairman), if you had a completely free election in all of Vietnam – North and South Vietnam – nobody's being coerced, everybody could vote for whoever they want to, how do you think it'd come out?” He said, “My guess is Ho Chi Minh would win.” Well, Johnson just went bananas, you know, over that. I mean, here the Chairman of the Armed Services Committee says that Ho Chi Minh would win a free election there.

But Senator Russell was a student of history. He read history. And one of his criticisms of American policy in Vietnam was that we didn't really understand Vietnam. We didn't understand the culture. We didn't understand the history. And so I think in all of these situations where the question is, “What are you gonna do?” First of all, he'd study the culture

and the history, and then he would make a decision on what was necessary and prudent in light of that.

SHORT: Okay. He also was somewhat of an advisor to John F. Kennedy.

CAMPBELL: Yes. Yes.

SHORT: How did they get along?

CAMPBELL: I think, from everything I've read, I think they got along very well. Of course, Senator Kennedy was not, I don't think, really regarded as an outstanding senator in the Senate, to be honest with you. In fact, I heard Senator Russell say one time – he served with all three of the Kennedys, Jack Kennedy in the Senate before he became President, Robert Kennedy before he was assassinated, and now Edward Kennedy – and I heard Senator Russell tell somebody one time that he thought that Ted Kennedy would be the best of the three in terms of a senator. And that's probably right. I mean, he's had a distinguished career in the Senate.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: You may not agree with his political views, but just in terms of being effective and recognized as an effective Senator. But, certainly, he was close to President

Kennedy. President Kennedy, when Edward Kennedy came to the Senate, he went to President Kennedy, his brother, and asked him, you know, “What can I do to get off on a good foot and to do the things that are necessary to be effective and be a good senator?” And he said, “Go talk to Senator Russell.” So he had a lot of admiration and respect for Senator Russell, and I think Senator Russell liked Kennedy.

SHORT: Following his assassination, he was put on the Commission...

CAMPBELL: Yes.

SHORT: ...By President Johnson and he didn't want to serve.

CAMPBELL: No. Did not. He felt like he had too many other things that he had to do. He didn't like Earl Warren, who was going to be Chair. And, of course, all of this has come out now because the Johnson tape-recorded conversations have all been released and transcribed now. And so I think it's very clear that President Johnson basically bamboozled him into serving on the Warren Commission. But it was interesting. After he got on it – and, remember, this was during the height of the Civil Rights fight in the Senate; the '64 Civil Rights fight happened at exactly that same time – so Senator Russell went to very few of the Warren Commission hearings. He had a lady that was a clerk at the Georgia Court of Appeals named Alfreda Scobie[ph], and she was brought to Washington and she attended all of the hearings as Senator

Russell's representative. Of course, she couldn't ask any questions.

But he read – religiously read – the testimony. When Oswald's wife was examined, he felt like they had treated her with kid gloves and had not adequately examined her, so he talked Earl Warren into him and two other senators forming a subcommittee and going back down and examining her again, which they did. I don't think they found out anything much beyond what had already come out.

And then when the final report was being done, they got into a huge fight over language because Chief Justice Warren wanted to say that the evidence is clear that Oswald, acting alone and with no assistance from anyone else, assassinated President Kennedy. Senator Russell was not willing to go that far, and he prepared a dissent that has now been released and is a public document here in the Russell Library, in which he said – his dissent said – that Oswald had spent time out of the country in Russia and in Cuba and that Senator Russell was not sure that all of the information was available to the Commission. That, as far as he was willing to go was to say, “Based upon the information and evidence available to the Commission, Oswald was the lone assassin.” And that is ultimately what they put in the final report.

But you're exactly right. He did not want to – he did not want to serve. I don't think he enjoyed serving, but I think he made a very valuable contribution because the Warren Commission, of course, has been criticized even for going as far as they did in the report.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: And if they'd have gone as far as the Chief Justice wanted to go, they would've been even more criticized.

SHORT: The Senator and President Johnson seemed to have parted ways along the way. Was that over the Warren Commission or the Civil Rights Act or his Great Society? What happened?

CAMPBELL: Well, again, let me preface what I'm going to say about this because I do have some ideas about it. To say that I was there during a very narrow window of the relationship – three years, basically, '66, '67 and '68, because Johnson was gone by the end of '68 – I do not believe their falling out was over Civil Rights. I won't say that it didn't play any role, but by the time I got there in December of '65, the '64 Civil Rights Act and the '65 Voting Rights Act had already passed and there really was no other major Civil Rights legislation that came after that. When I first got there, Senator Russell was down at the White House at least once a week and, as I said earlier, if Lady Bird was out of town, Johnson would have him down and just the two of them. So the relationship, from all appearances, was still close at that time.

I don't think the Warren Commission was the reason because Senator Russell did agree to serve finally. Johnson had already announced it to the press after Senator Russell told him he wouldn't serve, but, nonetheless, I think he got over that.

As I said earlier, I think the Vietnam War caused a significant loss of confidence on Senator Russell's part in Johnson.

But the thing that I observed and led me to the conclusion that, at least while I was there, I think it was a friendship of convenience because I saw things that indicated to me that Senator Russell didn't really trust Johnson. And the beginning point of any true friendship in my mind is trust. If you don't trust someone, how can you say they're a close friend of yours? And the reason I say that Senator Russell didn't trust him, well, the Warren Commission, how that came down, was one example, although not the most important one.

