

Steve Wrigley interviewed by Bob Short

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Steve Wrigley

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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 for research and studies at the University of Georgia. I'm here with Dr. Steve Wrigley, who has served as chief of staff for Lieutenant Governor and Governor Zell Miller and who is now the director of the Carl Vinson Institute at the University of Georgia. Did I get that right?

STEVE WRIGLEY: You did.

SHORT: Good. Well, welcome.

WRIGLEY: Thank you.

SHORT: We're delighted to have you. Before we talk about Zell Miller and your experience with him, let's talk a little bit about you. Tell us about yourself.

WRIGLEY: Okay. I think I'll go backwards in time. I've been at UGA now 11 years. I left the Governor's office in July of '98 and came here to work at the Vinson Institute running international programs. And then Michael Adams, the president, asked me in 2000, July of 2000, to become the VP of government relations, which to succeed

Larry Weatherford that a lot of people know, a good friend, did a great job here for many years. Larry had retired.

So I started as VP of government relations. I did that a couple of years, and I was responsible for federal, state, and local relations. We added a few people to help make that work better because I couldn't make it all work. And then in the spring of 2002, Dr. Adams asked me to be the senior VP for external affairs at UGA, which was government relations, fundraising, alumni relations, public affairs, the career center, sort of all of the external activities for the University. I did that about five years and then was ready to do something different. Five years is long enough, so when Jim Ledbetter retired as the director of the Vinson Institute, I expressed an interest in that. And that worked out because it's just a great old organization in this state that helps to work for state and local government on training and technical assistance just to try to help them do their jobs a little better. It's a wonderful organization and full of great folks. So that's sort of a quick thumbnail of essentially since I've been here.

Prior to that, I spent 13 years in state government and went into state government in '85 working in the Senate research office. I was finishing up my dissertation at Northwestern University to get my Ph.D., did that. Worked in Senate research a couple years. That's how I got to know Zell Miller. He was Lieutenant Governor.

SHORT: So tell us about your early life, growing up.

WRIGLEY: Oh, okay. I was going back to that, you know, the log cabin style. But I was born out of state. I was born in Kansas. We moved here when I was very young. My dad worked for the Federal Aviation Administration and was sent to Atlanta in 1960, and we lived in Cobb County for a while, went to school in early grades there. Then we moved to Douglas County, where I graduated from high school, and then went on to Georgia State in Atlanta. I grew up in suburban Atlanta in the '60s and '70s, when it went from being a lot of rural areas and rural counties and rather rapidly to being suburban Atlanta and suburban Georgia. And the demographics and the politics and all of that changed dramatically, as you well know, in particularly the course of the '70s as Georgia grew and in the '80s.

So I grew up basically considering myself a Georgian and grew up in suburban Atlanta and went to school and public schools here.

SHORT: When did you first meet Zell Miller?

WRIGLEY: Well, I did an intern...my senior at Georgia State I did a legislative internship on the Senate side. I met him then, didn't really get to know him, but got to know a number of people in the Senate research office and elsewhere. So I first met him then, but then when I came back to Georgia I worked in the '85 legislative session I

guess. While I was still working on my dissertation, and then they had an opening later in the year in Senate research, and that's where I really got to know him. I worked with him on some projects, and it was really during 1987 when he had his Mountain Protection Act. If you remember that, it was an idea he had that I helped him with. We worked closely on that, and that's where I really got to know him. We spent the better part of that year working on that and did a number of things around that legislation and into the '88 session. And then it was after the '88 session when Sarah Eby-Ebersole left his office. And he asked me to come over and be his executive assistant. That was the spring of '88, so I really got to know him in 1987 when he was Lieutenant Governor.

SHORT: He was a passionate man.

WRIGLEY: Yeah, I think he's a perfectionist about most everything he does, and which I think is what drives his passion. He really cares about getting things right, to the point of turning a decision over and over and over and looking at it a lot of different ways. He was a very good decision maker, it wasn't that he was adverse to the decision. Some folks in elective office don't like to make decisions because they're afraid they're going to alienate somebody. He wanted to get it right. He was just passionate about getting things right, especially the area he cared deeply about within education.

SHORT: Let's talk for a minute about his career before becoming Lieutenant Governor. He had lost two elections for congress, but he probably – and I think you'll agree with me – is the most resilient political figure in Georgia history. Every time he bounced back, he bounced higher.

WRIGLEY: Yeah. And I think what explains it is he really had something he wanted to do with being in elective office. I think a lot of people today...not everybody, but a lot of people today run for elective office because they want to be in elective office. He ran for elective office because he wanted to do something with it. And primarily...you know, I mean you know his story. I mean, he grew up where he grew up and poor and he really, you know, from his community and from his mother really, inculcated, internalized the notion that education can really make a difference in somebody's life. And I think it did in his life, and I think he was – I think the thing people sometimes miss about him is he was ambitious for his state. I think it bothered him that the rest of the country looked at our part of the country and thought there's nothing going on good down there. And he felt otherwise and felt he key to change that was education. I think that's where he was ambitious for the state and passionate about giving people educational opportunities because he really knew that it would make the state a better place. And I think that's why he bounced back politically, because I think

he had something he wanted to do with elective office. And not everybody's run is like that.

SHORT: As Lieutenant Governor, you really don't have the power to push an agenda because you always have the Governor who has his own program. He seemed to be very successful in his ability to get things done that he wanted done, as well as getting things done that the governor wanted done. How do you – how did he go about that?

WRIGLEY: Well, he was a master politician. And unfortunately, "politician" has become something of a dirty word, and I don't subscribe to that. I think we need people who are good at politics, and he was good at it. He understood individuals' motivations; he understood the senate and how it worked, the dynamics. He understood the dynamics vis-à-vis the state House, and I think he always had good relationships with the two governors that he served under as Lieutenant Governor. I don't think he ever tried to be the governor when he was lieutenant governor. Some lieutenant governors try to be the governor when they're only the lieutenant governor. I don't think he ever tried to do that, and I think that was a source of his ability to get along with the governor and the governor in power to support him and his agenda. But he knew how to put coalitions together. He knew...you know, he knew when to give in. He knew when you could push something so far or push somebody so far, and he really was a master at

understanding motivations and a master at knowing just how far an individual would go in terms of a vote or that sort of thing. So he was just...you know, I don't know all the governors, but he's got to be one of the most skilled political figures in our state in the last hundred years...he has to be. I think his success shows that, but he's really good at it. And he loved it.

SHORT: Yeah, he's proven that.

WRIGLEY: Yeah.

SHORT: Let's talk about his relationship with the Speaker of the House.

There's a saying that those guys really knew how and when to rattle each other's cages.

WRIGLEY: Yeah, I think they enjoyed it, too. They had a good time with it. I think they respected one another. They respected one another's office. And I think there were times they certainly didn't like each other. They had similar backgrounds in some ways, shared a lot of the same values, both pretty hard-headed. And, you know, both I think felt like that their vision of the state was the correct one. And I think that one of the things that gets overlooked is they fought about substantive matters; it wasn't just personality. Sometimes people in political offices, they fight because it's just

personalities and about power, and that happens. And certainly they have those kinds of struggles. But they fought about ideas; they fought about substance, whether it was the fiscal role of the state...Miller was far more aggressive about the state having a proactive fiscal investment in whatever it is, education or whatever. I think the Speaker was less so. It's not he wasn't – you know, he wasn't a hard right conservative on stuff, but Miller was far more I think comfortable with seeing state government working toward positive ends. So there's a lot of things that, when they fought about them, they were about something bigger. They weren't just fighting for the sake of fighting...well, sometimes they did that too because it was fun; they enjoyed it. But they never crashed a legislative session. They never crashed it just because they couldn't get along.

You watched them both a long time. I don't recall...in the time I worked with them, I don't recall a single time that they just crashed things just because they could. They didn't – I don't think the state suffered because they fought. I think probably the state probably benefited because they fought. I don't see anything wrong with that.

SHORT: No.

WRIGLEY: That's a good thing.

SHORT: That's good, yes. Looking at some of the things they disagreed on, we

mentioned the Mountain Protection Act. Speaker Murphy was not in favor of that. Miller eventually prevailed. The sales tax on food, Murphy was opposed to that, not because of the – it wasn't because he didn't want to take the tax off food, but because he thought it would cost the state too much money. Miller eventually prevailed on that. So as you look back over those struggles, don't you think that Governor Miller won most of those battles in the end?

