

Bobby Kahn interviewed by Bob Short
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Bobby Kahn

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BOB SHORT: I'm Bob Short, and this is Reflections on Georgia Politics, sponsored the Richard Russell Library at the University of Georgia and Young Harris College. Our guest is Bobby Kahn, Chief of Staff for Governor Roy Barnes and chair of the Georgia Democratic

Party. Bobby, Welcome.

BOBBY KAHN: Good to be here.

SHORT: You've been involved in Georgia politics for many years. But before we get into that career, tell us a little bit about Bobby Kahn.

KAHN: Well, I grew up in Savannah, and I have two brothers and a sister. My family has been in the wholesale dry goods business since my grandfather came over here. My grandparents came from Lithuania and Latvia and we're typical Jewish merchants and worked hard and built a business. I grew up in that business. I worked in it a couple of summers. My brother ended up working in it. I got very interested in politics growing up in Savannah. My dad was always interested, never involved, but always interested in politics. Like many families across the country, we watched the *CBS Evening News* with Walter Cronkite, either before or after dinner, and that's where we got our news. I reminisced about that when Cronkite passed a few weeks ago, and we were just always talking about politics.

Back then, the state was very democratic. That happened to be where I was, although my dad was good at playing devil's advocate, so I got exposed to both sides. A lot of the people I went to school with were Republican. I went to a private school in Savannah, Savannah Country Day. I remember when Carter was running for President, I was a senior. Nobody was for him but me and one other person. I got excited, because there was a show of hands for who was for which

candidate and stuff, and not everybody raised their hand for Ford or Reagan and I thought there was hope, but then that hand went up for John Connelly.

So I grew up around a lot of Republicans, but I talked a lot of politics. The first campaign I ever was involved in that, I guess I was involved in some of Mayor Rousakis' campaigns handing out stuff, leaflets and stuff. But Phyllis Kravitch was running for state court, and she won and ultimately became a judge on the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals. So I got involved in that, and then I got involved in President Carter's campaign when I was a senior in high school, and I've been involved ever since.

SHORT: So after Savannah Country Day, you went off to college.

KAHN: I went to Emory. I had debated in high school and debated at Emory, which was great training for research and argument skills and analytical skills. My record wasn't very good, but I learned a lot from it.

SHORT: And then to law school.

KAHN: And then I went to law school at the University of Georgia. While I was in law school, I met some folks from Representative Joe Frank Harris' campaign. I ended up -- while most people are doing summer clerkships and stuff in law school, I worked in Governor Harris' campaign. As a matter of fact, I worked between the first and second year of law school when

the campaign was just starting. Then between the second and third I worked, and I worked in Fulton County. He wasn't supposed to win the nomination. When I did, it was about time for me to go back to law school. I said, "Well, back then we did the hard part. So I'm going to stick around." So two days after classes started, I called the registrar and said, "I'm going to come back in January." He got all over me. He said, "You need to tell us that earlier." So I worked in the campaign in the fall, and then Governor Harris got elected.

When I got out of law school, I wanted to get involved in politics, but a lot of people had told me, "You need to spend a little time practicing law." I didn't want to do it at the time, but I did. I went to work for Jim Oxendine, who is in Gwinnett County, and it was a general practice, and did a little bit of everything. Of course, Jim's son is now running for governor. He's the insurance commissioner.

SHORT: As a Republican.

KAHN: As a Republican.

SHORT: One of those people who switched parties.

KAHN: He picked the right time -- not that there's a right time to switch, but he switched in '94 and rode the wave and got elected insurance commissioner. So I did that for a couple of years. While I was working for Jim, who's now a judge in Gwinnett -- he's a senior judge. Governor

Harris had appointed Robert Benham to the Court of Appeals, the first African American on the court. They asked me to help him go to Harris, and Judge Benham asked me to help with the campaign. So I ran that campaign.

SHORT: That was your first real campaign.

KAHN: Yeah, first campaign I had run. I mean, I'd been involved in campaigns.

SHORT: Right.

KAHN: I thought I knew everything. You will never know everything. But that was a campaign where you dealt with lawyers.

SHORT: How do you go about running a state campaign for a judge?

KAHN: It's very tough. It's very tough. Especially back then, an African American running statewide, that was an unknown. But he had the benefit of being an incumbent and having the establishment behind him. Although having the establishment behind you in some years is not a good idea. But we set out to run a statewide campaign like any statewide campaign that's much bigger. Of course, there you end up only being able to do certain things.

SHORT: Did he have opposition?

KAHN: He had, I believe, three people running against him. So our concern was a runoff. But Judge Benham enjoyed campaigning, and he liked going all over the state, hitting the Rotary Clubs, stuff like that. We raised money, which, at the time, was a fair amount. I believe it was \$150,000. We did spend it on travel and radio, basically and he won. He won without a runoff.

SHORT: You're best known as a political consultant, as a mentor and campaign manager for Roy Barnes. When did you meet Roy Barnes?

KAHN: I met him in the governor's race in 1982. I was working Fulton and obviously, he was part of the leadership of the campaign and did a lot in Cobb, and we did Metro Atlanta stuff together. At that time, parts of Metro Atlanta, including Cobb and North Fulton, were rapidly going Republican. 1980 was a watershed year for the Republicans. I was in law school at the time, and I remember I went to the Carter victory party. I'd been working in law school really hard and I'd been looking forward to going to Atlanta, to the Americana, for the victory party for a couple of weeks, because I had worked in the campaign before I went to law school. So I get in the car and drive on over here, and I walk into the hotel ballroom at like five after 7:00. This was the first year of exit polls, and everything had been called. Back then, the networks had not adopted consistent red and blue. So one station it was all red, and the other station, it was all blue and when I thought red was Democrat, I thought, "Oh, it's looking good. But, no, that's the

wrong network.” So I’d walked in there at 7:05 and at 7:20, I got back in my car and rode back to Athens. I was in the law library at 9:00. But that night, we thought Talmadge had won. So I’m walking to class the next morning trying not to see all these Republicans I’d trash-talked, and I see a headline, it was the later edition of the paper, that Mattingly had won, and he’d won on the strength of – even though Carter had won the state, he got like 81% of the vote in Cobb County, of a very elevated turnout.

So that’s what we were dealing with in ’82, was Republican areas and what was the suburbs, what is the suburbs and, happily, those areas are coming back. So in that campaign, Roy had had experience dealing with Republicans. He had always had opposition before that and, really, since. So we were working on how to carve out Democrat votes in the Republican areas.

SHORT: Let me ask you this question, and you don’t have to answer it. Is it true that Roy Barnes was once a young Republican on the campus at the University of Georgia?