But I remember one year (and I can't remember what year this was) we were at a military base in Florida and there had been a controversy where the CIA had infiltrated student organizations on various campuses where you had a lot of campus unrest, and they were trying to find out who the ringleaders of all this stuff was. Well, it became public and it created a huge controversy. And Johnson appointed a Blue Ribbon Committee to investigate into that. Dean Rusk was Chairman, as I recall. Johnson called Senator Russell while we were on that trip to Florida to the military base, and I didn't hear Johnson's side of the conversation but I did hear Senator Russell's. And I remember him saying, "Now, Mr. President, I don't want any misunderstanding with you or alleged misunderstanding like we had in connection with the Warren Commission. I am not gonna serve on this committee. Get someone else." And he couldn't have been more clear. Well, we get up the next morning and look in the newspaper and there's the names of the members and Senator Russell's name's on there. He was not happy about that. He didn't attend any of the meetings. And so that was another kind of little episode.

Another big episode – probably the biggest episode – was the Alex Lawrence judgeship nomination. And I'll have to give you a little background so that whoever is watching this

knows what the heck that was. In Georgia, when the Democrats were in the White House, the senators selected federal judges, and, in Georgia, we have three districts: Southern District, Middle District and Northern District. Senator Russell and Senator Talmadge had an agreement. In the Southern District, Senator Russell would select the judge and, if he wasn't personally obnoxious to Senator Talmadge, Senator Talmadge would go along with it. Exactly the opposite in the Middle District. And then in the Northern District, they would have to agree.

Well, there was a vacancy in the Southern District and, initially, Senator Russell selected a guy from Waycross named Mac Barnes and he was well on his way to being confirmed, wasn't controversial, but he died of cancer before the process could be completed. So Senator Russell selected Alexander Lawrence of Savannah, who was a distinguished lawyer, as the replacement. And, at that time, Ramsey Clark was Attorney General, and Judge Lawrence, back when the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision came out in '54, had gave a speech to a civic club in Savannah, heavily criticizing the Supreme Court for the decision, which wasn't unusual. I mean, Senator Russell gave such speeches. In fact, he thought to highly of the speech, he put it in the Congressional Record at the time.

But, at any rate, the NAACP and a group in Savannah started agitating against Lawrence claiming he was racially biased and blah-blah-blah. Clark started opposing him, and the reason Clark was Attorney General was that his father had been Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court and very close to Lyndon Johnson. That's the way he got to be. He was also probably the most liberal person in the administration and was the darling of the anti-Vietnam, all the liberal elements. So he had a dimension, I guess you'd say, that gave him some additional weight with

Johnson. But, at any rate, Johnson started dragging his feet, and a month went by and no Alex Lawrence nomination. Senator Russell was talking to him several times. Three or four times, he goes down to the White House to see him and says, “You know, this ought to be a pretty simple proposition. Either the guy’s qualified or he’s not and, if he’s not qualified, the American Bar Association’ll tell us.” So Johnson, “Oh, yes, I agree with you, you know. And he’s gonna be nominated. Don’t worry about it.” But he wasn’t. It just kept going on and on.

So, finally, Senator Russell just got exasperated about it, and he went to Winder one weekend. The other thing that had happened that bore on this was there were the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court was resigning – I guess it was Earl Warren – and President Johnson wanted to make Abe Fortas, who was a member of the court at that time, the Chief Justice and wanted Homer Thornberry, who was a judge from Texas, to be the replacement to Fortas. And the fear was that the Southern senators were going to filibuster Fortas because he had a very liberal voting record on the court. Johnson started trying to, Senator Russell thought – Johnson denied, but this is what Senator Russell thought – he was trying to play off the Lawrence nomination by holding it up until these votes on the Supreme Court took place.

So, at any rate, he lost his patience, which was very unusual for Senator Russell. I was not with him that weekend in Winder. He came home to Winder, but he came back with a letter, and he showed it to me the next Monday morning and said, “This is a letter I’ve written to the President about this judgeship issue, you know. What do you think about it?” Well, it was – I was taken aback by the letter. I mean, you know, Senator Russell had such a respect for the office of the President and he had some really, really tough language in there that didn’t – just

didn't – sound much like Senator Russell to me, so I said, "Senator," I said, "this, you know, are you sure you want to write a letter like this to the President?" Well, he kind of grabbed it. He wasn't particularly interested in my advice really or abide it. He did call Senator Talmadge down and showed it to Senator Talmadge, and Senator Talmadge said, "It's a great letter and I'll be happy to cosign it with you." [Laughter]

So he sends this letter and he says in the letter, "I do not, after so many years in the Senate and such a long relationship with you, I do not appreciate being treated as a child or a patronage-seeking ward heeler." That was his language. Well, of course, that got some action at the White House, and Johnson called him up and said, you know, "You've misunderstood this. This is no relationship between Fortas," and all this stuff. And there was a young boy – a young man – from Georgia, Tom Johnson, who later became President of CNN, and who's on the Russell Foundation Board of Trustees, by the way, who was in the White House Press Office. And Johnson knew that Senator Russell really liked Tom Johnson, so Johnson wrote a letter back saying that this letter – that he's going to destroy his copy of the letter and he wants Senator Russell to do the same thing because he said, "This letter does not reflect well on you, doesn't reflect well on me as your President, and it certainly doesn't reflect well on our 30-year relationship," or whatever. Well, so Tom Johnson brought it up and met with Senator Russell, and Senator Russell calls me in when he leaves and he says, "They want – they say they're gonna destroy theirs. They're not. Be sure we keep ours." And the letter's in the Johnson files and is in the Russell files.

