

**Bob Holmes interviewed by Bob Short**  
**2009 May 13**  
**Atlanta, GA**  
**Reflections on Georgia Politics**  
**ROGP-080**  
**Original: video, 78 minutes**

sponsored by:

**Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies**  
**University of Georgia Libraries**  
and  
**Young Harris College**

**University of Georgia**  
**Reflections on Georgia Politics**  
**Bob Holmes**

**Date of Transcription: October 6, 2009**

BOB SHORT: This is Reflections on Georgia Politics sponsored by Young Harris College and the Richard Russell Library at the University of Georgia. Our guest today is Bob

Holmes, former state legislator, political activist and a professor in an Atlanta college. Bob, we're delighted to have you.

BOB HOLMES: Glad to be here, Bob.

SHORT: Tell us about Bob Holmes.

HOLMES: Well, I was born in a little town in West Virginia. Actually, it was outside the city limits in 1943, town of Shepherdstown, West Virginia. It had 800 people but I'm sure that included the dogs and cats and other animals because I don't think there were 800 people there. But I went to school there, elementary school there. My father left when I was three and my brother was five and my mom went to New York to become a hotel maid with my oldest aunt, and so we got started working pretty early. I was nine-years-old and we picked cherries for thirty-seven and a half cents a two and a half gallon bucket. We thinned peaches. They grow in little clusters, so you knock off the smaller ones and the bigger ones grow and we got \$.50 an hour and \$.10 a tree and then when we picked peaches we got \$.50 a day, \$.05 per bale and we thinned peaches and did apples same thing. But then we hauled hay for \$.50 an hour and a penny a bale and here I am 14-years-old, we're making basically about \$10 a day max but we worked six days a week, ten hours a day. So school was really a vacation to me, you know just reversed.

But a little later we moved to New York. I had a chance to live with my mom when she was able

to get a rent controlled apartment. Five years later we lived with my grandma and my aunt in West Virginia and I was a juvenile delinquent. I got drunk the first time in my life when I was 11. My best friend overdosed on heroin when I was 14, so my mother shipped us back to West Virginia where I finished high school. Went to a little college there, Shepherd College and then I grew up. I studied very hard. I got graduate fellowships for a lot of universities. I decided to go to Columbia University where I got my masters and doctorate and I finished my doctorate when I was 25 and then I began teaching and then I stayed in New York. I was administrator at City University of New York and one of my mentors there was a guy named Robert Weaver who was the first African-American secretary in the cabinet, secretary of HUD, and he too a liking to me. And when I was in graduate school he was on one the panels where I got another fellowship, the John Hay Whitney Foundation and so he said he had something that I might be interested in after he left HUD and became president of the City University of New York, Bernard Baruch College which was basically a school of business. And I decided I wanted to leave the city. I'd never been an historical black college or university, so I decided I wanted to go there. So I went down to Baton Rouge, Louisiana at Southern University and taught there under special program from the Woodruff Wilson Foundation where I was like an assistant to the president. I helped reorganize their honor's program. I helped setup what was called the general elective college bowl thing which was great because it focused on academics and everyone knew who the football players were but no one knew who the bright kids were. So we set this up and as I was leaving -- it was one a year appointment -- we were playing the University Southwest Louisiana, Grambling College and places like that and it was really fun.

And I went back to New York because Dr. Weaver called me, flew me back twice and I directed a program there called SEEK Search for Elevation Education and Knowledge. And for kids who otherwise wouldn't have been admitted to the good four year institutions like Baruch, like CCNY and Brooklyn College, so we were to mainstream the and that was a really a fun thing that I did and I really enjoyed it. I had 1,100 students. Like running a small college. I also ran a program called the Harvard Yale Columbia Intensive Summer Studies Program involving students from the South who if they did very well would be admitted to those institutions and we'd give them fellowships.

And then the South came calling and a friend of mine was a director of programs of social sciences at Ford Foundation and he got \$25 million to help setup a doctoral program at Atlanta University and Political Science. Only one other historically black college had a PhD program in political science and so I decided I wanted to come and help with that activity and that's how I get involved there. And then I became very active in the community, helped found my neighborhood association, was president of the PTA and things like that, helpful in the city-wide league of neighborhoods. Became involved in Andy Young's election in 1972, got to meet Andy, helped write speeches for him and things like that in the campaign.

Then in '73 did some of the same things for Maynard Jackson and I ran in '74 and I was, in fact, elected. I've also gotten involved in several business ventures. I'm one of the co-founders in a couple of banks. One is the North Georgia National Bank which we sold. It's called the Bank of North Georgia now. Capital City Bank which is an African-American owned bank. We have seven branches. We just got into the top ten this past year and then I also had a couple of other

ventures. I owned a computer dealership and I was a real estate broker and kind of combined the academic life because it was a PhD program and really I didn't have to spend a lot of time there, maybe 15 to 20 hours a week being an advisor, teaching two graduate courses and doing research.

And then I decided -- well, I had been advisor and people began encouraging me to run for the legislature and I did and I was fortunate enough to win in 1974 and took office in '75. While I was in the legislature there were several people that I really admired. Mr. J. C. Daugherty who was elected back in, I think, '66 or something like that and Ms. Grace Hamilton, of course, who was the first African-American female ever elected. She really taught me a lot about politics and how to build coalitions and things of that nature and interesting enough another guy who was elected not too long before me, Billy McKinney. This is a guy if you talk about someone who stood on principals, he was there for 20 some years, he never made a committee chair because he was I guess--I hate to use this word--a maverick.

He sued the state on several occasions involving equal opportunity kinds of programs. He was involved in lawsuits suing about judges who were being elected superior court justice from districts and things of that nature. And I said, "This guy reminded me a lot of my grandma." She said, "It didn't matter if you were the only one, Bobby," she died when she was 98, "You always do what is the right thing because God's watching you and you know everyone is going to be accountable at some time." And I'd like to think that I emulated her teachings and also that Billy, kind of, reinforced and I really didn't regret a lot of things I guess that I did, decisions that I had to make in the legislature.

Well, my interest in the legislature not only came from being involved as a kind of consultant or a volunteer or a combination there of but it was also because my field was political science and public policy and as I said, I came here to help setup the doctoral program in political science in 1971 and that was really exciting because there are only two people in the department who are over 40. All of us are in our 30's and we'd been out of grad school four, five, six years and had a chance to build something from scratch and we graduated more African-American PhD's in political science between 1975 and 2000 than any other university in the country. And the great thing about it was that--I call them kids but some of them were my age because they had been teaching in college and came back to get their doctorates--but they were outstanding students. One of my students became director of the graduate program at Yale University. Three of them became college presidents. Johnson C. Smith, University of Mississippi Valley State, University -- it was small college, a junior college in Mississippi. They became mayors, they became elected officials. In Virginia one young lady was not only the mayor of Hampton she was the dean of Hampton University and she's now a senator and still a dean at Hampton University. So to see those kids do the kinds of things they did and they were really good. They had choices. They could have gone to some ivy league schools and things of that nature but they decided they wanted to have that experience and I think we made it exciting and fun for them and I encouraged them and they went on to do a lot of great things.