KAHN: Yes. Yes.

SHORT: Why do you think he switched over?

KAHN: Well, you’ve talked to him. We both know politicians who change their mind from time to time.

SHORT: Yes.

KAHN: But he got into -- back then, that was sort of the populist rebellious group.

SHORT: Young people.

KAHN: Yeah. Yeah.

SHORT: Yeah, young people.

KAHN: I think it had a little bit to do with Governor Maddox, who was governor at the time.

But he switched back to Democrat, because that's where he thought the . . .

SHORT: That's where his forefathers were.

KAHN: Yeah. Democrats believe in not just looking out for a certain small group of people.

SHORT: Early in your relationship, did you know that one day Roy Barnes might run for governor?

KAHN: Well, he was talking about running for the Senate in '86, and he did that for a couple of

weeks. Then he didn't run. I didn't know him that well at the time. I knew him okay. But after the '86 campaign, I had a good idea he was going to run for governor.

SHORT: Well, let's talk about that first campaign in 1990, when he ran against a field, including Lieutenant Governor Zell Miller and former Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young.

KAHN: Yes.

SHORT: How did you look at that race?

KAHN: Wrong. I had been executive director of the Democratic Party under the Harris administration, and John Henry Anderson was chairman. In some respects, Roy was considered the heir apparent to Governor Harris, and had a lot of the Harris people supporting him.

SHORT: Lets stop there for a minute and point out that Georgia governors prior to Harris, had been Busbee and they all came from the state legislature.

KAHN: Yes.

SHORT: And Roy was cut from that mold. He was in the state legislature for a number of years, and he was certainly knowledgeable in state government. Was that an asset in the race?

KAHN: Yeah. Yeah. We thought it would be. But he'd been in the state senate for 16 years. He was elected in 1974. He was looking to run a race just like Harris and Busbee had. Well, when you try to run last year's race, you're generally unsuccessful and he was. There were a lot of reasons why 1990 wasn't like 1982 or 1974.

SHORT: Right.

KAHN: First of all, Roy came out of the Senate and not the House. Which was important, because the House had a candidate.

SHORT: And the House had a very powerful organization statewide.

KAHN: Yeah. While I'm not sure the House was enthusiastic about their candidate, they were behind him. That was a place for them to park and not be for anybody else. So that's why 1990 was not like 1982 or '74. Secondly, Zell Miller knew what he wanted to do in a campaign for governor, and he knew what he wanted to do as governor. He had a great campaign; he had a great organization, and it was well-funded.

SHORT: And a great issue.

KAHN: And a great issue. He had several good issues.

SHORT: The lottery.

KAHN: The lottery. I mean, believe me, I saw those ads over and over again: the lottery, boot camps for first offenders, and cracking down on health insurance companies. So it was a good campaign, well done. Then there was another thing to the race, and that was former Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young was running and he was very popular. He'd just finished his term as mayor. We had not gotten the Olympics at that point, but there was talk about it and he was well-known all over the world. He was making a pitch in rural Georgia, which ultimately didn't work. But he was an interesting, good candidate. So there was no room for Roy. Roy exceeded everybody's expectations but our own, and he came in a strong third.

SHORT: Yeah. How did he take that defeat?

KAHN: He was all right. The biggest problem was he had loaned the campaign money, and the next day he wrote a check to pay it off.

SHORT: Right. If I were him, I would take it pretty hard.

KAHN: Yeah. The handwriting was on the wall. I mean, it was uphill, and we knew two weeks

before, and we made some resource decisions on that basis. But we knew that the room just wasn't there. Now, he got like 20%, 21% of the vote. He ended up exceeding what our last poll showed that he was going to get, because a lot of the undecideds ended up breaking for him. But he knew it was going to happen.

SHORT: What happened then?

KAHN: Well, there was a runoff between Lieutenant Governor Miller and Mayor Young, and most of the state went for Zell Miller. I had a commitment and a friendship with Andy Young that went back, really, to the 1988 Convention. While I was director of the party, we had pursued the Democratic Convention, and we got it. Atlanta hosted the 1988 Democratic Convention. I ended up being named president of Atlanta '88, which was the host organization, which did the parties, but also managed the budget of the city's commitments and these conventions, they'll go in and they'll strike commitments out of cities and in this case, it was the city and the state. So we had this organization called Atlanta '88 which was chaired by Mayor Young. But on the board was Governor Harris, the Fulton County Commission Chairman, Michael Lomax; the head of the chamber here, Bob Holder; and John Henry Anderson, the chair of the party. So those were my bosses.

But Andy Young was the chairman, and I dealt with him a lot. One of the most difficult things I ever did was, Andy had been talking to me about running his campaign, and it was one Saturday afternoon in March of 1989 and I went out to see him at his house to tell him I was going to work

for Roy. We had a great relationship and he was great as chair, and the convention was a success. So I was talking to him. Actually it was a Sunday. I was supposed to go out on a Saturday and I stayed up all night. I was just nervous, and I couldn't sleep or anything. So I called him up to confirm. He said, "I had something come up. Can we do this tomorrow?" So I went through the same thing over again the next night. So I went out there Sunday afternoon and it was one of the most difficult things I ever did, because he's a very nice person. I mean, he's a hero. I said, "I'm going to work for Roy Barnes." And he said, "Well, I don't really know Roy, but I've heard good things about him. But if Roy doesn't make it, will you be for me?" And I said, "Absolutely."

So the primary election happens. A lot of people had made that commitment to Andy, but they expected him to finish first going into the runoff. As it happened, the Lieutenant Governor finished first, and a strong first, and it was obvious he was going to be the nominee. He had the money; he had the momentum; he had the issues, and he was going to be the nominee. But Andy called me up and said, "He ran a good race. Now come help me." I said, "I'll be there tomorrow."

SHORT: Did that cause any hard feelings with Miller?

KAHN: I believe it did. And that's too bad. But Keith Mason and I were in law school together and the day before the runoff, the Young people said, "Well, why don't you fly around the state with Andy?" My wife wasn't too wild about me getting in small planes, and today, I'm not wild

about getting in small planes. But back then I said, "That would be great." And a side note: this was right before the Olympic decision and it was right after Saddam Hussein had invaded Kuwait, and one of Mayor Young's really good friends who was on the Olympic Committee, had been killed in the invasion. He was talking about that and then a reporter asked him about the Olympics. And he said, "Yeah, I think we've got a good shot of getting the Olympics." And I'm thinking to myself, "Yeah, and you think you're going to win tomorrow." So what I was going to tell you, it turned out we were, when you do these fly-arounds, you're running into candidates all the time and we were in Augusta, and we had landed just as Miller had taken off and Keith was on the plane, and Keith called a mutual friend. And he said, "You're not going to believe what's going on. Kahn just got off the plane with Andy. I can't believe he's doing that." So, yeah, there were hard feelings.