So that showed a lack of trust. Now Alex Lawrence's name was sent up. He was ranked

well qualified by the American Bar Association. He was confirmed in the Senate with almost no difficulty and had a distinguished career, by everybody's account, on the federal bench. But that told me that this didn't look like a lot of trust.

And then the final thing that happened, when Johnson left the White House, they had a series of oral history interviews of people that had been important to his career in Washington. Well, of course, Richard Russell's name would be right at the top of that list. Senator Russell was dragging his feet and, you know, he, "Couldn't do it. I'm too busy." Or, you know, "I'm sick. I'm gonna be in the hospital," and so forth. And it just went on and on and they'd gotten interviews from everybody else and they were getting ready to close the deadline, and we were getting calls from people – you know, cabinet members that had served under Johnson, you know, wanting to know why Senator Russell hadn't. And so, finally, the thing that precipitated it was a call from Dean Rusk, you know, said, you know, "What's going on here?"

So I went in finally and I just said, "Senator," I said, "you know this is getting embarrassing. I mean, we've got to tell them something. We can't just keep doing nothing." And he said, "Well, I'm not gonna do it and I'll tell you why. Because if I did, I'm gonna tell the truth and that wouldn't help anybody, so I'm not gonna do it." So he didn't. And I don't know what he meant by that, but my conclusion, based on all of this and some other things that we probably don't have time to go into, is that, at least at this stage, there wasn't personal trust, which I think is essential to any friendship.

I think if you look back on their friendship – and the reason I think it was a friendship of convenience – when it started, Johnson got most of the benefit. He had a rapid rise in the Senate,

a mentor, Majority Leader. In the back end of the relationship, Senator Russell probably got the most out of it. Senator Russell found out that Lockheed had been given the C5A contract, for example, not from the Secretary of Defense, but from Johnson. He called him. Generally speaking, we could get almost anything in Georgia and get the support of the Johnson Administration that we wanted in terms of projects and that kind of thing. And then, of course, just being known to be very close to the President or being intimate and being down there all the time, that was a tremendous advantage to Senator Russell in the Senate.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: So I think it was a friendship of convenience. That's my conclusion.

SHORT: Charles, was Senator Russell surprised when President Johnson decided not to run in 1968?

CAMPBELL: I never discussed it with him specifically, but my impression is that, yes, he was. It was a real bombshell in Washington. It was. People were shocked. I know that Senator Russell was very aware of the pressure – psychological pressure – on Johnson. You've got to remember that there were demonstrations outside the White House all day and all night. In fact, the Johnson girls would say they couldn't sleep at night. That's the reason why they looked forward to Camp David. But, and Senator Russell told the story – I think on this WSB

film toward the end of his career – that when he went down to see Johnson, he started taking Senator Stennis with him because if it was just him there, Johnson would break down and start crying and Senator Russell didn't want to go through that.

So I think that Senator Russell would have known he was under a lot of pressure, but I don't think he knew. He got a call in advance of the speech from the White House, but it was a matter of hours; and I don't remember exactly how many, but it wasn't too many.

SHORT: Uh-huh. Harry Truman once said that Richard Russell would have been President of the United States had he not been from the South. Did Senator Russell ever have any real passion about being President?

CAMPBELL: Based on what I've read, yes. I think he would like to have been President. Absolutely. You know, not only did Truman say that, but Lyndon Johnson, when he was Vice President (I always found this to be absolutely astounding that a Vice President would make this statement) but he was Vice President serving under President Kennedy and at a public event in Washington where they were honoring Senator Russell, Johnson said if he could personally choose a President of the United States, he'd choose Senator Russell. And I thought that was rather shocking to make that statement in public when, you know, you're Vice President to somebody else. But a lot of people felt like that he was the best qualified person.

Nixon said at the time of his death if had been born ten years later, he'd have been President. And I think Senator Russell felt like that he was qualified and that I think he was

somewhat hurt in '52, which is the only serious race for the nomination he ever made, that even though people conceded he was well qualified – probably better qualified than anybody else – that nobody from the South could be nominated.

But, having said all that, he was not willing to change because, at the '52 convention, people told him very frankly, they said, “Look. There’s two reasons. If you can solve these two problems, you can get the nomination. You’ve got to soften your position on Civil Rights and you’ve got to soften your position on certain labor issues.” And he said, “No, sir. I’m not changing those positions.”

SHORT: Let’s talk for a minute about his position on Civil Rights. I have had during my lifetime the great experience of hearing Senator Russell speak on that subject, and he was not a race-baiter.

CAMPBELL: Uh-huh.

SHORT: The speeches that I recall are always well done, well researched and based primarily on constitutional issues. Is that a correct assumption?