**SHORT:** You mentioned Grace Hamilton who was one of the first African-American legislators and probably the first female. She passed a bill that created districts in the city, I think it was in

19--

HOLMES: City charter.

SHORT: City charter. That really changed politics in Atlanta, didn't it?

HOLMES: Well, it basically did. The thing I admired her at first went back to when I was five-years-old. I wasn't here but when the white primary was declared unconstitutional and the mayor, Hartsfield, was running for reelection he basically told the people -- this was back in the 40's of course -- he told them, said, "Look, you need some folks registered to vote and I'll negotiate with you about some things that you want." Streetlights, hiring the first African-American policeman and things of nature." Billy McKinney was among that group building parks and neighborhoods and that's what she did. She was the director of The Urban League. But the city charter was something where she sought to bring about, I guess, a compromise because it had been elected at large and as you probably know when you have a situation and given the racial polarization even in the city of Atlanta you didn't have any African-Americans elected and she thought it was swinging in the opposite direction or it might and that her big thing was people needed to have not only concerns about their little districts but they also need to have concern about at large.

So she basically said we'll have a mixture of at large and some from districts. And it was 12 districts and six at large to give the city-wide perspective and that that would create a kind of

balance that would be necessary for the best things, best public policy to be adopted in the city. She was a very interesting lady. We had some disagreements like I did with a lot of people but I have disagreements with my mom and my brother. But no, and the new charter did another thing. It created a strong mayor form of government. People know that Hartsfield and Allen were very strong mayors but it was like saying Richard Daley was a strong mayor because Chicago had a weak mayor form of government and what I meant was that the city council actually ran the administration. The chairman of the public safety committee ran the police department and the fire department. You know, the chairman of parks and recreations ran the parks. They basically told the commissioners what to do and that was the difference, but this made it clear that you're going to have a separation.

The mayor wasn't going to be the administrator. The council wasn't going to be the administrator and legislative body. They were going to be legislative bodies and make policies and then the courts, of course, would remain as they were.

SHORT: As I recall the results of that election was nine whites and nine African-American on that first council.

HOLMES: No, that actually happened in the second election, 1977 but it got that way. It was moving that direction. When Maynard was elected there was a great debate between whether they wanted to support another gentleman, Senator Horace Tate to run for mayor as well. And so when he was running for vice mayor, made it four years earlier, you only had one person Q.V.

Williamson, 65. Was the only African-American on the council -- and they elected four more and they elected, I think two additional ones then and in '77 because one of the mayors advisors, David Franklin, was saying, "Well, look, you need to have a slate because you need to make sure that you have 12 or 13 African-Americans and the mayor said, "No." And so at that election in '77 you did have nine-nine and, of course, Carl Weir was elected president of the council and he could break the vote but most of the votes weren't just based on racial lines, I think, because of the mix of the at large and district that many people decided to vote for what might be considered districts types of things regardless of racial breakdown in terms of the vote.

So I think it did create that good balance that you need in a city that's as diverse as the city of Atlanta is.

SHORT: Let's get back to state representative Bob Holmes. You came over to the capital in 1975. What was going on back then?

HOLMES: Well, a lot of things. As you probably know the speakers was becoming more independent of the governor up until what, '72 or something like that I guess Speaker Smith was the first one who was independent. The governors before then actually used to appoint basically the committee chairs and everything and they told the speaker what to do and who to do this and when he started that -- and then, of course, Speaker Murphy who succeeded him was beginning to say, "Well, we have to show that we're a co-equal branch of government." So you had this same thing that had happened at the city where the mayor was being greater authority, the

speaker was given greater authority.

You had a lot of new people. My class is the largest in history. We had 67 member in the class of 1975 and the reason that it happened was the fact that the people who were there before us that a lot of them voted for a retroactive pay raise for themselves. They were elected in 1972 and in January and early February they gave themselves a retroactive pay raise and I said they ought to be unelected and defeated for stupidity. And I said I wouldn't say I wouldn't vote for a pay raise but I would never vote for one that would be made retroactive, but if the new term came up and I were reelected certainly I would accept that because it was clear that this was a part-time job but you work at it year round. You go to neighborhood meetings, you go to all kinds of things, hearings and stuff of that nature but that was what was happening.

So many of us freshmen were going in as quote/unquote "reformers." We were going to make our voices heard. We were young, we were excited, excited about what we're getting into and we determined that we were going to negotiate with the speaker and make sure that he adhered to some of our concerns. And we even met in caucus outside of the capital. We met at a hotel near the airport and I guess about oh, probably close to 60 of them actually showed up. Well, unfortunately the speaker heard about it before the meeting even ended and so you know what happened after that. Some of us who were considered the ring leaders, we didn't fair too well in terms of committee appointments. He must have gotten just a detailed list of who was doing this and who was doing that from four or five folks and we pretty much could guess who those people were who reported to him based on the committee assignments that they got. They got the good committee assignments.

Well, that didn't basically stop me. Unfortunately because that happened it, kind of, almost reinforced me and people said, "Are you crazy?" Al Burruss decided that he wanted to run for speaker and Al was going to promise both the freshman, biracial group as well as the Atlanta delegation and to do it based more on seniority and diversity and the fact that we were the largest. So from two perspectives because I had sat down and talked to the speaker. That's one of the things my grandma also taught me; you never talk about people behind their back, say things you won't say to their face. So I said, "Mr. Speaker, I'm kind of disappointed that you have this budget committee," so-called "green door" committee. "There's no member from Fulton County who's on it and we're the largest delegation and you got a few folks. You've got Sidney and you've got Jerry, they've got enough seniority at least they should represent Fulton County because when you're dividing up this budget and you've got folks from south Georgia and north Georgia and whatever, Atlanta Metro, Bill Lee.

I said, "You know, they're great people but you need to either expand it or you need to make more people involved. And then I said, "You know, and even committee assignments." I said, he was appointing Sidney and Sidney was chairman of health and Jerry Horton --

SHORT: That's Sidney Marcus and Jerry Horton.