SHORT: But you're over them now.

KAHN: Over them now. The interesting thing was, after the election, that's when I got into what ultimately became what I do now. We had figured out after the campaign that TV stations were overcharging. They were ripping off candidates. The FCC had done an audit and showed that they were overcharging us. So I got with Roy, and then we got with some other people, Matt Towery and some Republicans, and prepared to go after the stations. We waited 'til after the election. But we put a demand on all the stations in Georgia, and our clients included Zell Miller. So TV brought us together and we recovered a fair amount of money. He had spent the

most, so we recovered a lot of money for the Miller campaign. We ended up doing this all over the country and I shifted from the litigation – because I learned so much about it, I shifted from the litigation side to the media buying side, because I knew what the stations were doing.

SHORT: Are you still doing that?

KAHN: Yeah. I started an agency. I sold it when I went into the Governor's Office, but I returned when I was no longer in the Governor's Office. I thought I always would, but I didn't think I'd return quite as early as I did. The voters had other things in mind. But Governor Miller and I had talked some in the '98 campaign, because he was helping Roy. I went to shoot with him, and it was a little -- we had some banter. Then when Roy appointed him to the Senate when Paul Coverdell died, when Roy appointed Governor Miller to the Senate, then I worked with him closely, and we obviously got along well then.

SHORT: Tell us about that decision.

KAHN: Everybody was shocked when Paul Coverdell died. He and Roy were friends from when they served in the Senate together. They were both urban/suburban legislators. They were kind of reform-minded and worked on stuff together, so they were friends and his death was a shock, and so Roy sat there with an appointment that he never expected to have. He thought about it and thought that Governor Miller had the best chance of holding the seat.

SHORT: Yeah. An election was coming up.

KAHN: An election was coming up, and it'd be a special, in 2000. So he appointed him. He flew up to Young Harris and met with him, and two days later he appointed him.

SHORT: I need to ask this question: what was his and your reaction to Miller's performance as a United States senator?

KAHN: Well, I'll speak for myself. You talked to Roy. But that was when our relationship soured again, because he put Senator Cleland in some difficult positions. But we knew he was independent and of his own mind, and that was fine. He voted the way, I think, the way he thought he should vote. Where it became difficult for us was after '02 and he started really basically voting Republican, siding with the Republicans and thumbing his nose and sticking his finger in the eyes of the Democrats. It just so happened that at this time I became chairman of the party and I had a job to do, and he had a job to do, and it didn't exactly fit. Now, I was under a lot of pressure from people in the party who were very upset with Senator Miller, and they wanted to kick him out of the party and have these resolutions against him and all that kind of stuff. My position was, "A, you can't kick him out of the party. He doesn't have a membership card and we don't want to really stir this up, because, as it happened, a lot of people agree with him." We were trying to get votes, so the best thing to do was lay low. Well, there were party

activists and people who had been friends and supporters of Roy and Zell who wanted something done. So it was left to me to criticize him. I didn't go out of my way to do it. But he gave that speech at the Republican Convention, and I had to say something and I did, and he didn't like it. I remember he wrote this letter about the "deacons of disaster." This was in the '04 campaign. He was talking about me, Ben Jones and President Carter. So the deacons of disaster: Cooter, Kahn and Carter.

And we had to do something, and we did. Now, one of the things we did is we took his clips from the '92 campaign, when he was getting up there at the Democratic Convention and gave a great speech, one of the great speeches of his career, I think.

SHORT: "Hear this voice."

KAHN: Yeah, it was a great speech. He bashed President Bush '41. It was a popular speech. It was anti-Republican and we put clips of that on the Internet, and we put some of them on cable television. I don't think he liked that. You would know.

SHORT: It's hard to tell. Hard to tell.

KAHN: Oh, I don't think so.

SHORT: Well, Bobby, let's get back, if you will, for a minute to that period between 1990 and

1998 when you and Roy Barnes were vacationing. What happened during that period before he ran in 1998?

KAHN: Well, he ran for the House. He'd been in the Senate, and he ran for the House in 1992 and he won. He ran from Mableton, basically. And it was just a piece of the Senate district. I mean, it was his home area and he won. He won rather handily. And he goes for the caucus meeting. Or at some time he talked to Speaker Murphy. The Speaker said, "Well, what committees do you want to be on?" And Roy says he said, "Oh, I don't want to be on committees. I'll do everything from the floor." The Speaker said, "That's what I'm afraid of. No."

So he ended up serving where – I mean, the natural place for him was the Judiciary Committee. That's an important committee, obviously, in the House, a lot of good people on that committee and they take themselves very seriously. Of course, Roy had been chairman of judiciary in the Senate, and he had been co-chair of the Constitutional Revision Committee. I mean, he was serving with Groover, with Denmark Groover, in '92, I guess. So they sort of were the elder statesman and the people who wrote a lot of things in the bills that some people understood, but most people didn't.

SHORT: What was your relationship with him during that period?

KAHN: Well, that was when I was doing the TV litigation.

SHORT: Oh, I see. Yeah. So you were in constant . . .

KAHN: I was in his law office.

SHORT: Oh, yeah.

KAHN: And he was on the cases with us and he argued – we had several appellate decisions, appellate arguments, and he made them, or he participated in them. I would talk to him about the cases, because a lot of it was negotiation and we had some overall issues about where we were going to pursue this, in court or at the FCC. So I had a case. I mean, there were lawyers in the firm that would joke, “How’s your case?” I had one case. But we represented 50 people, and we had 100 stations we were pursuing. So I practiced law out of his office between, basically, ’91 and ’98 and I ran – or I guess I ran his legislative races. I was treasurer of his legislative races and helped him raise the money, and we would do the mail and the phones and stuff. In ’96, he decided he was going to run for governor. But he couldn’t announce before he qualified for reelection. It looked like he was going to not have opposition, because the Cobb party and the Republicans had always qualified somebody. But they were focusing on a lot of other seats, and this seat really wasn’t one they could take. But at the last minute, he ended up with opposition. So he had to run a race and he couldn’t start running for governor. But during the fall of ’96, we were preparing for his campaign and shortly after the election, he

was telling people he was going to run. Maybe even a little before the election, he was telling people he was going to run, thinking that if he were getting out there that Lieutenant Governor Howard would not. But Pierre went ahead and got out there probably in late October or early November. So he was running. Pierre was running and then Roy started raising money after the '96 election and raised a couple hundred-thousand, as did Pierre, going in '97. During the '97 session, the big fear was Mike Bowers.