CAMPBELL: Yeah, I think that is a correct assumption. Senator Russell never used the race question in his races. He never raised the question. Gene Talmadge tried to use it in '36 and Senator Russell responded, but he didn’t – he wasn’t – Senator Russell was not a

demagogue. I think that any fair assessment would have to say he was a segregationist. I don't think you can cut it any other way. I think he was sincere about that. He really thought that segregation was the best policy, but he didn't hate black people and he didn't want black people to be held back. I think that you have to consider this is difficult for us, people our age, because we came up in a different environment.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: But you have to remember that Richard Russell was born in 1897. The year before he was born, the Supreme Court declared segregation legal and constitutional. And that didn't really significantly change until 1954, in the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, and Richard Russell was almost 60 years old at that time. So he lived his entire life really where segregation was not only a way of life in the South, but it was the law of the land. And I have read various people who's said, "Well, you know, a lot of southern senators changed," and they cite Strom Thurmond or others. And it's very true; a lot did. But a lot of southern politicians, demagogued the race question when segregation was en vogue; and then when blacks started to vote, you would've thought they'd have been for the blacks all along. Senator Russell wasn't a demagogue. He might make a mistake, but it would be a sincere mistake.

And so somebody asked me one time, "What do you think, if anything, could have changed Senator Russell's view as being a segregationist?" And I said, "I know that politics wouldn't. If that was a reason, it would have happened in '52 because he had the Presidency on

the line.” But, you know, if he’d have had up close opportunities to work with Colin Powell or Barack Obama or maybe even Andy Young, that might have. I don’t know.

He got along quite well with individual blacks. Edward Brooke was the only African-American to serve as a Senator while he was there. They had a wonderful relationship. If you look at his – Senator Brooke’s – oral history that he did here for the Russell Library or his eulogy on the Senate floor, it’s, you know, very good. And I can remember one time – Senator Brooke only served for a couple of years before Senator Russell died – but I can remember going onto the Senate floor one time to get Senator Russell to go to a constituent meeting, and he was sitting on the Senate floor talking to Senator Brooke. Just the two of them. And you could tell it wasn’t the first conversation they had had. And so I went up to him and I said, “Senator, your so-and-so appointment’s here.” And he said, “Well, you’ll just have to hold on a minute. I’m talking to Senator Brooke.”

So, but having said all that, he was a segregationist. And whether he would have been a segregationist if he’d have come up under different times, he was a smart man and my guess is he wouldn’t have been. But that’s certainly the one area where he’s been criticized. If you could take away the Civil Rights issue, he probably had the perfect career in public service.

SHORT: Do you think that history would be kinder to him if he had not been so private in his life?

CAMPBELL: Perhaps. I know that President Nixon said one time – in fact, this was in

an oral history that President Nixon gave for the Russell Library shortly after Senator Russell died – he said that, when he was saying, “Well, what kind of weaknesses did he have? You’ve talked about all these wonderful qualities he had. What was his weaknesses?” And he said, “Well, whether this is a weakness, I don’t know, but he did not adjust to the electronic media very well. He was not by nature a back-slapper. He was a reserved person and I don’t think he used the media as well as he could have.” That kind of thing. And that’s kind of what you’re saying...

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: ...is that would he be better off viewed by history if you could have really gotten to know him better as I did.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: And I think so, yeah.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: I believe he would have.

SHORT: How did people in Washington – the Senators and the Congressmen – look at politics in Georgia from that vantage point?

CAMPBELL: Well, of course, Senator Russell was – pretty religiously stayed out of Georgia politics even though a lot of people tried to get him involved in there. The earliest and most obvious example was when Franklin Roosevelt wanted to defeat Senator George in the '30s for voting against some of the New Deal programs, he called Senator Russell down to the White House and said, "You know we've got to get this Senator George out of the Senate, and I can't do it without your help." And he said something to the effect that, "We can control politics in Georgia for the next 30 years." And Senator Russell said, "I can't think of anything I would less like to do than control politics in Georgia for the next 30 years." [Laughter] And, of course, he refused to get involved in trying to unseat Senator George.

And then Roosevelt went to the point – and this kind of led to a real cooling of their relationship – he or his people (I don't know if President Roosevelt made this decision) they selected one of Senator Russell's closest friends, Lawrence Camp, who Senator Russell had appointed Postmaster in Atlanta, to run against George as Roosevelt's candidate, saying, "Well, by golly, that will get Senator Russell of the dime." Well, it didn't. And, as a result, he lost his friendship with Lawrence Camp and, you know, but Senator Russell didn't change.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: And if you look at when he had his falling outs with Presidents, they were usually over positions that he took and would not change – Johnson – but, and then, you know, it's interesting, and this may be because it was right at the end of his career, but probably the President that was the nicest to Senator Russell was Richard Nixon, to be honest with you.

SHORT: Uh-huh?

CAMPBELL: And I'll just give you a couple of examples. When Nixon was elected President – and this was kind of unprecedented – he insisted that Senator Russell be a part of the regular meetings of the Congressional leadership with the President. That had never been done before.

SHORT: Okay.

CAMPBELL: When the movie "Patton" came out, Senator Russell knew General Patton, who was a famous World War II general. Some way or another President Nixon found out that Senator Russell hadn't seen the movie, so he called him up and he said, "I'm getting ready to go on an overseas trip. You select a date while I'm gone, and you come down to the White House. You can invite whoever you want to invite. You'll have a nice dinner and so forth and in the White House theater, you can view the movie, 'Patton'." Well, I happened to be one of the ones that Senator Russell invited to go. There were various senators and staff people, probably 30

people. And President Nixon had Mrs. Eisenhower come down from Gettysburg and the two Nixon daughters were the hostesses for it. It was just a wonderful, absolutely wonderful, occasion.