HOLMES: Yes, I'm sorry. Sidney Marcus and he was chairman of delegation as well. And Jerry Horton was chair of industry but I like those committees. They're not among the most powerful committees but I think you've got Mr. Daugherty and certainly he had enough

seniority. He'd been here 10 or 12 years to be chairman of a committee and people like that and Papa Dent -- he did appoint Papa Dent something like Human Relations and Aging but I said, "Those aren't very important committees," and so I said, "There's someone running who is willing to do that," and so you had both the Atlanta delegation, urban and you had the lack of African-Americans on important committees and things of that nature and I told him, I said, "Well, I'm going to have to support Representative Burruss. And why did I do that? So I said to myself six years later when I still hadn't got a good committee assignment or anything, "He must really be a closet republican. He's an elephant. He never forgets things that happen." So what happened was that Al, of course, lost. Well, my chairman resigned of a committee that's called Governmental Affairs and I was the vice chair but instead of me becoming chair he got someone who didn't even serve on the committee and appointed him chairman of the committee. And he didn't want to be chairman of the committee as well. So I didn't fair very well my first decade in the legislature because I had done those things first saying we're going to pressure him to do certain things and then we're going to have a speaker who is going to be more diverse in terms of his appointments, getting African-Americans, getting Fulton County folks and things of that nature on important committees, more importantly on the budget committee and then things began to settle down.

I did become active in the legislative black caucus. I eventually became chair but what happened was that the caucus began pushing things that some of us who were ahead of our times I would like to say were pushing, like, having an African-American on the budget sub-committee as well. And what happened was that Calvin Smyre was the governor's floor leader, so he couldn't

appoint him --

SHORT: Governor Harris

HOLMES: Governor Joe Frank Harris. Well, David Lucas was thought to be more quote/unquote “uncontrollable” than I was, they were younger than I was. He was as loud and everything, so by default I became the first African-American on the budget sub-committee. And of course, that mean that folks were coming to me not only from Atlanta but from all over the state, African-Americans, the HBCU, college and the universities and things of that nature. So it did work out in the long run which was again something my grandmother always told. It’s like when you pray, she said, “The Lord will eventually answer your prayers but he’ll do it on his time.” So I thought that was something of a test. My grandmother was the wisest human being I’d ever known. She never set foot inside of a school. She was burn during Reconstruction but anyway, my mom is the second youngest of 13. And then I guess I learned a lot. He also appointed me chairman of the Governmental Affairs Committee. Of course, I got on Appropriations Committee and I also got on the Rules Committee and I had seniority because Calvin and David and I were the ones who came in together. There were a few other folks but they had left or done other things.

Like, David Scott went to the senate and things of that nature, but I think I began to learn some things and I really almost felt like I was in school again and I needed to learn as much as I could but also being specialized and I became director of an organization called the Southern Center

for Studies in Public Policy which is a really a great thing because we did research, or my staff did and I did, on issue areas that affected the state, you know, they were environment. So I got interested and learned a lot about environmental justice. We dealt with education. We dealt with almost all the major public policy issues, so while I was learning about legislation I was getting a lot of background from research that we did and we did work for different governments. We did work for the private sector and even did a lot of work internationally in Mongolia, in Nigeria, in China and some other places.

We evaluated, for example, the revival of their higher education system in China believe it or not. We helped to setup a school of public administration in Mongolia which had been a communist party school and just had all kinds of great experiences. In Nigeria, we helped with legislators because if the military would leave then the people who were elected were all freshman because the military decreed that if you served in the previous civilian administration you were ineligible to serve in another one.

So here we had school teachers and farmers. They knew nothing about legislature, so we were in eight states training legislators how to be legislators and it was just a great experience and I learned from them and I learned a lot and those kind of things. So I was learning about public policy and then I, of course, decided that I wanted to focus on things and election law reform was my primary thing and that's what governmental affairs did. We were also oversight for the state merit system and a few other things. So I became particularly interested in that and I was one of the folks who sponsored Motor Voter legislation which the feds were, of course, pushing.

My first bill -- this was even before -- I sponsored a bill which allowed retirees 62 years of age to

be able to attend any branch of the university system of Georgia for free on a space available basis and we couldn't advertise it because the university system schools would be inundated and I've talked to several folks and when I said, "Well, I actually managed to do that at 76," and it's worked. I just talked to a guy at the YMCA that I work out with from time to time and he said, "I'm going back to school, Bob." I said, "Well, where you going?" He said, "Georgia State," and he said, "It's free." I said, "I'll tell you why." And so I am blessed but I did these things not because of -- but it was something that I was interested in and I always thought life was a learning experience and there are people who for different reasons didn't get an opportunity to go and this was an opportunity for them to go and do some things to keep their mind sharp and to also learn and even maybe go into a second career after that.

But back to the legislature and Speaker Murphy, we've been, kind of, I guess came together afterwards. I'm not sure he ever forgot because there were things on the budget sub-committee which I thought he may have opposed because I was supporting them but maybe I was being paranoid or something like that. But I think Speaker Murphy was an outstanding leader. People say that he was only interested in rural things but the Georgia World Congress Center wouldn't have been built. The dome wouldn't have been built. MARTA wouldn't have been pushed as far, although I think obviously there were problems with MARTA -- the fact that the state was putting their members on the body but they would not commit for line item annual appropriations and we're still the only major transit system in any state in the nation that doesn't have a line item in the state budget for us. But that was something that I'm sure a lot of the rural folks supported because you can build an awful lot of miles of roads in rural areas rather than

giving it to mass transit but it has its long-term effect and ultimately it effects them out there.

But I understand as a legislator you got to bring home the bacon and you can go out and cut the ribbon on the highway and say we got ten mile four lanes now instead of two lanes. I understand you have to do that.

But I think he did an awful lot of things in education as well and I just think he was just a great leader and like a lot of people he had his ways of doing things. I would guess that, as I said the legislation that I was primarily interested in as I said not only was education but also the election law reform and there were just maybe two or three other things. I thought it started getting more into the environment and then did get on the Natural Resources Environment Committee was my first choice but when the new speaker and the legislature was majority of the republicans then they, of course, kicked me off of my committees which I felt was unique in the United States. Usually you become the ranking member; you're the senior member of the other party. No, you're off of education, you're off of appropriation, you're off of rules and I was the second most senior person in the entire legislature at the time tied with Calvin. Only speaker Coleman had more years than I did and I think there was one other legislator.

SHORT: You were there how many years?

HOLMES: Thirty-four.

SHORT: Thirty-four years and a very busy man.

HOLMES: Well, yeah, my grandmother's thing, "Idle minds, devil's workshop," and I always thought that since I was so bad literally as a youngster I tried to go close to the other extreme and I know that by doing things constantly -- like I mentioned I was involved in outside businesses and did a lot of other things, did a lot of consulting work in addition to that and spent a lot of time with my three children. I was kind of a soccer mom. I don't want to get into that but I took them to swimming lessons, to dancing lessons, to piano lessons. I never missed a swim meet, I never missed a track meet of my girls and that was just the way -- and I knew in large part was because my father left when I was three.