WRIGLEY: Yeah, I think he did. And I think some of them he eventually won as governor; and of course that relationship changed dramatically when Miller became Governor. And I think that to some extent explains why he won most of those. And I think on some of the other items, I think he was a statewide elected official and I think to be a statewide elected official you just have to deal with explaining your positions to the public in a very different way than if you were Speaker of the House because you really answer to your whole district and then 179 members of the House. That's very different than if you've got to run statewide and explain and answer statewide. In some ways it makes it easier to craft and pursue a message because I think one of the things that happened – and those who admire Speaker Murphy, and I'm one of them, they might disagree with this; but I think the Speaker was never comfortable on that bigger stage and was a little bit awkward when he had to deal with issues where there was a lot of attention and statewide attention and media attention, and Miller was comfortable with

that and could have a message. I mean, how many times would they go to the eggs and issues breakfast and Miller would have worked months on a speech and speak eloquently and at length and lay out an agenda, and the Speaker would get up and just sort of mumble through something? And that was his sort of approach to things to the Speaker; it was deliberate. It wasn't as if he didn't have the ability; he certainly did. But that was just kind of his approach. And Miller's approach was different. But I think it helped Miller in the end to win those fights.

SHORT: I think that most political insiders really enjoyed them.

WRIGLEY: Every year we looked forward to those.

SHORT: Steve, you probably have spent more time with Zell Miller than anybody outside of his family while he was in public office. Tell us what he was like when there were no spotlights and no photo ops and no reporters around.

WRIGLEY: He didn't change much. You know him very well, Bob, and he didn't change a lot. He is an intense man, and he's introspective and he thinks a lot. And he remained intense, and that really didn't – that didn't change a lot. He's a very caring person, and I think sometimes people miss that. You know, my wife and I had

our children while I was working for him when he was governor, and they grew up; and to this day he always asks about them. When they would go on a foreign trip, he would bring something back for them. You know, he didn't have to do that, but there's a softer side to him and a very caring side to him that I think a lot of people don't realize and you would not see in public except on rare occasions.

But he's got a great sense of humor. He's a lot of fun. He's got a great sense of humor, which he often didn't show in public, but privately he would. And I think he's got a great sense of humor about himself. You can poke fun at him. You can make fun of him, and he laughs about it, which I think a lot of people might find to be surprising. But he's got a great sense of humor, and it's a sense of humor about himself. So he was a lot of fun to be with.

He was also, like I said, quiet and could be introspective. I mean, how many times have you ridden in the car with him for two hours and never said a word? And he wasn't being unfriendly; he was either thinking, he was reading. I think, unlike a lot of people in elective office today, he constantly thought about what am I doing, what are we doing, and where are we going and how are we going to get there. He was intense about that. Again, I think that's – he wasn't casual about anything he did, which I think is a secret to his success.

SHORT: And as a youth...you know, I've known him most of my life. In all of

the time that I've known him, he has always had a goal.

WRIGLEY: Yes.

SHORT: And that goal was to be a United States senator. And he finally achieved that goal, and I want to talk about that in a minute. But he really had no hobbies. He didn't play golf. He didn't play bridge. You know, he's not a ballroom dancer. But he was a fan of country music and baseball, and I'm sure you've been with him on trips to Nashville and baseball trips.

WRIGLEY: Uh-huh.

SHORT: And I'm sure that he probably was just as excited as a youngster when he got into those arenas. Well, he waited 16 years before running for governor. And during that time, he served under two progressive governors, George Busbee and Joe Frank Harris. How were their relationships?

WRIGLEY: I think very good. And I wasn't really around in the Busbee years, but he communicated with both of them well; and they still communicate. I mean, even as far back as Carl Sanders...as you know, they're very good friends and still to this day

communicate. Again, I think he was respectful to them. I don't think he ever tried to be the governor as lieutenant governor. I think that made a big difference. I'm sure he drove both of them crazy at more than one occasion. And Miller, he's a very good public speaker. He doesn't mind taking something on publicly, and both Busbee's style and Joe Frank's style was a little more I guess not as aggressive and calm. They were both very good governors and effective governors, but the styles were different. And to this day with Governor Harris we joke about some of those things that went on. But I think he – I think he got along very well with both of them and never tried to substitute himself for either of them, and I think that made a big difference. You know, they would disagree; but, again, I don't recall him ever having a big meltdown disagreement with either governor.

SHORT: He was a bit naïve I guess is the word when he became lieutenant governor. The first thing he did was give away his power to appoint committees. What do you remember about that?

WRIGLEY: Well, I think you're right; I think naïve is the word. I think it's one too many political science courses or something I think that the shared power was the way to run the senate, and there's a way to share power without sharing the powers I think. And I think that's what he learned over time. And I think he learned it very

quickly, and I think he was smart. And, after losing the senate race to Talmadge, I mean, there's no question he was wounded, but it's remarkable to me and it says a lot about his skill and his determination that losing that race in '80 and then just a few years later getting his powers back as lieutenant governor, which really I think ultimately launched him toward making a successful run for governor. But again, I think it goes back to his skill and understanding, motives about senators and explaining to them why it would make a difference. So I think...I think he figured out he could share power and wouldn't have to share the power. Somebody ultimately would have to be in charge.

SHORT: That's right. Let's roll the clock ahead to 1990 and his decision to run for governor. Why did he do that?

WRIGLEY: You know, I think it's what I said before. He had something he wanted to do, and I think being lieutenant governor for 16 years...I think he came to understand I'm never going to be able to do some things for the state that I think need to be done in education or whatever unless I'm the governor. And I think he felt like it was time to try to, you know, really aggressively put Georgia on a move toward...in fact, we were coming up on a new century, and I think he knew we're not going to see those kinds of changes unless I get myself elected governor. It's pretty simple. I just think he, you know...

SHORT: Yeah. He always has a goal.

WRIGLEY: Yeah.

SHORT: He made a mistake I think during that campaign by declaring that he would only serve one term. What prompted that decision?

WRIGLEY: I think it was – and I think he lived that over here after the '86 biannual that he...you know how he...and he's sort of cute sometimes in the way he deals with the media. He likes to sort of – he always sort of had this side to him that was playful. You know, I think we reached a point where the media scrutiny is such you really can't do that because they hound you and everything's on the web and we were just at that point beginning to see where those kinds of comments are easily retrievable. I think he was just being playful about it and got himself quoted, and that was in late '86. And then he tried to figure out a way to extricate himself from it. I never thought it was that big a political issue. I don't think people care about that sort of thing. But I don't think it was thought out. I think he thought it was sort of cute and playful, and maybe he thought, well, maybe it will help me get elected if I say I'm only going to serve one term. I don't know. But I don't think it's something he thought through very well.

SHORT: The campaign of 1990, you were involved; and that was the introduction to a fellow named James Carville. Tell us what you can about that campaign.

WRIGLEY: Well, I think it was – you know, I think every eight or ten years campaigns...and maybe it's more frequent now...but they get taken to another level, and I think that's what James and then his associate, Paul Begala, both did. I think they brought a level of sophistication to dealing with media, polling, messaging that had been seen in Georgia, but probably not to the level that they brought. And I first met those guys in 1988 when they became involved with Miller's campaign. They brought a lot of discipline, which I think at times in the past Miller had not always shown when he ran for office, and even being in office, which is odd because he's a very self-disciplined person, an extraordinarily self-disciplined person. But I think that pure honesty and that passion just comes out when he's out there in public, and I have explained it.

But Carville really brought a discipline and a focus, and the fact that he was – James was in his early 40s then I guess he would have been. And he was a little bit older. He wasn't a 28-year-old, 25-year-old person trying to manage a very seasoned, very stubborn, very focused Zell Miller. James was seasoned himself, and the two of them hit it off. They clashed all the time. But James really knew how to work with Zell

and get him focused and remind him what this is all about. I think Miller just looked in the mirror and said I'm going to do this and I'm going to do it right and I'm going to manage myself.

I think in the end, you know, people talk about James did this or I did that or whatever...in the end, Miller won that race because he determined he was going to win that race and he determined he was going to manage himself and do what he needed to do. And James and Paul and others were there just to help support him and provide, you know, campaign discipline and message focus. We did a lot of polling, a lot of, you know, focus groups, a lot of media testing, spent a lot of time writing ads and scripts and a lot of time raising money.