In his final illness, Nixon went to see him at the hospital, and Senator Russell apparently told him that for the first time in 39 years, he was not going to be able to have Christmas in Winder. And Nixon said, “Why don’t I make Air Force One available, and the doctors at Walter Reed can go on there and why don’t you go down there?” Well, Senator Russell said, “Well, I just don’t know. I don’t think I’m up to it.” So, at any rate, a couple of weeks later – this was probably three weeks before Christmas – a couple of weeks later, Nixon called out there and said, you know, “When does Senator Russell want the airplane?” And, by then, he was much, much too sick and he couldn’t go.

When he did die, Nixon ordered flags lowered, paid a tribute to him in the State of the Union, and flew to Atlanta, because Senator Russell had insisted that his body lie in state in Atlanta in the State Capitol and not in Washington. And so he and Mrs. Nixon flew to Atlanta to view the body and to meet with the Russell family at the Georgia State Capitol, and that was when he made the statement that if Senator Russell had been born ten years later, he would have been elected President. So I don’t know how you could be more respectful than Richard Nixon was.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: Now, of course, that was before all the Watergate stuff.

SHORT: Yeah. [Gap]

CAMPBELL: I think that you were asking me about the rumor that Carl Sanders was going to run against Senator Russell in '66.

SHORT: Yes.

CAMPBELL: And, frankly, I think that's one of the reasons I got my job, because I was in graduate school here at the University of Georgia in the fall of 1965 and I introduced Senator Russell at a Blue Key banquet. And I think they were looking for an opportunity to add a young staff person because of the rumors that Governor Sanders was going to run, and so I got a call about a week later asking if I was interested in joining his staff. And I know that in early '66, we went around the state quite a bit. That happened to be a window of fairly good health for Senator Russell. It was very fortuitous because Carl later said that he was not planning on running against Senator Russell; if Senator Russell couldn't run because of his health, that he would have been interested in running. He has an oral history here at the Russell Library where he says that.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: But, at any rate, the people in Senator Russell's office certainly thought it was a viable threat. And Senator Russell had been very sick in '65, almost died, had to have a tracheotomy, and so I think that some of the Sanders people must have told him, "Well, you might even force Senator Russell out of the race," kind of like Senator Talmadge did Senator George in '56.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: But that wasn't to be. And I remember going to the County Commissioners Convention in Jekyll Island with Senator Russell in early '66 to the Hibernian Society in Savannah, so he was getting about; and so Carl eventually announced that he wasn't going to run. That did have an interesting effect, however, I think in a later governor's race, and that's when Jimmy Carter ran against Sanders because most of the Russell people became alienated from Sanders – not all of them, but the vast, vast majority...

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: ...because they thought he really did want to run against Senator Russell and ran some polls and found out he couldn't win. That's the only reason he dropped out.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: Senator Russell, I don't think, harbored any ill feel about it at all, but I think a lot of the Russell people did. So, at any rate, in this – and I don't remember what year it was that Sanders ran against Carter.

SHORT: '70.

CAMPBELL: '70? Yes, '70. Huh. Certainly, the Carter campaign was putting out the implication that the Russell people – and Senator Russell, therefore – was for Carter because it was, you know, they'd get inquiries and Senator Russell's stock response was what it always had been, "I don't take part in Democratic primaries for or against anybody." Well, I remember that Ford Spinks, who was a state Senator from Tifton, later on the Public Service Commission, who was good friends with Senator Russell, he and Carter came over to Winder when Senator Russell was home one weekend, and this was right as the campaign was getting going. And Senator Russell's sister, Ms. Anna Stacy[ph], who was big for Carter, was there, and I was there and Senator Russell. And so we were sitting on the front porch rocking and so forth in the rocking chairs, and so they were, you know, in a nice sort of way, getting around to, "Hope you'll help us," and this kind of thing. Senator Russell was in his nice sort of way, you know, not saying anything really other than being nice and so forth, and they just went on and one and, finally, I remember Ms. Anna (as we called her) kind of became exasperated with it and stood up and stormed off and ran back in the house. [Chuckling] But I don't think Senator Russell did

anything to try to help Carter. As I said, I think most of the Russell people were for Carter.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: But I don't think Senator Russell did anything to get involved in it.

SHORT: Then you continued to work, though, in Washington after the passing of Senator Russell.

CAMPBELL: Yes, because I hadn't graduated from law school. I was scheduled to graduate in June and I didn't have a job, basically. And I didn't know David Gambrell. Interestingly, I had a conversation with Governor Carter right after the funeral – in fact, at the funeral – and he said, “Come by and see me before you go back to Washington. I want to talk to you.” And I went back by to see him in his office at the Capitol, and he said, “I just wanted to tell you that I'm going to appoint a really quality person. It isn't going to be a political appointment,” you know, so forth and so on. And – but he didn't say anything beyond that. Well, he appointed David Gambrell, and David came to Washington and he asked me to stay on until I graduated from law school, which I did. And so I was his Chief of Staff until I think it was June when I graduated. Then I came back to Georgia and set up three offices for him in Georgia: one in Tifton, one in north Georgia somewhere and the one here in Atlanta. And then I went into the law practice in September.

I did participate in some of his campaign strategy meetings. I liked David. I don't think he was the best politician in the world and he wasn't the best speechmaker in the world, but he was a high quality, smart person and did a good job. But, of course, he ran into Sam Nunn.

Now, at that time, I didn't know about this alleged promise that Carter had made to Ernie Vandiver. I never heard about that until much, much, much later. In fact, Ernie Vandiver and I were talking one day down at St. Simon's Island, and I think that's the first I heard that when Ernie told me that Carter had promised him that if anything happened to Senator Russell, he would appoint him to the Senate.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: But I never heard that when I was in Washington.