SHORT: You mentioned Mayor Hartsfield encouraging a voter registration.

HOLMES: It was for a selfish purpose. He wanted to get reelected and if you looked at the mayoral races there was pretty much a division down the middle. The white voters almost split equally and a lot of times his challengers actually had more white votes than he did. That's the reason he wanted more African-American because he was more liberal than the folks who were running against him and so he felt if you got more, then I have to give you something in exchange. I mean, that was a fair trade.

SHORT: VEP, the Voter Education Project. I recall that Congressman Louis was once involved, Lyndon Wade was once involved. Tell us about that project and its success.

HOLMES: Well, as you know, the registration rate of African-Americans in the South -- Mississippi I think was, like, 7% when the Voting Rights Act was passed in 1965. And one of the things that a lot of black leaders were interested in was saying that, here are people who are living in rural areas, plantations and things of this nature and sharecroppers, they knew nothing about it. And one of my--I had to say my idols, mentor was a gentleman named Clarence Bacote. Professor Bacote was the first graduate school professor when Atlanta University began its graduate school in 1929, he was the first professor. He was at the University of Chicago. He was writing his dissertation on African-American politics in Georgia. And this guy not only was one of the plaintiffs in the Primus King case in 1947 that outlawed the white primary, he was also a guy who in 1930 setup citizenship schools out of the Atlanta University. That is people would go to six weeks, I think it was one time a week, and they'd get these certificates and they were, kind of, encouraged.

They learned about voting and things of that nature. When he went back to finish his dissertation he had a couple of his other colleagues at the university to take that over. He was the first African-American to serve, I think, on the Fulton County Democratic Party Executive Committee and sometimes I would be like a kid. I would go into his office, which was two doors down because my office was in the Social Science Building, political science and history on the third floor and so I'd just go down and listen to him. Like a kid, soaking up the knowledge. He not only knew it because of his service but he lived it and that was another thing that actually got me interested in politics and running because--and he would do these analysis of

election outcomes and things of that nature.

But anyway, he was among those who was encouraging the Ford Foundation to put money into training and teaching and educating black people their new civil rights and so they needed an organization and John was one of the folks that, of course, helped to start, I think. Vernon Jordan, I think, was the first executive director who later became executive director of the Urban League and then a close body and confidant, of course, President Clinton and a investment banker, senior law partner and just did a lot of things even to this day.

SHORT: He was involved in the suit, the Holmes suit at the University of Georgia.

HOLMES: Yeah, he was someone who was something of a trailblazer as well in terms of just doing a lot of things and many people thought he might run for an elective office but I don't think Vernon was ever interested in that. But I had a chance to talk to Mr. Hallowell who was another idol. He was the guy who filed the suite. And also Horace Ward, Judge Ward, most people don't know that Judge Ward ten years earlier tried to integrate the University of Georgia but instead they bought him off and he got his bachelor's degree in law at the University of Michigan and I think a master as well and as you know he became a federal [indiscernible] judge and church member of mine. We used to sit on the same pew, so I really got to know Horace.

SHORT: Do you recall that in earlier days the state of Georgia would pay to send African-American students to other law schools?

HOLMES: That's what Horace did. That's what I said.

SHORT: Senator Johnson, yeah, Leroy Johnson.

HOLMES: He went to North Carolina Central University Law School and where Maynard actually went to law school as well. But yeah, now I was well aware as I said. So you remember I was listening to Dr. Baycoat [sp?]. He taught me more--second wisest person I knew next to my grandma. I mean, he was just a great guy and he practiced what he preached and you can't ask more of that. But I just felt that one of the things that needed to happen and one of the big surprises to me was that Atlanta took so long to integrate their schools when you mention that because I actually integrated a school--I left this out--in 1957 in Shepherd's Town. It was myself, my cousin [indiscernible] and two sisters, Molly and Charlotte Jenkins and we integrated Shepherd's Town High School.

Now, we were the Shepherd's Town Four but there was a Little Rock Nine and they got all the PR but there was the same kind of thing that there weren't any massive demonstration. There wasn't a governor who blocked the school doors or anything like that but it was the same year, same month and everything and I got thrown out of school a couple of times. Some of my badness came out in actions and one thing growing up in New York you had to be, I guess, aggressive and not back down from folks because then they'd be picking on you all the time, so that's why people joined gangs. Now, they didn't have any gangs in West Virginia but the idea

was I just felt and I just reacted one time. They were calling us names and everything, expletives [indiscernible] it or whatever but it was a big.

But one time, I guess, everyone reached their point and the guy came up and I didn't know who it was, grabbed my on my shoulder, my elbow went back to his stomach, he came down, I grabbed his head and ran through the principal's door. The door was glass and I got kicked out of school for a month, so my mom had to come down from New York and I got back in school and then we became friends, this guy and I. He was the fullback on the football team and I played running back on the football team and I played basketball as well and ran track which is things I was more interested in high school than I was in academics.

As I said I grew up basically in college. I left off one mentor. I hate to be skipping around. There's a guy named Harry Klueb [sp?] and he's the guy who got me really rolling in terms of academics. Born in New York, left high school, went in the Navy, got married, had two kids, got out, got his PhD in five years from the University of Iowa and worked part-time in ice cream factories [indiscernible] and he made it fun. He made learning fun. He really did and there's another guy, Jim Shafer. Jim quit high school. He was from Idaho of all places. I never met another human being from Idaho. Big for his age, played jazz, joined the service. I think he was 16, got battlefield commissions, went out, came out, went to college, went back in the Korean, came out a lieutenant colonel and went back to grad school. I mean, these guys were just unbelievable. Their experiences all from really family self-made and everything and they made learning fun and exciting and they really got my, I guess, academic juices flowing and they helped the scholarships and things I got. One of the guys [indiscernible] grad school with in

Iowa was chairman of American Universities Political Science Department and they got an internship semester, they called him Washington D. C, so he got to know folks.

In grad school I was in this program that Columbia selected 50 of the graduate students from all over med school, business school, arts and sciences and whatever and we basically--it was like a--getting you interested in public affairs and international relations and we had guest lecturers like Henry Kissinger. We went down to Washington to meet the majority leader, Mike Mansfield. We met Senator Fulbright. They tried to get us--we had met the director of research at CIA, The United Nations, deputy secretary general, we were supposed to be so-called future and then ten of us of the 50 were asked to write essays on foreign policy issues and I was one of the lucky ten for there. And so those kind of experience really did get my interests going in terms of public affairs and I knew I would either teach or maybe get into public affairs in some other capacity but those things all had a great influence on me.