SHORT: It costs a lot of money.

WRIGLEY: Yeah. I think we raised, what, \$6 million I think. It doesn't seem like much now. It was a huge sum of money. But that was for a primary runoff and a general election. And then just four years later I think we raised the same amount of money for essentially the general election. In '94 we raised I think about six. And there was a primary, but we didn't spend hardly any money. So just in those four short years the amount of money needed went up exponentially.

SHORT: That primary I'm sure was helpful because you had three opponents that he – he being Miller – got 70 percent of the vote. So that was an indication that he went into the general election with some strength. Getting back to that 1990 race, the big issue that Miller raised was the lottery. Obviously, a very popular one that was opposed by all of his opponents, which gave him some sort of leverage in the race. He didn't have to talk about everybody else's issues; he could only talk about his own. That campaign for the lottery was brilliant. And who managed that?

WRIGLEY: Well, Miller was all over it, you know. And to pursue the lottery was his idea. James and Paul had worked with a candidate, Wallace Wilkinson from Kentucky, who had run on a lottery for education. The messaging around it was really refined. You know, there was a group of us. But Miller was front and center on that, and he was the one who was really determined that if there's a lottery in Georgia the money would be dedicated...the proceeds would be dedicated to education, which was different from other states. And we'd already had seen the experience in other states, Florida and Kentucky and others where when the lottery monies went into the general fund they just kind of disappeared. And so Miller made that determination very early on. It polled very well, and a lot of it just had to do with sort of what is I think a cultural lack of confidence in legislative bodies to handle money right. I mean, that's probably unfair to most legislative bodies, but it's just how people feel about them.

And so I think he knew that intuitively. It polled strongly. And then the messaging around it, you know, we worked on. And I think for Miller, I mean, here was a guy who had been around a long time; he'd been in office a long time. He was running against three other very strong candidates who were fresh in many ways...Roy Barnes and Andy Young and Bubba McDonald. And I think not only was it a good idea and he pushed it as a way to advance education in the state of Georgia, but I think it also helped sort of, you know, frankly cover over the fact he'd been around a long time.

SHORT: Made him look new.

WRIGLEY: Yeah, it made him look new. It gave him the freshness that showed he was willing to be innovative and willing to be open to new ideas. And talking about pre-kindergarten for four-year-olds and those kinds of things, I think it was a good combination because I think Georgia voters tend to like people who have experience; but on the other hand, he just – it wasn't like he was saying to them, well, I've been around and it's my turn. I think he made it clear...and you know Miller, it's how he is anyway. He was going to fight for that nomination and winning that election because that's how – that's what elections are. They're battles, and you win them; they're not...you know, they're not coronations. I think he understood that. I think the lottery helped convey that to people.

SHORT: Let's talk about the demographics of that race. You had Andrew Young, who was an African-American. You had Roy Barnes, who was very conservative. And you had Bubba McDonald, who was supported by the Speaker. Now, I recall the Speaker telling me your man can never win because – speaking of Miller – because he and Andrew Young would split all the liberal votes and that will knock him out. But that didn't happen. Miller, as I recall, got a tremendous number of African-American votes, as well as the rural areas in the state where Murphy didn't think he could poll. Isn't that what happened?

WRIGLEY: Yeah. He did well among African-American voters, and some precincts in Atlanta got in the 20 percent range. Of course, Andrew Young got the lion's share of them, but Miller got enough. Of course, in the runoff, you know, did very, very well...ran very well among all demographic groups among white voters statewide. And in rural areas and older whites, ran very well there. But interestingly enough, I mean, you know, at that point the suburban vote was very strong and very important, and Miller was very appealing there. And I think Barnes's strategy was to try to appeal to suburban voters, and it didn't really work for whatever reason. But Miller ran very well in the suburbs as well, both in the primary and then in the general.

Of course, even then in '90...I don't remember the numbers, but the participation

rates in the Democratic Party were five or six-to-one to the Republican primary. Of course, that's changed today. He ran very well among all demographic groups in the primary, and I think again it was about what he said he was for. It was about the messaging, and I think he had a message that resonated with all demographic groups.

SHORT: It could have been that Barnes was hurt because Johnny Isakson, who was from his home county, was running as a republican. And therefore, Barnes didn't get those republican votes that I think he was counting.

So he gets elected governor; he wins the runoff, and he goes into office. What's the first thing that happened?

WRIGLEY: The lottery. That was the top priority, was to get the lottery passed. We had – when Miller was lieutenant governor, we had actually passed it in the Senate in the '89 session. Of course, it went to the House and didn't go anywhere. Because it was a constitutional amendment, it needed a two-thirds vote. So that was the top priority. Everything was around...I mean, you know, aside from all the organizational stuff that you have to do, which is tremendous, as you know. I mean, organizing the office and naming various department heads and all the things that you've got to do. You get on the budget...we were in a fiscal crisis at the time, nothing like what we're facing now but we spent a lot of time on the – literally the day after the

election in November, spent a lot of time in budget meetings and budget hearings putting together what would have been the fiscal...well, the amended '91 budget and the fiscal '92 budget I guess. And so that consumed an awful lot of time, all of those mechanics that a governor in Georgia has to do and that are very important. But the big focus was on a legislative strategy generally about the various things he had talked about in his campaign that he wanted to do. I think we had 35 or 40 pieces of legislation the first several sessions we were there.

But the big thing was the focus on the lottery, naming floor leaders in the House and Senate, and getting that team of people together pretty quickly because we knew we wanted to run the lottery through fast. And we were going to start it in the House and do it first, and it needed 120 votes. So we rather quickly went about getting organized for that and then all the things that you have to do, meetings with the leadership, meetings with the Speaker and lieutenant governor, and of course the lieutenant governor had been elected that year, Pierre Howard, and he was a good ally and very helpful to us through the years.

SHORT: At that point, the Speaker, as I recall, has sort of abandoned his desire to argue with Miller and became a pretty good ally.

WRIGLEY: Yeah. They got along very well when Miller was governor. And

the only really difficult session that we had was, as I recall, I think the '97 session. But for the most part, they worked well together, communicated regularly. We had regular meetings during the legislative session. Miller met with the leadership of both houses together on Friday afternoons. You know, Speaker Murphy had respect for the office of governor, and he very quickly said to Governor Miller...he said, you know, I'll make sure the lottery gets to the floor for a vote. He wasn't for it, didn't support it; but he wasn't going to hold it up in a committee.

But they worked very well together on the big things and the little things. And, you know, the Speaker every now and then would need something in the budget or had an interest in a judicial appointment here or there. And you know how those things help to move the system along. They communicated very well on those kinds of things.

SHORT: The financial crisis you spoke of required some innovative solutions as I recall. Tell us about that.

WRIGLEY: Well, then the economy was in bad shape and had been, and Governor Harris didn't have any choice; there was no revenue shortfall reserve. So we were playing without a safety net, and it seems like – I mean, the state budget was 7.2, 7.5 billion or 7.9, and we cut it to 7.2 or something, which is a pretty big hit. But Miller did a combination of budget cuts and reductions. Later he was interested in generating

new revenues through some fee increases, had a lot of interest in some budget management mechanisms over time to control state spending, which Hank Huckabee had really helped to implement as director of OPB around budget redirection of constantly asking state agencies to prioritize and reprioritize. And so over five or six years...and Miller really approached it as not year-to-year, which of course our budget is, but thought about it in terms of over five or six years, how to plan and implement the state budget, state spending, and expect and require state agencies to focus on their priorities and to cut their budget by an amount. And they got to retain those monies, but they had to redirect it to their top priority.

So it was a way to focus state spending to move along certain priorities without having to put new money into it. And that developed really over five or six years. And then immediate – when we first went into office, of course we did the cuts and things; but then we had this Georgia Rebound program in the '92 session where we raised driver's license fees and tag fees and had a pretty extensive capital outlay, set of bond projects to do construction on a variety of things around the state. And so it – he really had a combination of things: controlling spending, forcing prioritization, and then generating new revenue...not massive amounts of new revenue; the fees generated a couple hundred million I think.

SHORT: One of his early actions was to appoint a commission, as I remember it,

on effectiveness and efficiency, the economy and government. That was headed by Virgil Williams.

WRIGLEY: Right.

SHORT: That commission came up with a list of recommendations. Did he implement most of those?