SHORT: Well, after your career with Senator Russell, you came back to Georgia and you've been active in politics since then.

CAMPBELL: Yes, I have had some...

SHORT: Tell us about those days.

CAMPBELL: Well, I think the first thing I got involved in, I had gotten to know Senator

Henry Jackson of Washington state, Scoop Jackson. He's dead now. And when he announced for President in '72, I did some work for him at the Democratic Convention in Miami. Jimmy Carter, in fact, gave a nominating speech for Senator Jackson at that convention and, of course, McGovern was nominated. I worked for him then in '74. In fact, I met my wife as an outgrowth of this. I went to Kansas City. There was a midyear Democratic Convention and I went out there to work for Senator Jackson, and there was an optometrist from Fairburn, Georgia, whose wife was a Georgia legislator. You probably knew her, Bev Ingram.

SHORT: Very well.

CAMPBELL: And his name was Dale Ingram, and he was a big Carter supporter. And, of course, I was out there supporting Senator Jackson, but I met him and he said, "I've got a young lady you need to meet." And that was a blind date with my wife, Ann, and we're still married.

But other political things I got involved in, Senator Talmadge asked me to be chair of his campaign in both '74 and '80, and I was. When Jasper Dorsey, who was a close friend of Senator Russell's, was President of the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, he got me involved in being the Georgia Chamber of Commerce's Chairman of its Legislative group that presented the business community's position on issues to the Georgia legislature. So I got involved in a number of political matters.

SHORT: Let's talk for a minute about that '80 race. What do you remember about that?

CAMPBELL: Well, it was a very trying period. You remember that leading up to that, Senator Talmadge had undergone his divorce, that Betty had made these allegations about large sums of cash in overcoats and that had gotten big play. The Atlanta papers had come out against him. He had been reprimanded by the Senate as a result of certain misuse – or alleged misuse – of office funds. And there were rumors circulating around that he was going to be indicted. And I had been chair of his '74 campaign, and the way that happened was that when I came back after Senator Russell died, I went with a law firm named Heyman & Sizemore, and Lamar Sizemore, one of the named partners of that firm, was very, very close to Herman Talmadge. And, in fact, he and Senator Talmadge had practiced law together in a two-person law firm between the time Senator Talmadge was Governor of Georgia and the time he went to the Senate, about a two-year period there. So, but at any rate, Lamar came in one day and said, "You're gonna get a call from Senator Talmadge. He wants you involved in his upcoming reelection campaign." That was '73 probably, leading up to the '74 campaign.

So it was natural when '80 came along, but I was concerned about, you know, these ethical issues. So I went and saw Senator Talmadge and had a very, very frank conversation with him because I didn't want to get involved in a campaign and take time away from my law practice and only to have Senator Talmadge indicted or something. You know? So he, you know, he very sincerely and forcefully said, "There's nothing that's gonna come out that hadn't already come out."

So we went into the campaign and Dawson Mathis was running. Worst day in my life was when Norman Underwood qualified because he's probably my closest friend, and here I'm managing Senator Talmadge's campaign and my closest friend's running against him. Zell Miller, of course.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: I think that was the lineup in the Democratic primary as I recall.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: And, of course, Senator Talmadge had his drinking problem.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: Now, by then, he'd gone through treatment and he was on the wagon, and he stayed on the wagon. And he was an ideal candidate. I mean, he was really, really good in that campaign. But there was a lot of challenges. In the Democratic primary, of course, Zell roughed him up very, very heavily on the ethics issues, and Norman would chime in every now and then with an attack, and Dawson would too for that matter. Dawson did less attacking then – the only thing that Dawson did was (and this was very funny; Dawson's a funny kind of guy.

You know that).

SHORT: Yeah.

CAMPBELL: A reporter asked him one time, he said, “Congressman Mathis,” said, “you’re not known in Georgia, and Senator Talmadge is known throughout the state. How on Earth do you think you can beat him?” He said, “It’s gonna be a whole lot more difficult for Herman to become unknown than it is for me to become known.” [Laughter]

SHORT: Yeah.

CAMPBELL: But, at any rate, and another thing I recall about it was we had to really pressure Senator Talmadge into doing a series of what I call apology ads.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: Because our polling showed that a lot of people respected what Senator Talmadge had done, that he’d been a good, effective Senator, but they didn’t identify with him personally and he was not a personality that was known to the newer people, and we had to humanize him some way or other. So our media people came up with this idea, and he didn’t actually apologize in the ads, but he’s say things like, you know, “I made a lot of mistakes in my

life and I'm sorry for them and blah-blah-blah." Well, he didn't want to do that, you know. He was a – he had a lot of pride. But, you know, after we kept polling and finally he said, yeah, he'd do 'em, he did a very good job, and they were very effective.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: That probably is what allowed us to win the primary. The other thing that I think helped a lot were the debates he had with Zell.

SHORT: Uh-huh?

CAMPBELL: Zell won the runoff. He got in the runoff with Senator Talmadge, and I think we had five debates. And Senator Talmadge I think lost the first one, but I thought in the other four, he pretty decisively beat Zell, and the reason he lost the first one was we over-coached him. I remember we had a session – I had a condominium in Peachtree City that was kind of a weekend place – and so we went down there so we could have some peace and quiet and prepare him. Dawson had come over and endorsed Senator Talmadge, so he was there. Norman I don't think endorsed anybody, as I recall. But, at any rate, we're sitting around there and we're telling – everybody's telling – Senator Talmadge something different. "You've gotta do this. You've gotta do that." Well, that's enough to confuse anybody.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: And the funny thing that happened during that is one of my old chairs in my condo – you remember Will Ball?