SHORT: Had he switched parties?

KAHN: He switched before the '94 election. His timing was good, too. So going into the '97 session, Mike Bowers was this reformer, attorney general, white knight, all that sort of stuff. There was a lot of concern in the legislature, among the Democrats in the legislature, House, and Senate that Roy and Pierre were going to kill themselves, they were going to get in a bitter fight and all that. So a lot of leadership talked to Roy about running for lieutenant governor, talked to both of them about not having a nasty primary. So, toward the end of the session, Roy and Pierre talked, and Roy decided he was going to run for lieutenant governor and Pierre was going to run for governor. Obviously there wouldn't be a ticket, but Roy would engender a fair amount of good will by stepping back and avoiding a bloody primary. Roy and Pierre did some things that some later candidates might have observed.

SHORT: What?

KAHN: Avoiding a bloody primary. I'm thinking back to the '06 primary.

SHORT: Well, I want to get that, but not at this time.

KAHN: So Roy was off and running for lieutenant governor in April of '97. He's raising money, and at that point -- this is still Georgia law -- but we were going through some steps to convert the money race for governor to lieutenant governor, and we had not done that. We were just focused on getting new pledges. So in August, Roy's in Florida. I know what it was. Roy and I had gone to a sheriff's meeting up at Chateau Élan, and then we were going to go over to Blairsville to a Howard fundraiser and this was before GPS and, really, before Mapquest, and my sense of direction isn't very good. But we basically had to cross mountains, so we were a little late. So we went to Blairsville. I saw Pierre there and talked to him. I said, "Hey, I've got a business. I'd like to do your [indiscernible]." He said, "Well, let's get together." So we set a time. I called him, and I was going to go by and see him on -- I think it was a Friday, and I was going to see him that afternoon. That morning I'm getting calls. Pierre called me and said, "I may want to talk to Roy, but can we move our meeting from 3:00 to 4:00?" I said, "Sure." So I started getting calls right after I talked to Pierre that he's going to drop out. I said, "No way. I just talked to him." So then the calls kept coming, and finally I called Roy. I said, "I don't believe this is the case, but, boy, the grapevine is really on fire." Then we got confirmation of it and I called up somebody who worked for Pierre and I finally said, "I take it we're not meeting

this afternoon.” So the whole thing was a mystery, particularly in light of – I mean, Pierre had a great fundraiser. It was a great event, a people event and a money event, in Blairsville. That may have been a Tuesday or a Wednesday, and this was a Friday. I may have the days wrong. So the whole thing was a mystery.

SHORT: So there was no arrangement between the two?

KAHN: You mean for him to get out and Roy to get back in?

SHORT: Yeah.

KAHN: No. It was a surprise. I mean, Pierre invited Roy to this fundraiser because, obviously, they were friends. They’d been friends since – they were part of the Gang of Five in the Senate that did all this reform stuff.

SHORT: Tell me what you remember about the Gang of Five.

KAHN: Well, I’m kicking myself for bringing this up, because every time I talk about it, I have to go look it up. But they were doing reform stuff on campaign finance and consumer issues and things like that and as far as I can remember, Roy was one, Ed Hine was one, Pierre Howard was one, Paul Trulock was one.

SHORT: And you're missing the undertaker.

KAHN: Sutton?

SHORT: No, no. The present-day Mayor of Carrollton.

KAHN: Oh, that's right. Wayne Garner. Wayne Garner.

SHORT: Yes, Wayne Garner.

KAHN: Yeah, yeah.

SHORT: The Gang of Five.

KAHN: That's right. And Roy and Zell had a on-and-off friendship. I mean, when they got there -- they both got there in '75 from the '74 election, and they were both reformers. Busbee did -- there was some really pro-consumer stuff that was done in the mid 70s that you could never get done today. The Governor's Office of Consumer Affairs, which probably has been gutted. There was some really good landlord-tenant stuff for the tenant in there and there were some other things. I guess the Consumer Utility Council. I think Roy and Zell were allies on

that. But then Roy became Joe Frank's floor leader, and Zell was coming off of the Senate race and so they were kind of in different places, so there was natural tension there. But I think the Gang of Five stuff probably bothered the Lieutenant Governor at the time. But that's what I remember about it.

SHORT: Well, Howard withdrew. Roy became the leading candidate, but he got some opposition from the Howard camp.

KAHN: Yeah. Well, Roy, we talked the day that Pierre dropped out and pretty well figured this was – you need to move fast and Bert Lance talked to me, and he said, "This is Roy's chance. He's got to take it." So he came back the next day. He was going to come back a few days later. Imagine that, Roy Barnes cutting a vacation short.

So he came back and he announced he was going to run. Lewis Massey, who was Secretary of State, had been appointed by Governor Miller to fill Max Cleland's unexpired term, because Max had resigned to run for the Senate. Lewis ran a good campaign in '96 and was popular. He got in the primary, too, thinking he would inherit a lot of Howard's support and he got some of it. But the good will that Roy had engendered within – a lot of the people that were pushing Roy to run for lieutenant governor and not have a fight were friends with boy Roy and Pierre, and they immediately came to Roy. The time was right. I mean, that was an election about experience and it was a little early for Lewis to be running for governor. Roy ran on his record and this was happening around the country. Gray Davis in California was up against two very

well-financed challengers in the primary and he ran on experience, and he won the primary. He wasn't supposed to. So that was a good year.

SHORT: Lewis did a very gracious thing, I thought, when he suspended his campaign.

KAHN: Yes.

SHORT: And that obviously helped the Barnes effort.

KAHN: Oh, absolutely. Roy had gotten like 48.9%, 49% of the vote. Lewis was second. These things take time. And so after a couple of days, he decided he didn't want to continue and so Lewis and Roy and Governor Miller had a press conference in Governor Miller's office, and it was a unity press conference. That helped a lot.

SHORT: Saved your campaign some money?

KAHN: Saved campaign money. Didn't have to run a runoff. Although, we were concerned about turnout, so we had to do a little bit of a runoff campaign. But it was mainly with the idea of everybody's pulling together, let's move toward the general election. So, obviously, won the runoff. Saved a lot of money. Had a unified party going into the general election. They were supposed to have a runoff, but they didn't.

SHORT: They didn't. That's right.

KAHN: Roy had just come under 50%. Milner had gotten over 50% and that provided a little sense of urgency about getting together. Of course, Milner had run – this was the third time for him. He had almost beat – he came very close to beating Governor Miller. The Cleland race was close. So the third time could have been the charm.

SHORT: Were you afraid of him?