WRIGLEY: He did, as I recall. And in fact, we had what we refer to as the Williams Commission on that and on his campaign plan. OPB actually had tracking sheets for campaign promise and, you know, stage of implementation that we kept up with all the time, and the same thing on the Williams commission where they had come up with recommendations and where he decided the ones – and, as I recall, the vast majority of them – that he wanted to implement. We set up tracking sheets, spreadsheets to keep up with the stages of implementation of those things. And a lot of aspects of the Williams commission and that Virgil of course brought from a business perspective, a lot of it had to do with money management and financial management to accelerate the state's management of that, which just made a lot of different processes more efficient in check processing and improving the amount of interest the state was earning and just...it seems like a little bit, but when you're talking about several billion dollars, you know, it

makes a lot of difference. So that was something early on that was really very...I think very helpful to us. You know, after two or three years those commissions tend to sort of run their course of their natural life, but I think it was very helpful to us in the first term.

SHORT: You were present at the birth of the Hope Scholarship.

WRIGLEY: Yes.

SHORT: How was it born?

WRIGLEY: You know, it really was Miller. Going back, he had this idea about the concept of the GI Bill, and he really wanted sort of a scholarship plan with that sort of basic, as he would say, you know, if you do something, you get something. And so I think that people missed...he was determined to expand access to higher education opportunities, but he also talked about quality and excellence a lot and felt like that in a state of the deep south, you know, we haven't always valued education and higher education to the degree that we needed to. He valued it, and he wanted to, literally in his words, create a cultural of higher expectation. And that's really what Hope was about. And so it was about setting a standard, get a set GPA in your high school academic courses, and you get to go to college...you get tuition free. It was very straightforward.

And we went through a lot of iterations of what the scholarship program would be like. We had talked about the pre-kindergarten plan during the campaign in a lot of detail. We only talked very generally about maybe using the lottery money for scholarships. And it was only after the election that we really began to spend time focusing on what it would look like.

We looked at a lot of different ideas and possibilities. There were a lot of different staff people involved in that...Dan Ebersole, whom you know, and David Lee...really helped an awful lot, really had a lot of ideas and memos and a lot of different options. And there was debate of do you have a merit-based program or need-based. And Miller was pretty determined, you know, we're going to have a merit-based program because the point is in the state of Georgia I want people to realize a college education has value, and we're going to teach people that. It matters that you get a college degree, and it has value. And that's sort of where Hope came from. But we spent a year or more off and on working on different alternatives about what a scholarship program would look like. You know, the most important thing to try to deal with and grapple with is how much money do you have.

Estimating lottery revenues was pretty tricky. And I was trading emails with Dan a couple days ago. We started joking about our original estimate was very, very conservative, and we thought it was – we estimated 135 million a year. Hank Tomlinson, who was the official revenue estimator for the state, he estimated it at – he

thought...he really thought it would be about 250 million a year, but he thought it could go as high as 400. Of course, Miller immediately started saying 400 publicly, the biggest number right away. But that makes a big difference. And you have to price out what are these things going to cost and to structure the Hope plan and...but by the middle of '92 when we were campaigning for the lottery referendum, that summer of '92 when the lottery constitutional amendment was on the ballot in November of '92 and the campaign for it was heating up, Miller wanted to announce the scholarship program in the late summer or early fall of '92 before the referendum. And so we really put it all together, and that's when it came out, is in September of '92; that's when he announced it.

And we had spent a good part of that year putting the details of it together. And of course, when it was initially proposed and the first couple of years of it are different than what it is now. It expanded because of the amount of money the lottery generated; it was significantly higher than what we anticipated. But we went back and forth, had all these meetings and discussion, and Miller's propeller heads, as we called them, and memos and...you know, you get some people involved in these things and they get really complicated after a while.

I remember one night, the summer of '92. We were sitting in the governor's office. And Miller just laid it out. He said this is what I wanted to do...just straightforward and just laid it out. You know, you get a 3.0 in academic classes in

high school and you get your first year of tuition for free. And then over time it became more generous than that. So...but it was – there was a long gestation period I think for Hope. I don't think people realize it was really a long period of time that we worked on it and kicked ideas around about how it would look, how it work, and trying to guess how much revenue we'd have.

SHORT: It's been very successful.

WRIGLEY: Yeah, I think it's made a big difference in this state. And other states have tried to copy it. But, I mean, that's...imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. I think that's the case.

SHORT: In '92...the people passed that in '92.

WRIGLEY: Yes.

SHORT: And that was the year that Bill Clinton ran for President. So there was a good turnout, but the vote was close. And the Clinton vote was close. So you've got your – you've got what you wanted. You got the lottery. You got your Hope program on the way. What are some of the other programs that you got underway during Miller's

first term?

WRIGLEY: There are a number of things that flowed out of the campaign. One is he was really interested in what we called Preservation 2000, which was to try to expand the amount of natural areas and lands that the state owned and preserved. And he wanted to add 100,000 acres essentially to the now public land that the state owns. It was a pretty big number then, and it was expensive. And so we worked with great folks at the State Department of Natural Resources. Lonice Barrett and others...Joe Cannon was back over as commissioner for a while. Lonice Barrett was head of state parks. They were terrific. I mean, we didn't have to worry about them. They said this is the goal, you know, and they mapped out how to get there. That was a big piece of the first term that we spent a good bit of time on. And as part of that, ultimately Tallulah Gorge came under as now a state park, and there's some significant additions to the state public land holdings. So that was a major undertaking.

A lot of issues in just general education reform beyond Hope. Implementing the pre-kindergarten program was a big undertaking as well. It was obviously related to the lottery and the lottery coming online, and just the mechanics of setting that up were pretty significant.

You know, we had a number of other pieces of legislation around crime and punishment I guess, for lack of a better term...

SHORT: Boot camps.

WRIGLEY: Boot camps was a big part of the agenda, implementing those, which was primarily sort of a budgetary mechanism in getting the state department of corrections to organize them and set them up. We toughened penalties on a number of areas and toward the end of the first term had created I think what are now called the seven deadly sins, but a class of – that the most severe violent crimes were, on a second conviction, you go to prison for life. The data was clear and is clear that it's that class of felons that really generate a preponderance of the violent crime. And so that was a big part of the agenda, getting that kind of legislation passed. And then, you know, you have your own agenda when you run for office and get elected, and then the thing that you have to work like hell to do is to stick to it because when you're governor of Georgia, as you well know, you run the state. You are the day-to-day CEO. It's not an honorary position; it is a real job. And you work every day. And if there's a prison riot or a flood or, you know, just all the issues that take place in all of those dozens of agencies all over the state, you've got to deal with those. And they're constantly flooding in trying to take over your agenda, and you can't ignore them. You've got to deal with them, you've got to manage them, you've got to hire good people and get them in place. And there was a time those first two or three years when resources were tight.

What I remember about that first two or three years is a very hectic pace. Each legislative session, we had 30 or 35 bills focusing on the main aspects of the '90 campaign promises, to get those passed and underway, all in a climate of tight resources. And, you know, like I said, you have a few things intervene. I mean, you know, Miller got caught up in the presidential election of '92 and it took a good bit of time. There was this effort to change the state flag that came along in '92 and in the '93 session. You know, the big dreadful flood in '94 and in the summer of the reelection year. All that stuff happens, and you've got to deal with it. It's part of what you do every day.

SHORT: Let's talk about the flag for a minute. We all know the history of the flag. Governor Miller decided that he was going to change it. At first he was criticized about, you know, not including enough resources, meaning people, in that effort. Do you think that he might have passed it had he really done that?

WRIGLEY: No, no, I don't think it would have made a difference. I think, you know, it was 1992 is when he announced it, in May of '92. And then it was in the '93 session when he attempted to pass it. And I don't think there was the broader understanding and broader commitment on the part of anybody really to try to change that. I think everybody was afraid of it. I think the democratic party was afraid of it. I think the republican party was afraid of it. I think the business community was terrified

of it. And I think to some extent he was ahead of his time, and I think – you know, I've told him this...I don't think he really handled it very well. I think the speech he made in the '93 state of the state speech where he really, you know, I think was...lectured those guys and was offensive to them. You know legislators. That's not how you get them to do what you want them to do.