SHORT: Oh, yeah.

CAMPBELL: Will, you know, was a little overweight.

SHORT: Slightly.

CAMPBELL: You notice I said “was”; I didn’t say “is”. He was overweight. Well, this chair he’s sitting in collapses while we’re talking to Senator Talmadge about what he should or shouldn’t do in this debate, and Dawson Mathis turned around without even cracking a grin and said, “Son, you’ve gotta do something about that weight.” [Laughter] But, at any rate, I thought Talmadge was very wooden in that debate and, but, so after that, I said, “Senator, forget about preparation. forget about preparation. You say what you think ought to be said.”

SHORT: Uh-huh?

CAMPBELL: And after that he was great. He [chuckling] another funny thing that

happened in that thing was you'd be in these TV studios for the debates, and Senator Talmadge had this chart that he was going to use that showed all the programs that Zell had said that he wanted, how much they were going to cost, to show this is reckless federal spending. Well, the first time we put it in there, you could tell Zell was really fixated on what was behind that damn chart. Well, Senator Talmadge forgot to use it, and so nobody knew what it was. Well, we thought it helped so much by disorienting Zell that we used it again. [Laughter] And, finally, in the last debate, Senator Talmadge unveiled it. He'd been making the point all along but just not with the visual aid. But he did a great job in the debates and we were able to beat Miller.

And then we made a very, very bad mistake. Mack Mattingly was the Republican nominee. He was unknown. He was referred to as a former typewriter salesman. He didn't have any money. And so we unanimously advised Senator Talmadge, "You ought to go back to Washington and be a Senator. People are probably tired of," it had been such an active campaign – we had leaned on people so much to raise enough money. So we quit polling as frequently as we had been. That was a bad mistake because when things started to turn, we didn't know about it as quickly. And I should have taken a leave of absence from my law firm, but I tried to practice law and do the campaign at the same time, so I wanted to, you know, I had a kind of conflict of interest, if you would. I wanted to get back and do stuff at the law office.

But, at any rate, the bottom line was that we quit raising money. We quit polling as frequently. He did refuse to debate Mattingly, and he would've just eaten Mattingly up. I mean, Zell was a good debater and he beat Zell. I mean, Mattingly would've been pathetic. But, and then the big thing that happened was that Mattingly got some money from the Republican

National Committee because they were polling when we weren't.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: And they could tell that it could be a competitive race. And I remember we had a big meeting of the so-called Council of War, if you will. I remember Tom Murphy was there, Tommy Irvin, Jimmy Bentley, Rogers Wade, Gordon Roberts, the people that were the inner circle of the Talmadge campaign. Everybody was pretty unanimous that he ought to go back to Washington but, in hindsight, that was a bad mistake and probably resulted in him being defeated.

An interesting thing that happened on election night – of course, the election was very close. The Atlanta newspaper projected Talmadge as the winner, as did several television stations. I had a bad case of the flu on election night, so I did not go to the campaign, but I talked to Senator Talmadge a couple of times on the telephone. And I remember one time about 10:00 where people had started saying, “Talmadge has won. Blah-blah-blah.” Talmadge had 20 – Senator Talmadge had 20 – precincts around Georgia that he looked at, and he'd been doing this for years, not only in zone races but how other races. And they were spread out all over the state. They were in south Georgia, north Georgia, and so forth. And he said – I remember him telling me – about 10:00, he said, “I'm really worried.” He said, “The precincts where we ought to be winning big, we're not winning by near the margin we should be and when these votes start coming in from the metro area, in Gwinnett County and Cobb County, Fayette County, and so

forth.” And, of course, he was right. Ultimately, Mattingly won. It was razor thin and a lot of the Talmadge people urged him to seek a recount, but he said, “No.” He said, “I’m not gonna put the state through that.”

SHORT: That was the beginning of the Republican rise in Georgia.

CAMPBELL: Yes. Yes, absolutely.

SHORT: What do you think caused that, the Democrats losing as they have done?

CAMPBELL: Well, I think the – I think the Civil Rights Act had a lot to do with it. It drove a lot of white conservative supporters over to the Republican side. The Democrats had always been able to put together a pretty good coalition by having the black support, labor. There weren’t very many – there wasn’t much – liberal in Georgia, but whatever there was. And then conservative white, particularly rural, areas, because all the County Commissioners were Democratic.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: So, of course, you vote Democratic. You might not for President, you know. You might not vote for George McGovern, but you vote – and when those rural,

conservative, Southern whites started moving away, that's what started it.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: And it probably took longer, frankly, than it should have. If Bo Calloway had won the governor's race when he was in the three-way runoff with Lester Maddox and Lester was elected by the legislature, it probably would have started much, much earlier.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: But, by 1980, I know in talking to Senator Talmadge later, we were going through various counties and we looked at Fayette County. Now Fayette County was a Democratic stronghold, a Talmadge stronghold. That's where the Redwines were from that were, you know, Gene Talmadge people.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: And the truth of the matter is there had been all kinds of new people that had moved into that area around Peachtree City and all. Mattingly carried Fayette County pretty decisively. And so new people moving into the state that were not traditional Democrats I think also contributed to it quite a bit.