Couple of other issues, several of the governors that I served under all of them were unique.

Senator Busbee had been a power and I didn't really know him. He was chair of Appropriations when he was elected basically the same year that I was elected to the Georgia General Assembly.

We didn't get along particularly well because like with the speaker, I guess my agenda was somewhat different from them. Not only in terms of wanting to see more African-Americans appointed to important positions, judgeships. Because I remember one time, I think it was, like, in '76 or '77 and I think the governor must have had like two or three appointments to the Supreme Court, a couple of appointments to the Court of Appeals, a tone of superior court judges and not one of them was an African-American and I found that hard to believe. And that's the

reason we didn't get along well and things like that.

And Maynard even brought that out in the campaign when he was talking about some things as he was coming out and Joe Frank Harris. But Joe Frank did make a good start on that as you probably know.

SHORT: You mentioned Maynard. Maynard ran for the United States Senate.

HOLMES: '68.

SHORT: Were you here then?

HOLMES: No, I came here in '71.

SHORT: Oh, that's right.

HOLMES: I came in '71 but I talked to a lot of people about it, read a lot about it. I'll throw in a plug here. I just finished a book on Maynard Jackson. It will be published in October and I go into, of course, several of things and that's really how he got his start and as Leroy Johnson said, "It was a win-win situation." If he lost, he would still have the envy and admiration of a lot of folks and also, perhaps, encourage other folks to run for elective office, I mean, challenging this guy. They said, "Are you crazy? Are you drinking or smoking something that's illegal?" Who

can beat Talmadge. He hadn't had a challenge the previous two elections. He didn't have any opposition and so he said he had to do, impressed by Dr. King and Bobby Kennedy who were assassinated a month apart and that's why he said he did it but his wife, whom I interviewed, of course, Bonnie said, "He was out of his mind." She said, "Here I am pregnant with a baby and he doesn't have a job. He quits his job. He borrows the money to pay his filing fee. I mean, what are we going to live on?"

And luckily her parents said they would pay their house note, \$157 a month and that she would work up and then her mom would come down but it was just something that he did without even talking to her. And Leroy Johnson was right, it was a win-win and so the fact that he lost meant when he ran for vice mayor there wasn't anyone who would even challenge him for that. And in the black community the idea was he, kind of, deserved it. No one else even talked about running [indiscernible] a couple folks started talking but no he had the feel from the black community and basically the same thing in '73 when he became mayor because people thought that Leroy Johnson might be because he had seniority or even Horace Tate but they thought maybe he should step aside because Horace had run for mayor and had lost but surprisingly when Horace had been a school board member he got a large share of the white vote because they were elected at large as well.

So he said, "Look, I'm showing you I can get 22%, 23% of the white vote and that's all I need to get elected," but they decided that the Civil Right's leadership, the Jesse Hills, Herman Russell and some of the old folks who were involved in the voter registration back in the '40s, the ministers, Reverend Holmes Borders, people like that who had been around who had setup the

Atlanta Negro Voters League and things. They said, "Well, people aren't ready to vote for a black mayor and a black vice mayor, so maybe you need to, kind of, step aside so you can't have both of you running," so Horace lost. And Maynard, of course, won in '73 because they thought he needed to take that extra step, vice mayor and then mayor.

But I think the Civil Rights leadership here really did play a great role in making Atlanta what it is today and I think that Joe Frank Harris in selecting Calvin Smiley as his floor leader, kind of, made a symbolic gesture that I think showed them that at least their long hard work in terms of election politics and voter registration was paying off. In other words, back to the Hartsfield thing in the 1940s, they had been the reason why Joe Frank was elected governor. No one had ever heard of Joe Frank Harris. I think he had, like, a 3% name recognition when he started out.

SHORT: Five.

HOLMES: Five, he was all the way up to five, okay, so the idea was that people like Calvin [indiscernible] campaigned for him and I admit, I wasn't among those who was on the bandwagon initially but it was something that I think bode well for the future in terms of showing that he was going to get African-American involved in these significant kinds of positions. So I think that that really helped a lot. And of course, Zell was a unique individual. It was almost like you had to choose between Zell and the speaker. I mean, the speaker very close to Busbee and Harris. They were really his protégés. He had appointed them to their position and that's how they made a lot of friends but Joe Frank had probably the most effective

campaigns simply because 85% of the state house members were supporting it. I mean, you couldn't want an already organized campaign on the ground in practically every county in the state and you didn't even have to pay a lot for it. They were using their people to be the foot soldiers and that's why he won, I mean, basically. He didn't have to create a state-wide campaign organization because he had one because he had 125 legislatures working for him basically.

And I think that he did begin to make greater strides in terms of appointments and things of that nature. Zell had a reputation of being a maverick as well and I liked him better when he was governor than I did in his post-governor political operation but a lot of what he did and what the speaker did was too personal. I hate to say it but it wasn't quite as bad although it was not too far away from the current situation with Lieutenant Governor McHale [sp?] and Speaker Richardson. I mean, they just personalized these things to the point, like, they said, it's, kind of, like a street fight almost. I mean, you ought to get rid of this guy, he's this and that, I mean, they were just personalizing things instead of dealing with public policy which is always bad for the state and I think unfortunately this last session was an indication of that and the session before was the same.

I mean, the speaker has this idea which had good parts. You eliminated the license fee, birthday fee for the car and you use some of the money for grading, you add a tag to it. Great source of [indiscernible] and then the lieutenant governor never uttered a word and then he says, "Since we're going to do this tax cut why don't we just phase out the income tax, just whack out another billion plus dollars." And then he attached it to the speaker's bill. Now, here we are at Grady

Hospital trying to find a way to fund a trauma center and they personalize to the point that nothing gets done and that's what I meant about bad.

Somehow, somehow that never happened to the speaker and the governor [indiscernible]. I mean, they would beat up on each other in the press and every place else but eventually it would happen. And so some people thought, "maybe there were going to go on a road show afterwards, you know, the Zell and Speaker Murphy Road Show because they said--well, it really wasn't [indiscernible] that they did that because they had to show they were strong and they weren't going to back down but eventually they compromised for the good of the state.

SHORT: Let me go back to Governor Joe Frank Harris, he appointed as I recall the first African-American appellate court judge in history, Judge Benham.