KAHN: Oh, yeah. Yeah. I mean, he had all the money in the world. He had learned. The candidate who loses learns, and he had learned from his last two elections. One of the things he did, particularly in the '94 election, was, and a lot of self-funders do this, he thought he would do it on the cheap and he ended up at the end dumping a bunch of money in, that if he had spent it earlier, he could have spent it more wisely. But he wasn't going to make that mistake this time. So we knew that and he started in on Roy immediately, just hammering him on television: soft on crime, too liberal for Georgia. Soft on welfare, too liberal for Georgia.

SHORT: Sounds like Karl Rove.

KAHN: Yeah. So it was a tough campaign.

SHORT: But you won handily.

KAHN: Yeah. To our great shock. The margin, that is.

SHORT: Yeah. That was surprising to some people.

KAHN: Oh, yeah. Yeah. But it was a good year for Democrats. It was a good year for Democrats nationally and here.

SHORT: So Roy Barnes becomes Governor, and you move into the capitol.

KAHN: I wasn't planning on doing that, either.

SHORT: Really?

KAHN: No. I enjoyed my business, and I'd never been in government before. But it seemed like a good thing to do.

SHORT: It's a lot of responsibility.

KAHN: Yes. Yes.

SHORT: I'm going to ask you this question. Again, you don't have to answer. But you were known as a tough guy in the Barnes administration. Are you a tough guy?

KAHN: Well, I have this reputation. But when people meet me, they tell me I'm not so bad. I mean, as far as I was concerned, I had a constituency of one. I guess some people have to say "no," and Roy wasn't too good at that. I think you go back to every chief of staff, executive secretary – the governor's job is to say "yes," and your job is to say "no." Roy knew what he was doing as governor and he knew state government. He knew the legislature. I think one thing that nobody appreciates until they get there is just how big government is and how entrenched the bureaucracy is. The department heads would come over and, "Oh, yeah, we'll do that. Whatever you want." Then getting it done within the bureaucracy is a whole other matter. But Roy had a very ambitious agenda, legislative agenda, and was very successful in getting it passed and there were some tough votes.

SHORT: Let's talk about some of his accomplishments. What do you think was his greatest accomplishment?

KAHN: I think overall it was his vision when it came to transportation and infrastructure issues like water. But globally, it's that sort of thing and having a handle on what the state needs to do

to educate its kids, grow and that sort of thing. Now, we had a lot of issues within that. I think his management of the budget was really good. Really good, in retrospect.

SHORT: Yes.

KAHN: But, I mean, we had a lot of issues within that. The first year we did transportation, also did healthcare, doctor-choice. But those were some contentious things. Transportation, not so, compared to healthcare, because for healthcare there were lobbyists. For transportation, there was no organized group saying, "We don't want to do that." Well, there became one. So the first year we did that.

SHORT: That was the Northern Arc.

KAHN: That came up later. Yeah. That was part of an overall transportation plan and that actually came in 2001, and it was part of an integrated transportation plan that included light rail and buses and highways. The Northern Arc was one of them. The Northern Arc was actually a compromise. It was a piece of the Outer Perimeter. I mean, there's been plans on the books of DOT to build a perimeter around 285 probably since the 70s. This was just connecting 75 to 85 north of Atlanta and that became, for people living in the path and people who didn't want spend on it – because it was expensive – a great rallying cry.

SHORT: Then there's 2002 reelection. Let's talk about that.

KAHN: Well, we need to talk about two sessions of the legislature before.

SHORT: Good.

KAHN: You're the interviewer, though.

SHORT: That's good.

KAHN: In 2000 we did education reform, and that became very controversial, obviously. It was a comprehensive education reform that Roy had been studying education. He was on Governor Harris' Education Reform Commission, and he knew these issues pretty well. He puts his own commission together and two of the models they were looking at were North Carolina, and Roy's good friends with former Governor Hunt, and they've done a lot to improve education over there. The other one was Texas with Governor Bush and he had pulled a lot of their reforms from North Carolina. Then, Governor Bush used mainly Texas, because that's what he was familiar with, for No Child Left Behind. So this was in the era of testing and accountability and that sort of thing and one of the big problems with No Child Left Behind was it wasn't funded. But a lot of the concepts were in there, were in No Child Left Behind and the Governor Barnes' education reform. The one that gets all the attention is doing away with teacher tenure. I mean,

there was a bad tactical decision made there and I will tell it. I will go through it with you.

Roy wanted to do something about fair dismissal and basically getting like another year or two of probation. I don't know all the terms. I'm not that familiar with the whole education reform effort, other than helping to get it passed. But he wanted to get a couple more years of probation before they fell under the Fair Dismissal Act for Tenure. We talked to the leaders and the teacher organization, GAE, PAGE, and all that, and he said, "What can we do on this?" They came back and said, "Nothing." So we said, "Well, if we're going to have a fight on our hands, let's go for something that is really big." I mean, we never thought we'd get it passed. But Roy was good at getting stuff passed and that became the focus of the bill, and it was only a small part of it and it was a mistake to do it. That became the rallying cry.

The interesting thing was, a lot of what we were doing, including getting rid of tenure, were Republican ideas and when bill was introduced in the House, there were a couple-hundred changes made to it, and most of those changes were offered up by Republicans. The Republicans came to Roy and said, "We want to work with you on this, and we're going to have this little committee." It had Earl Ehrhart, Brooks Coleman and two or three people on it. They made most of the changes that went into the House version of the bill. By the time it hit the Senate, there was just a storm because of tenure, and then there were other things.

Superintendents saw that they were going to lose control over the expenditure of money and that sort of thing. So the Republicans lined up, including Senator Perdue and Senator Eric Johnson, and they fought it and we passed it in the Senate, but there were some senators and some House members who lost because of their vote on education reform. Then it just became an easy thing

to talk about and the rallying cry and we were feeling pretty good about our ability to pass stuff, so we went ahead and passed it. We probably – well, we shouldn't have. Because it's not the focus of education reform, and it just gave everybody a rallying cry.

SHORT: Changing the flag also became an issue.

KAHN: The flag. Not something that Roy wanted to get into, because he knew it would dominate. But the problem was, it was dominating everything. It was part of every discussion. But even then, he didn't want to necessarily want to get into it. He thought if he made a move at passing it, he had one shot in his term, or even terms, as governor. If he failed, it'd be another 10 years before you could look at it. But we were getting pressure from all kinds of places. The biggest came from the NCAA. They were scheduled to have, I think, the Final Four and a bunch of ACC and SEC tournaments in 2003, 2004 and 2005 and I think there was one recently. Those were all on the table. In fact, the NCAA moved something out of South Carolina recently because of their flag controversy. But we were getting a lot of pressure and then we were getting pressure from legislators, African American and urban/suburban Democrats, white Democrats who were feeling it from their constituents.