SHORT: If [overlapping conversation]...

CAMPBELL: And then, of course, once the Republicans got a couple of statewide offices, then you get the money problem. And so now it's almost flipped.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: You know? Now, the Democrats have a hard time raising money. I'll tell you a funny story about Senator Russell and Republicans. When he was growing up, he was about ten years old, so I guess it would've been 1907 or so. One of his playmates came running up to him one day and said, "Dick," said, "come downtown. There's a Republican down at the train station!" And so he ran down – I think Senator Russell told this in the WSB film – said he ran down to the train station and that guy, he said, "I'll be damned if I could tell much difference." [Laughter]

SHORT: Would he ever consider switching to the Republican Party?

CAMPBELL: No, absolutely not. No. He was – I remember when Phil Campbell and Jack Ray and Jimmy Bentley and Alpha Fowler (and there was a fifth one; I can't recall who the fifth one was) Crawford Pilger[ph].

SHORT: Crawford? Yeah.

CAMPBELL: When they switched – when the Democrats kicked them out of the '68 Democratic Convention – I was in Washington at that time, and there were rumors circulating that Ernie Vandiver was going to switch and I think Vandiver came up and met with Senator Russell, as I recall. There was even a rumor Senator Talmadge was going to switch. And I remember going in to talk to Senator Russell and just to ask him, and I said, “You know, I’ve heard this rumor that Senator Talmadge might switch to the Republicans.” He said, “Oh, hell. Herman, he ain’t gonna switch. That’d be suicide. Why would you do that, give up your seniority?” No, he wouldn’t have switched because, you know, he had all this seniority on the Democratic side.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: And so, no, he wouldn’t have switched parties.

SHORT: I heard or read that Senator Talmadge at one point said that he never discussed that switch with that group that, as we knew them, called the Clique.

CAMPBELL: Right.

SHORT: Do you think they sought his advice?

CAMPBELL: I can't imagine that they didn't talk to him about it. I mean, Jimmy Bentley.

SHORT: Yeah.

CAMPBELL: Jack Ray.

SHORT: Yeah.

CAMPBELL: These are hardcore Talmadge people.

SHORT: Yeah. I would assume...

CAMPBELL: I don't know exactly how they put it or what was said, but I cannot imagine that. And the rumors were, you know, were quite strong at that time.

SHORT: Right. Tell me the greatest feat of Senator Richard B. Russell.

CAMPBELL: The single greatest accomplishment?

SHORT: Yes.

CAMPBELL: Boy, that's a hard one, you know?

SHORT: There are a lot of them.

CAMPBELL: Yeah, there really are. I mean, I think that you would probably – you know, you could even make a case that what he did as Governor, when he reorganized state government and created a unified Board of Regents. In the Senate, I mean, I think people would say the MacArthur hearings were probably – would rank right up there – but I'd be hard-pressed because he did so many great things of a different nature...

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: ...That it would be hard for me to select one.

SHORT: What would he say about the election of Obama?

CAMPBELL: I don't know. I mean, my guess he'd think Obama's a pretty damn smart

guy. I mean, he certainly would have admired the quality of the campaign he ran, almost without mistake. He certainly would have admired his unprecedented fund-raising prowess. But he probably would have liked John McCain is my guess because McCain's strong on national defense.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: Senator Russell, it was interesting; when Lester Maddox was the Democratic nominee for Governor, a reporter asked Senator Russell, said, "Are you gonna vote for the Democratic ticket?" And he said, "Of course, I am." He said, "I've voted for the Democratic ticket all my life, and sometimes I've had to hold my nose, but I'm too old to change now."

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: So there's no question he would have voted the Democratic ticket, and my guess is he would have a good deal of admiration for Obama...

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: ...Because he's obviously smart and he's obviously a hard worker.

SHORT: Uh-huh.

CAMPBELL: And he's also pretty pragmatic, you know. He's not an extreme ideologue. Senator Russell didn't identify much with the ideologues.

SHORT: Will we ever have another United States senator with the stature of Richard B. Russell?

CAMPBELL: No, because they've changed the rules, among other things. I don't know if there'd be anybody else that'd come along with as many good qualities as Senator Russell, but they wouldn't become as powerful even if they did because, you know, they divided the Senate committees into A, B and C committees. Senator Russell was on three A committees. Now you can't be but on one A committee, but they grandfathered people in that were already there. So I don't think you could get the standing in the Senate.

And then, too, in this day and age, in almost any state that you were in, there's close to a two-party system and you'd have competitive races. Senator Russell was the exception in the '36 race; he never had a competitive race and so he didn't have to go out and raise money. And now senators have to run for reelection almost instantly when they – in fact, I had an interesting conversation with Sam Nunn when he quit the Senate because I had a lot of admiration, and do have a lot of admiration, for Sam Nunn. I think he was a worthy successor to Senator Russell.

And I was trying to talk him out of quitting and he said, “Well,” he said, “Charlie, the Senate’s not like it was when you were up there. It’s changed a lot.” And that’s true.

SHORT: Uh-huh. Well, you’ve certainly had a wonderful career and a very accomplished lawyer, and I hope you’ve enjoyed all that relationship with Senator Russell.

CAMPBELL: Oh, yeah, it was a wonderful experience. It was – it’s something I’ll never forget.

SHORT: Well, we want to thank you for being with us, Charlie.

CAMPBELL: Thank you for participating in the interview.

SHORT: Good.

[END]

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