I remember in November of '92, I actually left his office in November of '92 and went to Georgia State for five or six months. When Keith Mason left and went to the White House, I went back as chief of staff, but...so I was not there. But in November, he and I met. He was talking about some stuff, and he asked me what I thought about the flag. And I said you can't pass it. You've got to introduce it, but I don't really think you ought to push it. And he said that's the way I am, too. And a month later...you know Miller. Hey, he may deny this, but I'm convinced of this: About a month later Tom Murphy and Pierre Howard were quoted in the newspaper saying he can't pass it. Well, you don't wave that in front of him, you know, that he can't do something. And so he sort of became determined to try to pass it, and I think it was – he really kind of went about it in the wrong way.

There's no doubt in my mind he believed in his heart and soul it was the right thing to do. And he believed it and felt it very strongly, that it was the right thing to do. And I think I was talking to the pragmatic side of him in November of '92. And I think the passionate side of him took over when he was told you can't do it. And I think he

sort of processed that as, well, this is important...you know, it's important symbolically for our state and a lot of people. So he dove in and went at it on all fours. I don't think he had support anywhere to do it, and I think his friends were saying, you know, you're not going to be able to pass it. It clearly cost a lot politically I think.

SHORT: For a while.

WRIGLEY: For a while, yeah...yeah, I think so.

SHORT: That resiliency...

WRIGLEY: Yeah.

SHORT: That bouncing higher that he always did.

WRIGLEY: Yeah. But I think he realized, you know, I can't do it...can't get it done, and moved on from it. The thing he did that I think was really smart...and it wasn't a big issue to very many people, but to the people that it was a big issue to it drove them. You know, it really motivated them. But the thing he did was in the fall of '93, summer and fall of '93 and the year before the '94 reelect, he spent a lot of time out in

the state. He traveled the state extensively, and I think that was smart. I mean, he's tough enough and resilient enough to know I'm going to go out there; and if they're mad at me about this, I'm going to let them tell me. And it's a lot better to let them tell you in September of '93 than in November of '94, which some of them did anyway. But I think he wasn't going to hide from constituents that disagreed with him. He was determined to get out there amongst them, and he did. And there were a lot of good things going on in the state, too. And by then, you know, lottery was kicking in; people were excited about it. We began to issue Hope scholarships; pre-kindergarten was opening. There were good things going on, and one of the things we try to do is remind people of that.

SHORT: Miller and Clinton, they were good friends in '92. That relationship seemed to sour.

WRIGLEY: Uh-huh.

SHORT: What caused that?

WRIGLEY: You know, I think he, like a lot of people, was really disappointed, offended, angered...I don't know, he'd have to pick the label...at the President, you

know, just lying about the Monica Lewinsky thing. I think that really – that overt lie about that from Clinton I think really was the beginning of Miller's taking a step back. Now, I think he still loves the guy, respects him, but I think that sort of closeness, that kindred spirit piece of it, I think that's where they really sort of drifted away, with the beginning of that. And Miller's not moralistic about those kinds of things. I think that sort of overt, very public on the part of an office holder, which was damaging to the office...you know, everything else aside, whether you're a Clinton fan or not, it was damaging to the office. And I think that's what bothered him about it, was the disrespect and disrepute that it had brought to the office of the President.

SHORT: He served in the senate with Hillary.

WRIGLEY: Uh-huh.

SHORT: They became good friends.

WRIGLEY: Still are I think, yeah. And she...they became very good friends, you know, when – in '91 and '92. And there are others that can tell this story better, but she was in Georgia scheduled to campaign with him the day that the Jennifer Flowers story broke in '92, January of '92 I guess. And she offered him the chance not to go

campaign. I mean, that was a huge story, a huge deal. And he said no; I said I'd go, I'm going. And she's never forgot that. I mean, you know, he stood in there with her. And I don't think they've ever had a cross word. I think she defended him publicly and privately in Washington, and I think to this day does. And you know politics...I mean, people on opposite ends of the ideological spectrum...

SHORT: Here today, gone tomorrow.

WRIGLEY: Yeah. And they're oftentimes very good friends, when people who are really ideologically identical don't get along at all. I don't think we choose our friends based on ideology.

SHORT: Let's hope not.

WRIGLEY: But he always speaks highly of her, and I know she liked him.
So...

SHORT: Steve, if you don't mind, let's move ahead now to 1994 when Governor Miller is running for reelection, even though he said that he would only serve one term. Tell us about that campaign. You were deeply involved in that one.

WRIGLEY: Uh-huh. We knew from the outset it was going to be a very difficult race. And I remember meetings in the summer of '93 when we had done some polling. Alan Secrest was our pollster. You know, Miller put the question to him directly. He just said, you know, can I win. And Alan said, you know, it's a toss up. And, you know, for an incumbent governor in the state of Georgia and a guy who had been in elective politics as long as he had been, that's a pretty sobering assessment. And he decided we're going to go do it; and of course, as he does, he threw himself completely into whatever he needed to do in order to win. A lot of that was what I talked about earlier, that sort of reintroduction of himself. He was not just a guy and all he's trying to do is change the flag. I mean, a big part of the strategy was to try to reintroduce him and make sure that people understood that he had – he accomplished a lot as a governor and that he had goals for a second term. So it was an extraordinarily difficult race. Georgia was going republican. The '93-'94 elections nationally and in the south clearly showed that. So we knew it was going to be a tough, close fight.

We probably got off lucky, believe it or not, by running against Guy Millner, who was inexperienced in politics and showed it a lot, was not an attractive candidate in many ways...had a lot of money, you know, which helped him get the nomination in their party. But I'm not so sure we would have beaten Johnny Isakson had he been the nominee. He made a good strong race against the – people forget that '90 general

election was close. I think Miller got 53 or something, and Johnny got 45 or six and there was a libertarian in there, which is a pretty close race by 1980 and '70 standards.

So, you know, we knew '94 was going to be tough. But Carville was involved again, Begala, and a guy named Jim Andrews, who was really the campaign manager. He did a terrific job, and we had a number of other people involved, Rick Dent and others. And, you know, we did some of the same things we did in '90. We focused on the message. We focused on making sure people understood Miller had accomplished things. And a lot of that was around the lottery, and a lot of it was around some of the environmental things, healthcare, the boot camps, and the two strikes and you're out. I mean, we really worked hard. And that was the sum of the message, there's a record here...there's a good strong record of accomplishment. And that resonated well with people. We pushed it and pushed it and pushed it.

We were fortunate in that as the incumbent governor we didn't have a primary really. And so we were able to not have to really run until...the race didn't really start for us until about August of '94 in terms of the public part of the race. We obviously spent a lot of time on fundraising and the messaging part of it and Miller making public appearances all over the state so that, again, that sort of reintroducing himself. And it was a very tough grueling race. Millner was a tough guy and a tough opponent and didn't back And so he was very tough, but was not a good messenger, you know, and made a lot of public mistakes, spoke out against gambling and it turned out he owned

casinos. I mean, those kinds of things just drive the public crazy, the hypocrisy of that. And then talking about cutting taxes and he doesn't pay his own taxes and just a lot of things that business people who are successful in an arena where there's no public scrutiny. When they get into politics and there's public scrutiny on everything you do and say, it's very difficult to make that switch. And he helped us a lot. He made a lot of mistakes. I think the state wanted to vote for somebody else in many respects, and we wound up winning by 32,000 votes. And it was 51 to 49 or something like that. It was very, very close. And I think – you know, I think it's possible that, you know, a stronger republican nominee might have beaten Miller. I really believe that.

But I think Miller himself ran virtually a flawless campaign. I think he was terrific and he worked hard. He didn't whine and cry about it; he just got in and worked his tail off, and I think he ran a flawless campaign. But it was still very close, and the republicans even nationally – democratic governors all over the country were getting beat, and Richards got beat that year by a guy named George Bush. We forget that, you know. Bush went on to bigger and better things...I guess better, I don't know.

But that was a year when the democratic governors went down in rows, and that year and the next couple of years the governors went from being like...I don't remember the exact numbers...35-15 democrat to republican to almost the reverse. I mean, it was a big switch nationally. And Miller survived that, and Lawton Chiles in Florida survived that. And Lawton Chiles had won by an even smaller margin. We won by 32,000, and

I think he won by 15 or 16,000 in a bigger state. So the percent was even – I'll never forget Chiles called Miller within a day or two when it was clear they both won, a day or two of election. Chiles called Miller and said "Landslide one to Landslide two." They had a sense of humor about it. But...