HOLMES: Yeah, Rob Benham, yeah, my frat brother. No, that's what I'm saying. The symbolic gesture of appointing Calvin as floor leader in my mind as I said was saying, "I'm going to show you that I'm going to be diverse in terms of my appointments and things of that nature," and Bob, of course, became the chief justice of Georgia. And as I said, Zell when he got in there and obviously the lottery was his big thing and was his legacy and I think that he didn't do anything else during the time that he was there that, that made him an outstanding governor because there was a lot of things he did that I just didn't go along with like the two strikes and you're out. I mean, it's one thing to be tough but it's another thing, I think, to go over the cliff, so to speak. And I think the problem we have today with a high number of folks who are in for

these mandatory sentences and things of that nature and not having any discretion for the judges was one of the worst things that every happened. And, of course, the other thing and not nearly as bad was with his implementation of the welfare reform thing where he, unlike any other states said, "Well, five years is too long. We need to cut it to four years where you're eligible." I mean the money was there from the feds to do it for five, so I think those are the two worst things that he did and as I said it somewhat was balanced by the lottery to provide for the [indiscernible] scholarships, to provide for the kindergarten, the pre-k thing which is really a trailblazing, kind of, thing and, of course, to buy education equipment.

I could talk a lot about some other things but maybe I'll basically talk a little bit about my retirement. I guess the word that best describes the reason I did it was frustration. As I said I was kicked off the three committees I'd been on. Wasn't even allowed to serve on the committee. Had good legislation. I'd go to committees and people said, "This is a good bill," and one of the guys mentioned he was directly affected by the bill. It would have been beneficial but he couldn't vote for it because the leadership was opposed to it. Appropriations, I know what it's like not to get stuff out because there's never enough but even the little, what you call them feds calls them earmarks, we call them special projects. I didn't get a single special project, \$25,000 for a center that was helping guys to get back with their families who were in drug addiction centers. And this little church over here had 12 beds and we were able to get 25. We got another building. I said, "We need some operational funds. Can you give me \$25,00?" No. So those are just indications of what I considered the--

SHORT: Did you go before the green door?

HOLMES: Oh, no, they setup a special little group of six members who you would go to. No, these are little projects. No, green door you go about big projects, multi-million dollar. I'm talking about the special projects which any person with any seniority can get \$25,000, \$30,000 or \$50,000. It's usually a four to six years, maybe a 25 year an eight to ten you get 35, 40, ten years you get 50. Everyone got that. Republicans got it. I didn't get it and I'm the senior person. Couldn't even get \$25,000 out of the budget. Never got a bill out of committee even though people on the committee wanted it but the leadership didn't get it. So I just said, "I'm basically wasting my time here. There's some more important things that I can do like working on a project called National Popular Vote," and what it is it's a way to change the way the electoral college casts its vote. You sign an inner state compact as a state, okay, when the states who sign its cumulative total electoral college votes is 270 which is a magic number to elect the president, then the compact takes effect. There are thousands of compacts that states are involved with from water distribution to--I mean, everything you can imagine, educational compacts or whatever and that's the way it operates.

And so one of the things that I did at my policy center was the deal with what's called Election Law Reform. As I said that was my thing here, that was my thing there. We looked at things, like, alternatives to single member election district method of voting. Most people aren't aware that it's only the former British Colonies that use this method. Everyone else uses what's called some form of proportional representation. They use cumulative voting, they use preference

voting. I won't go into details of those but what it does it makes it possible for different diverse groups within a society.

If you look at all the European governments except Great Britain. They're the ones who like the single member district. You have many parties and under these systems you can elect folks in Africa and that's one of the things I did there. I was part of the United Nation's election teams. There was a little country called Lesotho which landlocked along with [indiscernible] in South Africa. Well, they had a king and then they decided they wanted to be like England in a sense of having the king as just a figure head but they would actually run like the parliament does in England but they had seven tribes and to use the single member electoral vote method, you know what happened? The largest tribe was about 26% of the people got 70% of the vote, why? Because they got a polarity in just about every district. In other words they only had 26% but under the system where you went in polarity more votes than anyone else, not necessarily a majority, you know, the south is the only place that has run off space and that's the way most of these--some of them have a ceiling and and they say, "Well, if you do that you got to win at least 35% or 40% or whatever," so what you had was a nation where 26% of the people had 70% of the people in their parliament. They were going to have a Civil War and we went over there basically and we said, "Well, look there is an alternative to this," and they decided on cumulative voting.

So if you have multi member districts and, of course, you have 26% of the population the likelihood is if you have a ten member multi member district, it's like electing at large by your county. You will have a good opportunity of getting about a fourth of the votes. If you have

15% you'll probably get a couple of votes. So in other words it gives everyone an opportunity to do that. Well, under our particular contract the people in the states, five of them we already got, but it's also passed in seven other states. Both houses are waiting on the governor to sign it and things of that nature and we hope to do this by 2011. And because I was working on this one of the guys who used to be president of the scientific gains who helped to develop the scratch off lottery tickets and he got a few dollars from that. This is a guy named Dr. John Cosah [sp?], he's head of the scientific gains. He lives in California now. He teaches some course in computer genetic engineering, off the chart in terms of IQ.

But anyway, so John said 2000 was awful and 2004 was almost awful because if Kerry had won in Ohio, Bush would have had over three million more votes but he would [indiscernible] just like Bush won before and then he looked back and he said that, "A change of less than 1% in two or three states in the last 12 elections would have produced five presidents who would have received fewer votes than the person they would have defeated." So he said, "We got to do something about it." "Going to cost money, John. We got to lobby individual states to do it." He said, "Well, we'll start off." So he hired lobbyists in 16 states. First thing out of the senate is, "How much you need?" So basically there's six of us that are, kind of, coordinating that and we work with the lobbyists in the different states.

I've been in North Carolina, I've been in Connecticut, I've been in New York, in Maryland [indiscernible] a whole lot of folks, lot of legislators and things and having served on a lot of positions with black elected officials like the Georgia Association of Black Elected Officials, the National Black Caucus, the state legislatures, being on the executive committee over 20 years

you get to know just about everyone in there. And of course serving also on committees, national conference and state legislature. I've been on a bunch of task forces. We had 15 members on the No Child Left Behind task force. I was one of those members. We had hearings in New York, in Portland, Oregon, [indiscernible] so that was--because I had worked on the alternative election system because I know a lot of folks, my name came to John's attention, so they called me and asked me. I said, "I think it's great," and I've been kicking around these different ideas because the electoral college is an acronym that's 225 years old and it was [indiscernible] political compromise just like having the senators, two from each state, Wyoming at 500,000 has the same number as California with 40 million people. It's insane to have that. And so that was an opportunity that was out there to deal with the national popular vote and as I said we're optimistic that it will happen.