So this would have been in '01. We had basically ridden it out until -- I'm talking about in 2000. We had ridden it out in the first year. But it kept coming back, and it would come up in the context of legislative initiatives. So it wasn't going away, and it was going to become a part of everything we did. But even then, it was December of 2000 and if you'd asked me December 1st

if he was going to do anything, I would have said “no.” Then we were in a meeting of the legislative leadership and this was the Democrats. This was pretty well rural-dominated, but a lot of them had big African American constituencies. They started talking about, “We need to do something.” Of course, a legislator saying that and then wanting to do it is another thing. They’ve been known to change their minds, too. Speaker Murphy said, “Ya’ll are crazy.” So we were talking, talking it through, and the business community was putting a lot of pressure on us. So at that point, we had resurrected something that Cecil Alexander had done after Governor Miller had tried to change the flag and it was a field of blue with a seal which was the original state flag, which would have been -- or field of blue and the coat of arms, I guess, was the original state flag, which seemed like a pretty good flag. But then he had every flag that had flown over the United States, Great Britain, France, Spain and all that. So then we started to talking to some of the people that didn’t want to change the flag, and said, “Well, what if we had on here some representation of the ‘56 flag?” They were open to it. So we were playing around with a glue stick, cutting and pasting and stuff and it was in early January. Denmark Groover came up for a judge’s swearing in and came in and talked to us and at this point we still didn’t think we were going to do anything. This was January of 2001. We still didn’t think we were going to do anything. Denmark Groover came in, and voted on the ’56 flag and he said, “You need to change the flag.” So Roy came back to my office and said, “Come in here and bring your folder.” I did, and showed him the various iterations and talked about it. So then we at this point started talking among ourselves. We had gotten a letter at this point from Eric Johnson, who was Republican leader of the Senate. Or it wasn’t a letter to us; it was a letter to his

colleagues saying, “Don’t fall for it. Don’t take the bait. This was a Democrat problem.” You know, they say, “Democrat.” “They made the flag in ’56. Let them figure it out. We don’t need to help.” So, we’re not going to get their help. But at one point Eric sent word that if we would work with them on reapportionment, they would help us on the flag, a deal we should have taken. Given that, there was no way you were going to get many Republicans to help. They were going to play this for every racial point they could.

So here we are into the second week in January, and we start talking to legislators, leadership, but never let a copy of the thing out. They were warming up to it. Never as a group. We would talk to them individually. Roy was scheduled to speak in Milledgeville around the 21st, 22nd of January. It was on the original capitol, and it was an historic thing and all that sort of thing. So the legislature was going to be in recess Monday and Tuesday. So we thought we would make a run at it. So then we started getting together and putting a game plan together and talked to Ed Holcomb, who was at Georgia Power at the time and helping the chamber, because his boss was head of the chamber, of the Atlanta Chamber. We had a meeting at the Governor’s Mansion after the speech in Milledgeville and at that point, Roy started calling the Senate leadership, because we were going to do this in the House. Pretty much had the House leadership at least sort of there.

SHORT: Including the Speaker?

KAHN: Roy had gone up to see him like maybe Friday of the previous week. “I don’t know.

Let me talk to my boys.” Of course, we had already talked to those boys. So this was when the test was coming, the people that said, “Our people want to do something,” whether they would follow through. They were looking for a leader, and he was it. So we made the move and we knew that we had one shot at it, so that was the whole thing about the doing it quickly.

SHORT: Yeah. How did doing it quickly really happen? The public was not aware of that.

KAHN: No. Well, there was a bill, and it needed to get changed in the House rules. The House Rules Chairman was Calvin Smyre, and we’d been talking to him for months. So we were going to change it in the House rules, and they were going to vote it onto the floor. Which is unusual, but they did. Well, listen, the press, right when it happened, was pretty good. It was a masterful stroke, had the Republicans complaining about it. But the people, by and large, thought we needed – the ones that the press talked to, thought we needed to change the flag. But then the protest started. We figured if you had the protest and everything beforehand, there was no way you were going to pass it. We had one shot at it, and we wanted to get it out of the way.

SHORT: And you did.

KAHN: As a legislative matter. The idea was we’d vote it into the House on Wednesday or Tuesday and then get it into the Senate, because we didn’t want them going home. But there were some – the Senate has tougher rules. So it was coming up, I guess, Monday or Tuesday

after they came back. So they went home, and we worked the Senate over the weekend. It barely passed the House, and it barely passed the Senate and we had Republican votes both times. But there were legislators who lost because of it.

SHORT: What was your relationship with the group known now as “the Flaggers”? Did they have any input?

KAHN: Actually, we had talked to some of them beforehand. I don't know all of them, but there are people that I know within those groups. We had talked to them beforehand, and they said, “Well, we don't like it. But having that on there, the '56 flag on there is better than not having it on there.” There was no way they were going to go for the pre-'56 flag, which is basically the flag we have today, because it was considered a civil rights flag. Which, ironically enough, it was the flag of the Confederacy, not the battle flag. So we had talked to some of them. But, listen, when the Republicans got hold of it in the Senate and then the protest happened, it became the teacher thing, only a whole lot worse. Just the pounding. Then people started talking about how ugly the flag was and, listen, it was not a thing of beauty. It was a vehicle for change. As far as I was concerned and a lot of people were concerned, just the coat of arms or the seal on a field of blue would suffice. But they called it the “Denny's placemat” and all that sort of thing. So it became a rallying cry, another rallying cry, both what was done and how it was done. But you could not have gone – it was a transition flag. You could not have gone from the '56 flag to the pre-'56 flag that had been the symbol of wanting to get rid of the

'56 flag for 20 years, you couldn't have gone straight to that.

SHORT: Another thorny issue was reapportionment.

KAHN: Yeah.

SHORT: Let's talk for a minute about that.

KAHN: We should have taken Eric's deal. Reapportionment has never been a pretty process.

SHORT: Now, this was in what year?

KAHN: It would have been 2001. It would have been after the flag thing. So things were not going well with the Republicans as it was. The history of reapportionment had always been incumbents taking care of themselves. It was a nasty, nasty game. They had the constraints of the Voting Rights Act and Justice Department. So both Democrats and Republicans would use that in whatever they did. But the number-one goal was incumbents taking care of themselves. Well, our view was, that's a good way to lose a lot more seats. Because while one incumbent Democrat can win a seat, the next person, because it's done to his or her choosing, and you get this neighborhood and that neighborhood there, when that person retires or, in a bad year gets beat, like '94 then it's going to go Republican. The map-drawing tools had gotten a lot better.