SHORT: That was the year of the Contract with America.

WRIGLEY: It was Gingrich's -- It was a big republican national wave. And as you know, the thing...when you're running in a statewide race, you generally want to avoid your state race for a state office being nationalized. You don't want to get caught up in all that goo that goes on in Washington. And we got caught up in that. And some of it was our own doing because of Miller's closeness to Clinton. That was a liability. And some of it was just the nature of what was going on in the country, the dissatisfaction with President Clinton's first couple of years, the demographic changes in the state of Georgia which had changed dramatically from the mid to late '80s. And Miller's...I think we overlook sometimes Miller supporting the lottery, that cost him in terms of his traditional vote base. Seniors had doubts about it. The flag thing cost him among some white voters.

But what happened is he really – and this is where I think democrats failed to build on after he left office. But he also really energized younger voters and younger

female voters. If you believe in the polling, they voted for him heavily. And he held his own there. That's not a record that subsequent democrats built on. I think it's cost us. It cost democrats.

But it was a very different kind of campaign because in some ways we were appealing to very different voters because some of them we'd lost. But he won, and he ran against a tough, smart, tenacious opponent who had probably too many flaws ultimately to win. And that's not a personal thing; it's just, you know, the nature of someone who makes the kind of transition that Millner tried to make, and it wasn't – he made a lot of mistakes. You know, he'd say things and you could easily contradict him with the things he'd said before and would just sort of say things insulting to people in public. And so it's hard to make that kind of transition from being a CEO to being a candidate. And I think Millner got better. He never won a race, but he ran, what, two more times I think? And he got better as a candidate, but, yeah, it was a tough race. When I hear 1994, I flinch still. I mean, it was a long, difficult year.

SHORT: Were there any new planks in the Miller platform?

WRIGLEY: Yeah. We had – we sort of had a two-part race. We talked about the record. We spent a lot of time telling people this is what he's accomplished. And then we had – we laid out an agenda for '94, which probably wasn't that...there's nothing

memorable in that to me, not like the first term. And the other thing that's sort of hovering over all this is the Olympics were coming to Georgia in '96. And the state basically made that work. I mean, the Olympics would not have happened had the state not pumped hundreds of millions of dollars into it. It was indirect...I mean, we built dorms and other facilities that the state later got and utilized, spent a lot of money on security and law enforcement support. That was a big part of the state's involvement. All that was sort of in the background of the '94 reelect and afterward, and we knew if we won that the second term would be dominated by dealing with the preparation for the '96 Olympics. So that was sort of hovering there in the background.

You know, the '94 "sort of" agenda for a second term isn't all that memorable to me. It's just sort of weird to think back on.

SHORT: Right. Let's talk for a minute about the judicial appointment situation when Zell Miller was governor. As I recall, he was under court order not to make any appointments until some case was decided.

WRIGLEY: Yeah. And he ultimately...they managed to work that out through some negotiations. In his first term – I'm glad you jogged my memory. There were a number of things he worked out or resolved, just through negotiation. And what used to be the old Presidential Parkway situation, if you remember that, he worked through the

DOT, this court case around superior court appointments that they worked out and settled. And he was able then to make a lot of appointments, and he really made a lot of appointments of African-Americans even beyond I think what the courts expected or required at the superior court level. But he loved making judicial appointments. He really was into that. For a guy who's a non-lawyer and who was a policy person, he's not a legal person. And they're two very kinds of people. Miller is a policy person. He's not a legal person. And he...but he loved that. He loved the judicial appointments, and he loved doing the interviews and spent a lot of time on those decisions from state court, superior court, supreme court...all of the appointments he made he spent a lot of time on them, took them seriously. And then there's always a political aspect to them because everybody's got to support them. And he really took a measure of these folks in the interview process. And it was a job interview for him. I mean, he really worked people over pretty good I think. I mean, he knows it's an incredibly important job and I think he wanted to make sure that the people he put in it not only had the character and the integrity but also that sort of they remembered where they came from. You know, that old thing about getting "robe-itis" is something that I think he always tried to make sure he put somebody on the court that didn't forget that they're not Zeus sitting up there. You know, they're dealing with very real-world things. But, yeah, he was very active, I think much to the chagrin of his legal counsel. He was very active in the judicial appointments.

There were the “water wars” when he came into office. Alabama had sued Georgia over water allocation out of the Chattahoochee, and we – you know, and Joe Chandler was instrumental in helping on this. But we got them to drop that suit, and we entered into negotiations to try to work out how to do that. And of course, here we are now nearly 20 years later and still working on it. So, you know, there were a lot of non-legislative aspects to governing that he took on in the first term, and the judicial thing was a big one I think.

SHORT: He also replaced the state board of education at one point.

WRIGLEY: Yeah.

SHORT: That was typical Miller, was it not?

WRIGLEY: It really was. And in '94 we had talked about it. Linda Schrenko, who was elected as a republican to be the state school superintendent, and the board was appointed by the governor, and of course we had appointed most of the board I think by then. You know, Miller had – he's got a respect for what voters decide. And we had board members who just would not get along with her. You know, it was probably one of those situations where the superintendent and the board members went out of their way

not to get along and went out of their way to be difficult rather than went out of their way to try to get along. This went on I guess for a year and a half or so. I'm trying to remember what year it was that we did it, but we had talked about it. He and I had talked about what could be done, and we had talked to board members about it. We had talked to – you know, we worked with Ms. Schrenko, who had actually been pretty good for us to work with and supported things that we wanted to do. She could be very unpredictable, but, you know, we worked pretty well with her.

We had sort of kicked that around, and he, you know, kicked around I think...you know, I think the only way to do this is to make a clean break. And we waited for an opportunity, and something happened. I don't remember...something happened that triggered it. One morning early I was having breakfast with Bill Nigut. I was going to have breakfast with Bill Nigut at 7 or 7:15 or 7:30, somewhere in there at the old Murphy's Restaurant over there. And I got there and I sat down and ordered my food, and my beeper went off. Miller said "Come on in, we're going to do something." And so we went in to the governor's office, and he said "I'm going to fire the school board." I said okay. Because we had talked about it for several weeks. We knew something dramatic was going to have to happen.

You know, he technically can't really fire them. You know, we had to get resignations. And I think ultimately everybody resigned but one. And of course, then he asked Johnny Isakson to be the board chair. That was great fun. Johnny was a little

bit reluctant I think, and Johnny said, you know, can I have some input into who you appoint? Miller said give me a list. He just basically let Johnny say, and he said I've got to agree to it obviously, but...

So they went back and forth, and I think Johnny may have only suggested one or two, if that many, that Miller didn't agree to. But it was basically Johnny's list. And to this day, Johnny talks about that. And so one morning Miller and I and Johnny went to the governor's mansion, and I'd get people on the phone and tell them that Johnny Isakson and Zell Miller wanted to talk to them, and Johnny would talk to them and Miller would talk to them and they wouldn't take no for an answer. And these folks didn't know what they were being asked, you know. So we spent a couple hours one morning out at the governor's mansion recruiting a new school board, and it was – I think it was a good example. When Miller made up his mind, you know, he struck and sort of struck quickly, and it was somewhat dramatic; but it was the kind of thing to make a statement that, you know, this woman has been elected by the people of Georgia to be the superintendent...you need to let her be the superintendent. He really felt strongly about that. So that was...that was kind of fun actually. It was a little unusual.

SHORT: In his early career being a senator from the mountains of Georgia, North Georgia, Miller had some problem understanding the role of business in politics.

WRIGLEY: Uh-huh.

SHORT: He slowly overcame that. How did he do it?

WRIGLEY: I just think it's the maturing that most of us go through. And I think an understanding and a recognition...I think – I mean, you know him. He grew up with that sort of populous anti-business aspect to him. I think he realized over time that business investment, corporate investment creates jobs, it's essential to how our country works and how our state works and to the quality of life. And I think for somebody who is as utterly passionate about improving the quality of life in the state as he was, he couldn't very long cling to the notion that being hostile to business is a good thing. I think he just learned over time, don't you? I don't know if there might have been something before I met him where there was an epiphany; but by the time I knew him, a lot of that was basically, you know, gone.

SHORT: I think he just didn't know...

WRIGLEY: Yes, I think that's right.

SHORT: The people involved.