Right now we have 23% of the states whose electoral college votes total 57 now, you need 270. That's the magic number and we are confident that there are several states that the time ran out on us last time. Like, Georgia, there are only about ten states where they stay in year round, so you got to get them early and so we just got Nevada. We just got Washington state. We got Rhode Island. We got Massachusetts, we got Maine. We got Vermont and these folks are on the hot list that we want to try to get them before they adjourn and then we can go back to New York and a few other places. We'll probably going to have to wait because Arnold vetoed the first time it passed out there. It passed in other states but we've got about nine states that we think we'll get this year and that'll give us two more years to get what we think will be the other half. But we've been working on them as a matter of fact, even the little states like Delaware and

Connecticut because every state counts and that's what it'll do it'll make sure that every vote counts equally because they will agree in signing a state compact to cast their vote for the candidate who receives the most national popular votes cast in the country between the 50 states and the District of Columbia, so every vote will be equal.

You won't have a situation like Wyoming, whose people's votes count eight times as much as that of a Californian. It doesn't make sense and it's the only office in the world where you can win and get fewer votes than the person you beat. The only one in the entire world. And 70% of the people in the country favor more of a national popular vote way of doing it than the electoral college. Another opportunity I actually do a little bit of still, I guess I'd call it coaching a young man, for example, since I did a lot of work in Nigeria over 15 years with their state legislatures and met people and a few years ago I was doing some work on setting up a research and budget office for them just like our congressional budget office that was setup in 1974 because they put \$4 billion [indiscernible] to build 300 elementary schools and at the end there'd be 100 elementary in the \$4 billion [indiscernible] or build 100 kilometers of interstate road and \$2 billion and then the \$2 billion be gone and they've only built 50 kilometers and that's what the U. S. Congress was in. They had no way of tracking or monitoring any over time. They didn't have any staff or anything to do it. So I figure this will save particularly in education.

That's where it goes back to that if these schools could have been built then that country is going to go--and it's just a corrupt situation but anyway [indiscernible] a new speaker was elected last year and he appointed a young man who was very bright. It was the chief of staff, former Navy commander, has a law degree, an engineering degree but had never been involved in political

process. So I, kind of, serviced as his executive coach, teaching him the nuts and bolts. I actually brought him down here to Georgia, took him up to D. C., spoke to staff, the former speakers and things of that nature, our dear friend Newt, his chief of staff, so he really knows what the job entails. Even had him talk to several people here because I said, "Look, it's not Nigeria but these are the same kinds of things." Steve Anthony was just great and Steve was Speaker Murphy's--and Steve and I had a great relationship, so Steve spoke to him and things like that.

And then I'm writing stuff as well. I have a couple of other offers to write books. The one I just finished on Maynard Jacksons, these are things I've been putting off in large part because of legislature and these are things now that I can spend my time on and be happy because I can see things happen. I mean, we send emails around and people celebrate that we have 28 houses or senates in the states, in the country who have passed the version of national popular vote. Like, in North Carolina, we passed it in the senate so now we got to get the house and that kind of thing. We pass it. House in Arkansas, now we got to get the senate and we got a couple years. Well, no some of them if they're four years it's good because it carries over but when you have an election between these start from scratch so that's why we have to prioritize states.

And it can be hectic but it's fun and you can instantly see the results of it. There was an issue that you want--oh, I talked about my interest in electoral voting reforms and things to that nature and as I said I consider that to be my so-called area of expertise and I've also been an expert witness in a number of voting rights cases, federal district courts here, Tennessee, other places. I also done work for the Southern Poverty Law Center basically going around the south and

identifying areas or potential court cases that they should file and things like that dealing with voting rights.

But I think that one of the things that I see is a great change for the better is the use of different means of getting the vote out. I think we're one of the worst countries in the world and Georgia's one of the worst states in the United States in terms of electoral turnout and that's what I said, that's why I was so interested in the [indiscernible] voter legislation that I first introduced and then when the feds passed it that it made life easier here to get it to pass [indiscernible] here in Georgia and I think that it's helped a lot about getting people on the [indiscernible]. I think that we need to look at how we can make it easier for folks rather than that one day on a work day to do it and I think we've made a great deal of progress there. We have early voting and as you probably know at the last election for the president, I think about roughly 30% of the folks had already voted before the election.

You still had long lines because of the record turnout in terms of that but I think that electronic voting which is something that states like Oregon have been pioneers in, I think we need, to of course, look at that. I mean, anything that will make it easier for folks to vote is something that I generally favor. Now, you got have controls because where ever there is something like that, there's potential for fraud but I believe that we use the models, we use examples of folks who've been doing this for years. They've gotten out just about most of the bugs so you don't have to reinvent the wheel and the equipment that can be made--it's just like using the touch screen voting machine. I mean, I think that makes life easier. So I think these kinds of reforms are things that are great and I think that now that we have years of experience in operations of these

systems in other states that Georgia needs to come into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and see--and it's cost benefit what is the best way to get rid of all these paper ballots and hanging [indiscernible] and things of that nature so you won't have--and I do believe in the paper trail as well.

We didn't do it here initially. A lot of folks were upset about it because it's just a matter of--it [indiscernible] sense of comfort with any new development because they're saying, like, with use of computers, hey, garbage in, garbage out. You can program something to do something that doesn't reflect what the actual situation was, so I think it's a very low price to pay to have the paper trail where people can actually check and therefore verify that their votes were, in fact, cast for the candidates that they wanted to.

SHORT: Do you think that voter identification requirement is a deterrent to voting?

HOLMES: It is for a relatively small number of people. I think senior people--but it's kind of weird to think that in places--and that goes back to my hometown of Shepherd's Town where everyone knows everybody and someone's been on the roles for four years and this young lady, like my grandma, she's never had a driver's license. She's never had--it's just an inconvenience that is unnecessary since everyone knows. Why should this lady have to go to the polls and produce a card. My mom never even got a driver's license but in other words, if there is a problem that has been identified then you take actions to, in fact, solve it. There was no evidence presented about anything. The biggest form of voter [indiscernible] in Georgia is absentee balloting and I've said for years and I've tried to do something about that even when I

was chairman of the committee and these folks who are pushing the IDs, I have not heard them say one word about it. There are dozens of cases of prosecutions, hundreds of cases of prosecution for that but they haven't done anything about it. Why is it? Now, some people say it's just absolute politics that absentee ballots are primarily used by republicans quote/unquote, so you don't want to deal with them.

And the folks who are adversely impacted the most by voter identification are likely to be democrats and they say that's the answer as to why they're going after this so-called reform but it's like a solution in search of a problem because I don't remember anyone coming to my committee that I chaired for a decade dealing with voter reform and we would get reports after every election. We would say secretary of state, please tell us about election fraud problems and give us some legislation of how we can resolve it. I have never gotten one complaint from the elections board, secretary of state's office to say we got this horrible problem dealing with fraud involving voter ID. So that's the reason that I never had a bill in my committee because there was never any proof and my idea that the legislature, that's what they're supposed to do.