So we thought, “Yeah.” I mean, politics had always driven it before, but we’d inject a little politics in it to the benefit of the Democrats. I mean, that angered Democrats and Republicans, because Democratic House leaders didn’t want us sticking our nose in their business and taking away precincts that included their relatives. So the party, which was the Governor, was very active in doing what parties do, which is promote things in the interest of the party, and that included some maps that favored Democrats and it offended legislators who wanted to draw their own maps, and it offended Republicans who saw what was going on to the detriment of Republicans. It offended some people who look at maps and don’t like splitting up counties and communities. So that became another rallying cry. But again, I don’t see -- I mean, if you’re going to do it, you don’t have politics in it and that’s where you have a commission, which some states do, and try to eliminate politics from it. But if you’re going to have politics in it, I don’t see a whole lot of difference between drawing it partisan for Democrats or drawing it partisan for an incumbent.

Now, as it happened, Democrats in the legislature, I mean, our view was you pack the Republicans together, but don’t put them in with each other. Why anger them – those are going to be Republican seats. Let them be incumbent Republican seats. But a lot of legislators wanted to stick it to the Republicans, so they put Republicans together, and that made things worse. But on a congressional map, even with the Republicans redoing it, we ended up picking up a seat.

SHORT: So all of that, the teachers, the flag, reapportionment, you move into . . .

KAHN: Northern Arc.

SHORT: Northern Arc. You move into reelection in 2002. Tell us about that race.

KAHN: Well, you had September 11th of 2001, which just clobbered the economy, particularly the tourism business. We had had the dot-com bust, and Georgia had a lot of technology jobs. So the economy was down, and we were cutting budgets. Turns out those were the glory days of the budget compared to what we've got now. But we went into that race. We knew there were problems, but we thought we were okay. The biggest problem was, Roy, other than just some what could have been anomalies, never really got above 50% in polling, in our own polling. Public polls, yeah. But in our own polling, we never got above 50%. We had tested all kinds of messages, and it really didn't move anybody. We tested negative messages, and people didn't care about negative stuff on Sonny Perdue. It was all about Roy. I mean, it was a well-funded campaign, and we tried a lot of things, and we lost.

SHORT: Are you surprised?

KAHN: Yeah. Yeah. I stayed in the Governor's Office until June. The campaign got up and running really late '01, but I think had an office in January of '02. I figured I would be spending more time on politics. So after bill-signing, I went over to the campaign. But it was – everywhere he was going he was hitting Flaggers and hearing about things. I worked for Carter

in 1980 between college and law school and I went to Texas and Kentucky. I went around with Charley Graves, who had been the executive director of the party. So I went places with him and I learned there that when you're running for reelection, you're spending a lot of time explaining stuff you did and apologizing. All these people that helped Carter in '76, they couldn't get calls returned and stuff like that. I mean, it wasn't all these people, but there were enough anecdotes. So there was a problem. So reelection is about the incumbent, and we gave a lot to the Republicans to run on and it wasn't a good Democratic year.

Yeah, I was surprised. I thought even though we didn't get above 50, I thought that people would stay home and that we'd have enough undecideds break our way. But we did a good job of turning out African-American vote. I mean, it was at a record level that year for a non-presidential year. It was a very strong force. We did an even better job of turning out white Republicans.

SHORT: Do you think it's historically noteworthy that the Republican candidates in 2002 were former Democrats?

KAHN: Well, I mean, without getting too inflammatory here, the base of the Republican Party is former Democrats who switched over race. I mean, when Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, and said, "We lost the South for a generation," that's the Republican Party. Now, it's included a lot of the old-style Republicans, and they've gotten new younger people. But the base of the Republican Party is people who switched in '64. It's

enough. In fact, the ironic thing about Eric Johnson's letter that we shouldn't help because it was Democrats who did it, well, the Democrats who did it, a lot of those folks became Republicans.

SHORT: Well, it's 2009. We sit here on the campus of the University of Georgia. There's a gubernatorial election next year. Roy Barnes is a candidate. What do you think? Will he be successful?

KAHN: I think so, but I've thought that before. I mean, I think the first person that I ever heard say this was Zell Miller after the 1980 race -- that you learn a whole lot more when you lose than when you win. Now, learning gets old after a while, but he learned a lot. He learned a lot in 1990 from Zell Miller. He learned a lot in 2002 from himself and from the people and he's taken those lessons and applied them.

SHORT: Do you think these eight years have been long enough for people to forget those issues that hampered him during his race in 2002?

KAHN: Oh, they'll be reminded of them. But I think what a lot of people want to know is whether he's learned from those issues, what he says about those issues, and what he wants to do in the future now. I mean, the state has a lot of problems. The country has a lot of problems and in some respects, it's like '98. People may be looking for experience. But you don't run the last

race or even the race before that, although you do take lessons from it. But it's a better time to have a conversation about those issues.

SHORT: You think he'll be the same progressive and forceful governor he was during his term?

KAHN: Yeah. But I think he'll be more patient and he'll pick his issues. It's going to be tough with a – it's a different world with a Republican legislature and in some respects, that may make him a better governor, because he won't be able to get his way on everything.

SHORT: Well, Bobby, you served as chair of the Georgia Democratic Party. Let's talk about that for a minute. What happened to the Democratic Party in Georgia?

KAHN: Well, coming out of the ashes of 2002, it was tough times. It still is. I was interested in being chair because I wanted to help with a coordinated message for '06. I think we did that. Not to success, but we put the issues out there. We had our problems. '04 was a tough year in Georgia because of the presidential campaign and Zell being -- Zell validated a lot of Independents who may have voted Democratic before, swing voters. But Zell validated them being Republicans. They agreed with him. I mean, he is a very persuasive communicator and made the case for George Bush very well. Now, Bush would have won Georgia anyway. But a lot of issues Zell talked about resonated. I mean, he reached people very well. But '04, we were up against a very popular candidate for the Senate, and our candidate was underfunded and not

as strong. So '04 was a tough year. The maps had been redone, either by the legislature or by the courts, activist judges. So we didn't really have any hope there. So we were already thinking toward 2006 and the governor's race and the other races. But we had a very, very bitter primary. The candidates did not get back together afterwards. Even if they had, I don't think it would have mattered. I think it would have helped down-ballot. I think it would have helped with Mark Taylor's margin, but I don't think he could have beat Perdue that year, in retrospect. I mean, it's taken me a while to come to this conclusion, but Sonny Perdue is a very good candidate. He reached people well, too.