WRIGLEY: Yeah.

SHORT: And once he got to know the people involved, he sort of changed his mind about the role they could and should play in the Georgia government.

WRIGLEY: Yeah, I think that's right, yeah.

SHORT: So that was a good plus.

WRIGLEY: And I think by the time he was governor he enjoyed a great relationship with the business community and the corporate community. I think they looked to him for leadership. They followed his leadership.

SHORT: They liked his leadership.

WRIGLEY: Yeah.

SHORT: I remember Tom Cousins, who we all know has been a very successful businessman in Atlanta, became a great supporter because he admired the way Miller did

things.

WRIGLEY: Yes, very much so.

SHORT: That was good.

WRIGLEY: And the thing that's interesting is in the '94 reelection Miller running against – Miller, a career politician running against a successful CEO, Miller had 100 percent support from the Atlanta business community...openly and publicly supported him and raised money for him because they liked his leadership and stewardship of the state. They felt he had done a good job as a manager and was investing in the right policies and was taking the state in the right direction. We had very strong support from the business community in the '94 reelection.

SHORT: Looking back over those years, besides Hope, what do you think were Miller's biggest accomplishments?

WRIGLEY: I do think pre-kindergarten gets overlooked, particularly for its potential for getting kids ready for school and what that means in particular in our state. In fact, when Roy Barnes was elected in '98, I was with him somewhere and he said that

to me. He said everybody talks about Hope; he said I think pre-kindergarten long-term will be the legacy piece. I think that was a big deal. And it was also the thing that...Hope is easy to like. Hope is easy to explain. Hope is easy for everybody to say, "yeah, I really like that," even if you don't like the lottery. Everybody gravitates to it. But, you know...and that's why Miller wanted pre-kindergarten to be voluntary, because there's still in our state a notion that we shouldn't – the state doesn't need to be interfering with two and three and four-year-olds and we shouldn't mandate, you know, what parents do with them. So that's why it's voluntary. There was a lot of religious opposition because of the business competition that it would create to their own dayschools and preschools, and that was probably some of the source of their opposition to the lottery, I guess to be cynical about it. But that was probably tougher from a political sense than Hope ever was. Like I said, Hope is easy. I mean, you're not going to find anybody who doesn't like Hope. It's hard not to like it. But pre-kindergarten politically could be threatening to some people and unnerving to some people. So I think that was a big deal.

He loved it. He cared about it a lot, spent a lot of time on it, would visit pre-kindergarten sites. Really paid a lot of attention to it. You know, he spent – you know, he made sure that he paid attention to the curriculum, you know, and he wanted to make sure that every pre-kindergarten kid read *The Little Engine that Could*. You remember that? He had all these books...he had them all printed and distributed because

of the theme in there of persistence, of being tenacious. Then he later did that music for baby's brains...you remember that? I mean, he cared about a lot of that stuff. He got with Sony Music, and they did a CD because there were studies that showed that listening to certain kinds of music, classical music, on the part of six-month, eight-month, and one-year-olds developed their brains. So he worked with the Georgia Hospital Association. I mean, he had this whole scheme of working with Sony and the hospital so that when a mother left with her baby she had a CD with these classical music songs on it.

So those are the kinds of things that don't get a lot of attention, but I think in terms of helping again to improve the quality of life in the state by developing the human capacity in the state, which is always what he focused on, I think was a big deal.

I think the other thing that's overlooked is, I do think the extent to which his leadership transformed higher education in Georgia. We talk about it some, but we don't always wrap it up that neatly. But for this university, the University of Georgia, it's a much better place because of Miller's determination to invest in it, invest in Georgia Tech, and assist them in general. But all that aside...but to say to people it really matters if you get a college degree, it really matters if you get an advanced degree, you should go do that, it makes a difference...it will make a difference in your life, and it will make a difference in our state. And, you know, the reality is governors don't...they didn't talk like that and maybe don't now. I mean, I think it's a shame because it really does...it is

what separates a state that's going to be competitive with – you know, let's face it...it could be Indiana and India. I mean, that's what separates us and it will separate you if you don't produce those kinds...you know, an educated population. It will separate you in the wrong way. He understood that and was passionate about it. And I think that was a monumental achievement of his, to move the higher education system in our state from a really nice average system in the deep south to a very good one. I think he created that momentum, and it's hopefully still continuing. I think that's a huge achievement. I think that's one.

You know, I just think the establishment of the lottery was really sort of a departure politically, or culturally if you will, because everybody said you can't pass that; we're a deep south state dominated by the Baptists. I think what that told everybody was no, that's not the case, that even if you talk to people about education they really do...they care about that. So I think that political culture change or a recognition of the change was a big deal.

And then, you know, again politically, I think remaining as a democratic governor and keeping a democratic legislature in the course of the 1990s was a pretty remarkable achievement in a deep south state when every state around us changed. Either one house or both houses or the governor's office went...republicans took over. It didn't happen here while he was governor. And I think a lot of it was, he wasn't self-conscious about it. What he was self-conscious about was issues and policies and messaging around

those that everybody cared about, regardless of...you know, he looked for that broad group in the middle and didn't try to consciously do party building. I think that's why it happened the way that it did.

I think his fiscal management of the state, sometimes gets overlooked. He did a terrific job with that, and he entered at a time when there was nothing in the RSR and had to cut the budget. He cut taxes several times in the course of his term; and when he left, he left a very nice surplus. Eight years later, there was a very nice surplus, while enhancing a lot of state policy, whether it was on the environmental side, you know, all the things we've talked about and a number of areas in education. So I think that strong management, while also investing in things that make a difference, I think that's a really strong record. It would be hard to duplicate because he was able to advance the proactive agenda while at the same time, you know, managing the funds within...within that agenda and it's probably harder to do now because of the state's revenue situation being what it is.

SHORT: Is there anything you think he would want to change in his career?

WRIGLEY: Well, you've talked to him, too. You know, I think he – he and I have talked several times. He sometimes looks back, and this I think from a personal style standpoint, wishes maybe he had not been as tough maybe. I've told him "You

wouldn't have been as successful."

I don't know that there's anything as governor he would have – looking back, he would change. I wonder now if he could do it over again, if he would have – I think he might have tried to change the flag. I think he might have tried to change it differently. I think he might have tried to go slower and maybe would have tried to, you know, get out sort of a statewide effort behind it rather than just push it almost single-handedly.

I think that with respect to Hope, he probably would have visited more about, well, let's set up a need-based component to that and not just have it completely merit-based. It wouldn't take much money. I mean, it would be a small amount of money. Other than that, I don't know. I mean, when I talk to him, we don't really – you may talk to him about that sort of thing. We don't really look back and say, well, I wish we had done this or done that. I mean, it's sort of you get your chance and you do your best and you move on from it. And some things work and some things don't, and you just know. It's a hard job; it's a tough situation and you do the best you can. I mean, there are unfortunately some administrations which are failures, administrations which have a lot of really negative aspects to them and not many successes. I don't think Miller's was that way at all, and you still look back and probably wish things were different and such but ultimately it sort of is what it is and to let other people decide those things I think.

SHORT: Were you surprised when Governor Roy Barnes appointed him to the United States Senate?

WRIGLEY: You know, not really. We talked a lot about that, as he was considering accepting the appointment. I think it was a logical smart choice for Governor Barnes to make. It says a lot about Governor Barnes; it's says a lot about his own self-confidence and constraint and ability to be analytical about a decision because they'd been rivals, I mean, they'd really never been a lot of animosity between them. But they'd been political rivals and run against one another. It says a lot about Barnes's ability just set all that aside and say, "You know, I want to put up somebody who can win."

So I wasn't really...I wasn't sure Miller was going to take it. I mean, I guess in the end I knew he would, but he really went back and forth on it, as you know. I mean, he really struggled with whether or not to take it. You know, Barnes is great. He's a terrific salesman. I don't think Barnes is...I told him that, I'm not going to take no for an answer. Barnes is just bright and articulate and persuasive and funny, and I think he wasn't going to let him think about any other thing than saying yes.

SHORT: What is your opinion of Miller's conduct in the senate?