Now, sometimes you want to get ahead of the curve and anticipate problems but if you have this massive problem that's out there it seems to me that someone, even republicans, no republican ever came in and told me, "We need voter ID because down in my district our registrar says that there are--" Five percent of the people are using fraud to vote, to get their ballot and so that's what I'm saying. It's a solution in search of a problem. I don't think it's necessary but I think if you do have a problem that has been clearly identified like absentee balloting you deal with that first and foremost but no one even talks about that.

SHORT: Now let's get back to Bob Holmes.

HOLMES: Okay, well, life after the general assembly, I guess, we are basically, the wife and I, have done a lot of traveling. We've been fortunate, we've been blessed. We were in China last year. We were in South Africa year before and Brazil, Costa Rica, Nicaragua. I'm taking her to some of these places where I went to do work like South Africa. I won't take her Nigeria. Too dangerous but we're trying to get around to two or three places every year. We've got eight grandkids from college to elementary school and we spend a lot of time with them. We bring them down during the summer or we're blessed to have some timeshare, so we take them with us on vacations and onto Florida, Disney World or we got to different things with them like one of my grandson's is a high school choir director and when he's doing stuff, like, he was in San Francisco. We went out there and spent a little time with him and his choir won first prize in their division and so we, kind of, relax and I do my running. I just got off the board of The Road Runners Clubs of America where I'd been on for four years. About 900 clubs who are members and about 250,000 members. I do a lot of volunteer civic work. I'm on the board of the Grady Hospital. I'm on the board of the Sickle Cell Foundation of Georgia. I'm on the Metropolitan Atlanta Advisory Board. I used to be on the floor board.

I'm on the little foundation of the little college in my town, Shepherd University. I'm on the foundation board there trying to raise money. I'm on my church's finance committee and on the commission on higher education and do a few other things that keep me busy. I'm going to do

another triathlon next month. I run probably one or two road races a month and this will be my third triathlon I'll be doing in June. So I try to keep busy, try to keep health as my grandchildren are always talking about how old I am. I'll be 66 but I still--my physician primary says I probably have a 35 year old body.

SHORT: So you haven't got time for much golf?

HOLMES: I've never played a round of golf in my life.

SHORT: Or fishing or hunting?

HOLMES: My brother does both. My brother two years older than I am he plays golf three days a week. He goes deep sea fishing around the Gulf. He'll start in Mobile and then the next month--at least once a month they'll go around Panama City, that's what he does but I've never gotten interested in that. I do try to do at least one and half to two hours of exercise, physical fitness a day. It'll be running, it'll be swimming, it'll be biking, it'll be nautilus equipment and things of that nature.

SHORT: Gosh, you're making me sick.

HOLMES: Jack LaLanne is my idol. He's 95. For his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday he put a harness on his back

and he swam a mile pulling a tug boat. For his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday he swam 32 miles from the coast of California to Catalina Island. I'm waiting for what he's going to do his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. He's my idol.

SHORT: Well, let's wrap it up, Bob, I'm going to ask you a couple of personal questions. First of all, if you had your political career to do over would you have done anything differently?

HOLMES: I don't think anything significantly different. I like to think, as I said, following teachings and upbringing in my grandma, I'd like to think that at least I try to do what was right in every circumstance regardless. It was clear in some instances that have been politically beneficial for me to have done the other things. Like I said I could have come in to the legislature and like the usual freshman say absolutely nothing. Just listen and get along and one of my best friends would probably be a model for that. That's Calvin Smirey [sp?]. I may have been governor's assistant floor leader. I may have been a committee chairman long before I was a committee chairman. I'm pretty sure I would have had I taken that route but like the Bible says if you teach them certain things when they're young, when they're old they won't depart of it and I couldn't even consider doing some of the kinds of things that would have probably been more beneficial to my political career.

And I always wanted to be in a situation whereby I never wanted something bad enough that I would forget my grandma's teaching in order to get it. And I've been blessed as I mentioned earlier, I mean, how many folks you know who came from my background who have been lucky

enough or blessed enough to do the things I've done. Founding two banks. We were going to open up the Regional Bank of Middle Georgia before this recession occurred. That would have been a third bank. Most people don't found a single bank and the things like the worked on the national popular vote which is directly connected or the things with the voter registration because a lot of folk didn't like that and one of my favorite articles was a play on John Kennedy's profile on courage and one of the editorial writers for the constitution wrote this article and she said it about the state legislature and I was one of the ten people that she mentioned. So I'd like to think that that's proof of what I tried to do was right.

SHORT: So you never thought of running for another political office?

HOLMES: Only one time. I thought that maybe I would run for the congress but John Louis is one of my best friends. We live four blocks apart and he's been in that position and I would never even think about running against him but that was a fleeting moment that I said. It was the only office I would be interested in other than being in the legislature, another legislative office and I just felt he's doing a good job. I would never run just because I want to run because of my own personal ambitions and if he weren't doing a good job then I would probably say, "I think I can do a better job therefore I'm going to run."

SHORT: How would you like to be remembered?

HOLMES: Well, pretty much what I said. Someone who did what he felt was right, someone who did things that were for the benefit of people other than his own personal gratification or own financial gain and things of that nature and that the legislation that I passed and the policies that I supported were things that were for the betterment of the people and not necessarily folk in my district. Most of the 34 years that I served was from a district that was upper/middle class. For example, the new subdivision that was developed in my community 300 yards from where I live, the houses start at \$800,000. The Cascade Heights, the houses start at \$400,000. That first one all the houses start at \$1 million--that these weren't the people who needed the legislation in education. These people could send their kids to private school if they wanted to. It was for what I thought. Just like being on the board of Grady Hospital. I don't have any public housing in my district. I've never had public housing in my district and the people have their health insurance but I have a lot of people relatives and things, not here but in West Virginia and New York. I lived in Harlem for a while. I went to a public hospital when I broke my wrist playing basketball and things of that nature and I know that there are things--my mom was a hotel maid and a lot of friends that I grew up with there. Their parents worked but they made minimum wages and so I know that there are people out there and grandma again says, "The Lord bless you so you can be a blessing to others." And Luke 12:48, "To who much is given, much is expected." And I'd like to think I lived my political life and made political decisions based on those types of philosophies.

SHORT: Well, Bob, I want to thank you on behalf of Young Harris College, the Richard B.

Russell Library and the University of Georgia for being our guest today.

HOLMES: Thank you. I enjoyed it and hope you have many more exciting interviews that are more exciting than mine when you talk to others.

[END OF RECORDING]

**University of Georgia  
Bob Holmes**

**Page PAGE 37**

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