SHORT: Well, the Democrats also in '06 lost an opportunity to replace the two candidates for governor, the secretary of state and lieutenant governor.

KAHN: Yeah. We were focused on the governor's race, there's no question about it. We had primaries for lieutenant governor and secretary of state, too. Those candidates were left broke. They didn't start out with much, but they were left broke. So it was tough. It was tough down the ballot. But demographics are favoring us. I think Republican performance is favoring us. Don't know if it's happening quick enough for 2010. A lot of it will depend on what's going on globally and nationally with the Democratic Party and the President. But I think with a strong top of the ticket that we can pick up some of the – hold or pick up some of those other constitutional offices.

SHORT: Some disenchanted Democrats think that the state party is too aligned with minorities and labor unions and liberals. Is that a good assessment?

KAHN: The party – no. I mean, I understand that reputation. But it's whoever wants to get involved, really and one of the tough things – and it's something that I've attempted to do with varying degrees of success since I was executive director of the party – is get elected officials, legislators involved. They'll do some stuff, but you've got to really push them. I think the key to a strong party – and a lot of the constituency groups don't agree with me on this, but the key to a strong party is the involvement of elected officials, of minority, business, every form and fashion of elected officials and that's a diverse group here.

SHORT: Do you think the national party has an impact on elections in Georgia?

KAHN: It's all according to the election. Certainly in 1994 it did, in a negative way. In 1998, I think it had an effect in a positive way. By national party, I mean, we're talking the Democratic National Committee, but also what's going on in Congress, what's going on with the President. Heretofore, if an election was nationalized, it wasn't good, by and large, for Georgia. The '08 election was nationalized, and our people did better because of the turnout model. So I think we're better off, though, when it's local candidates running on local issues.

SHORT: How long do you think it would take Georgia Democrats to regain power in the state?

KAHN: You're going to have to go through another – I mean, you've got the governor's race, and that would certainly go a long way toward building the party, is having a Democrat as governor. One of the chambers could go back after reapportionment. Because what's happened is the suburban areas – the Mattingly story from 1980. Those areas are going Democratic. Cobb. Cobb was 45% Democratic this last election, and it was like 38% the previous and Gwinnett is the same way. So those areas are going Democratic, and we'll pick up legislative seats there, whether in 2010 by beating – that's where some of our pickups came this last election – whether in 2010 by knocking off incumbents, or just by reapportionment. Now, they moved out. The Republicans have moved out.

Now, this is something ya'll probably have looked at. But if you took a look at families that lived at the stadium area, Turner Field area, in the 40s, they first moved to DeKalb and then to Northwest Atlanta and then to Gwinnett and Cobb and then to Forsyth, then Cherokee and Bartow. So as they move out, the Republicans are the ones that move out. But the suburban areas should be Democratic. The other thing is a lot of the people you lose in rural Georgia, where reapportionment – where the legislature endeavors to protect itself in reapportionment – and this is something where we had fights – rural Georgia's losing population. So it becomes tougher and tougher to protect those people. Well, the people in need of protection now are Republicans. We've lost the seats down there that we're going to lose, and we can start gaining some back. So it's conceivable with the map under the new rules that we could start picking seats back up in 2014, 2016.

SHORT: Let's talk for a minute about the quality of candidates. The Republicans claim that they do a better job of recruiting and training candidates. What is the Democratic Party doing about that?

KAHN: Well, that is the toughest job that a party has. I mean, and it's not something you just decide in March while we've got qualifying coming up in April and we need to recruit. I mean, that's an ongoing year-round deal. In the early days with Newt and Paul Coverdell, the Republicans picked their battles and they recruited candidates, and they did a pretty good job. At some point along the way, they recruited themselves. I mean, just areas went from Democrat to Republican and whoever was on the ballot, whatever warm body was on the ballot, won. We've got a few of those situations now. In fact, in this last election, there are two or three seats where if we had had a warm body on the ballot, the seats would be Democratic. The party, I think, is focusing on the caucuses. A lot of recruiting goes on in the House and Senate caucus. They're looking at that now, and, I mean, those are some of the seats they're focusing on.

The training's gotten a lot better by both parties over the years. Whether it's use of the voter file, door-to-door techniques now digital on the Internet, the training's gotten better by both parties.

Recruiting has become tougher. It takes more of a time commitment for people to serve.

Elections are tough and expensive. So it's a challenge for both parties. The interesting thing about the '06 election, I don't think a single incumbent lost in the general election. So Democrat or Republican and the Republicans missed some recruiting opportunities there, as did we.

SHORT: 2010. If former Governor Barnes prevails, will you be a part of his administration?

KAHN: No. I have kids in college and I have a business. I'll help him in any way he wants, but it will be from the outside.

SHORT: In other words, the famous Bobby Kahn will not be a factor in Roy Barnes' administration.

KAHN: Four years in state government was enough for me.

SHORT: Let me ask you a very personal question. You're well-known throughout the state and the nation for your political activities. How would you like to be remembered?

KAHN: Well, I'm not too wild about the tough-guy thing. I want to be remembered as a hard worker who served who he was working for. I worked hard in the Governor's Office, but I think we were fair. I've had Republican legislators who tell me, "I spent more time in your office than I do in the current governor's office." I've got friends on both sides. Some would say more friends on the Republican side now. But I would like to be remembered as somebody who worked hard and who was fair.

SHORT: So you think you don't deserve the comment that some writer said about you, that Bobby Kahn knows only two classes of people: Democrats and the rest of the world?

KAHN: Well, that's not a bad way to look at the world. But like I said -- there's one legislator, a Republican, who's just an absolute nutcase. I'm not going to say his name. But he was shocked because he came into the Governor's Office and wanting an admiral in the Georgia Navy. And I said, "Sure." And he went around telling people, "I got the admiral of the Georgia Navy. I can't believe he did it." Oh, yes, he's a legislator. Part of it is he just wanted to ask.

SHORT: Well, that's true. Well, Bobby, thank you so much for being with us. We've certainly enjoyed the conversation.

KAHN: Enjoyed it.

SHORT: And we'll give you a final opportunity to say anything you'd like to say about your career or your experience.

KAHN: Well, I've had some extraordinary opportunities, whether at the party -- which was probably my favorite job, executive director of the party. I was young, energetic and really loved politics. I still do. But that was my first real shot. But that and the convention, which I never thought I'd have an opportunity to be a part of. Then working with Governor Barnes and

the administration of the things we did. I've enjoyed it. I like telling my kids about it. They enjoyed it. Doing stuff like this makes me remember it, and I've enjoyed doing that as well.

SHORT: Well, thank you very much.

KAHN: Sure.

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