WRIGLEY: He and I have talked about this. You know, the one thing there I regret that he may not regret, that whole episode of going around the republican convention in '04 I think was unfortunate and unnecessary and showing that much anger...somebody somewhere shouldn't have let him do that. But, you know, outside of that, which is not sort of part of the senate, but it was part of President Bush's reelection...I don't have any, you know, negative judgment about it. I mean, he was appointed. He then ran immediately, and he got elected by the people in the state. I think, he and I've talked about this and talked about it while he was doing it sometimes. I think he's an executive. You know, he's an executive branch guy. He is not a legislative guy, particularly with respect to what you have to do in the U.S. Senate, which is work four years to pass a bill. He's not a patient guy, as you know. You know, he likes to do things and if you're a senator, you get to make speeches about doing things. You don't get to do things; you get to make speeches about doing things. And that's two very different things. That's what members of congress get to do. They get to make speeches about doing things. That wasn't for him. I think the really gross partisan nature on Washington turned him off badly, by people in the Democratic Party as well as the Republican Party. But it wasn't his cup of tea. All of the stuff you have to do, you know, to be a good senator...it's a very important role in our country, but it's not what he's cut out to do.

I mean, I'd talked to him about, you know, about what his philosophy was...well,

the President ought to have his own team; whoever he wants to appoint he ought to get to appoint. I said, well, the constitution says you're supposed to advise and consent. It's not – it's different. You know, it's not the state of Georgia. You know, he's not the governor of Georgia; he's the President of the United States, and the constitution says you're supposed to do this. He didn't buy into that, you know. I think just the role of a senator, which is very important in our country – and our state has produced some great senators – you've got to have the makeup for it, both emotional and otherwise, and he just doesn't. You roll all that into the fact it was in Washington, a place he, as a governor, didn't like it.

We'd go up there, and all these governors would try to do everything they could to get in the Washington Post or get their photo at the White House. You know, he didn't want to do any of that. He had no interest in that. It's unfortunate because I think when he left office as governor he was very happy and content and, you know, being a U.S. Senator, way too appealing to turn down that appointment, but I think when he got up there he was sort of disappointed in a lot of aspects of it. Probably showed it more than he should have. I mean, in the end he's a big boy and you're a United States Senator and, you know, if you're unhappy about being there you don't necessarily have to tell the whole country...just suck it up. I know there are other issues he had to deal with and such that you're aware of, but I'm not judging him about it. I mean, the guy is a great public servant in our state's history. I mean, you're going to carve out 18 or 24

months of it and say, 'Well, I wish he hadn't done that'...I'd never do that to him. I think for somebody who's been so good to me like he has and so important to me, I wouldn't do that. Even if I didn't know him as well, I think it's sort of grossly not fair to measure somebody that way.

SHORT: Tell us about the Carl Vinson Institute of Government.

WRIGLEY: Okay. It's a public service unit here at the University of Georgia. The University of Georgia has a three-part mission: teaching, research, and service. We're part of the public service arm. Our mission basically is to try to transfer some of the knowledge that's in the University out in the state and to improve the quality of life in the state. So there's a small business development unit which helps people start and run small businesses. There's the Fanning Leadership Institute which works with communities on helping them to develop their community leaders, and the Georgia Center For Continuing Education, is a public service institute. We're the Institute of Government, so our focus is to work with government officials, elected and appointed on helping them run their governments better. We work a lot with cities and counties, do some work with state agencies.

The biggest part of our portfolio is the training courses that we offer and provide to state and local and elected and appointed officials. All newly-elected county and city

officials are required by law actually to participate in a minimum amount of training through some of our training classes. It's very basic, teaching them about public accounting, ethics, open records, how you deal with your staff, how you run a meeting; but the whole purpose of it is to help someone who's never held any kind of elective office before to adjust to that. As you know, you get elected in November, and in January you take over. They're wonderful people. They're dedicate to their communities, but you might have somebody who's in their 50s or 60s and has been very successful in their different walks of life, either running a business or an accounting firm or a law firm or a ministry or whatever...then suddenly, boom, they're a public official. You know, if you run your own company or your own law firm, you don't have to ask anybody what to do. You don't really have to work with maybe three or five or seven other people to reach a consensus about what you ought to do on the trash pick-up or the sheriff's budget or whatever.

You know, for me and you, it's second nature because we've been in public affairs most of our lives. So we've seen it and we've watched great people do it and we've participated in it. But for a lot of people, when you come to it for the first time, it's very new. Then there are all these things like, well, what do you – you know, what do you mean we've got to bid these contracts and what do you mean the newspaper gets to sit in on our meetings?

So what we try to do is get them ready for that, that, look, you're starting

something very new, it's in the public arena; everything you say and do and write is open to scrutiny and there's going to be – you know, unless you're a sole county commissioner – and we don't have but a few of those nowadays – there's three to five to seven or nine or whatever the number is other people you've got to work with. Then there's a staff. You know, you're probably going to not have enough resources to run your police department and your fire department, and then you've got to interact with this sheriff's department, and he's elected independently of you that you handle his budget. You've got a school board and a school system that's separate from you as well, but you fish out of the same property tax pool. So all these relationships that people come to and they go, wow, you know...they're again under the scrutiny of the public.

So we try to get them ready for that. Then we have advanced courses that focus on – that are voluntary that focus on leadership development and to really get, once they're sort of settled in and have a knack for what it means now to be a public official, we will want to try to help them take their public service to another level in terms of their own leadership, leadership style, leadership development. That's a big part of what we do, is our training focus.

We also have faculty who do technical assistance work. By that, we may – we've got a group that does a lot of human resources work where we work with a city, a county, a sheriff's office, the GBI, on their – just their paying class systems to help them get that right so that it's merit-based. We've got a group that does a lot of technical

assistance work with local governments just on if they want to change their structure, on their ordinances. We've got an environmental policy group. We've got a new group that we just started, an applied demography group which is doing population estimates and projections for the state of Georgia and are working with state EPD. As they put together a statewide water plan, we're feeding to them labor and population projections and estimates.

So we've got a group that does a lot of technical assistance and policy-related work with state and local government agencies, again just to – we're not advocates; we're there to provide them good information and to help them make better decisions. You know, whatever decision they want to make is their business. They're elected. That's their job. But we're there to help them...you know, be a resource to them. We've got a small international program where we do training programs for countries that are transitioning to democracy. We've got an information technology section which does a lot of interesting things with GIS, GIS mapping and technology for state agencies and for, again, local governments. We do a lot of work with the state DOT; the state highway map, we produce that. It's all GIS-based, and it's fascinating stuff. I don't understand any of it, but the products are terrific; they're really interesting. You can use that as an analytical tool. You can actually G-O code certain kinds of education information and look at geographic patterns to some of that and so we try to blend that in to some of our work. So it's a lot of fun. It's a great place. I mean, I like government; I like

politicians; I like what governments do. I think it's great fun working with folks particularly at the city and county level who have tough jobs. We ask them to do really difficult things, and we don't pay them and they don't have any resources and everybody's always mad at them. But it's a lot of fun, a lot of really great people that we get to work with.

We're part of the University of Georgia, and we utilize faculty members from, you know, maybe the public administration department sometimes or family and consumer sciences, social work; you know, some of our projects we try to involve them, and we hire students. We hire Masters and Ph.D. students, and also we've started to hire some undergraduate students to be involved in that. And particularly with the undergraduates, you know, you can go through college and really not learn much about state and local government, which is really a shame. So one of the things we want to do is to begin to reach out to some of those undergraduates, and then there are places just full of these really smart kids. We want some of them to be aware, you know, look, here's a career path or, if it's not a career path when you're out...you know, you ought to at least have some understanding of how these very important entities in your life function. So it's fun.

It's a mix of policy and training and technical assistance and politicking, and it's a really good, strong organization. It's been around since 1927 in one form or another. It was named in the early '80s for Congressman Carl Vinson, who of course was...I think

still holds the record for the longest-serving member of the U.S. House.

SHORT: Mr. Navy.

WRIGLEY: Yes, that's exactly right, built the Two Ocean Navy in the 1930s and '40s.

SHORT: Well, it sounds like it's a very necessary thing.

WRIGLEY: It's a good group. I think we make a difference, a positive difference; and we want to keep doing that. It's fun.

SHORT: Steve, I want to thank you for being our guest.

WRIGLEY: Happy to do it.

SHORT: It's been fun going over some of the years I remember.

WRIGLEY: Yes, I appreciate being asked. I'm honored to be asked. It's good to chat with you about it, too. Thank you. Appreciate it.

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PAGE 48

Page

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