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BOB SHORT: I'm Bob Short and this is Reflections on Georgia Politics, sponsored by the Duckworth Library at Young Harris College and the Richard B. Russell Library at the University of Georgia. Our guest today is Dan Ebersole, currently Georgia's State Treasurer,

who has a career in government that spans more than 35 years. Welcome, Dan. We're delighted to have you.

DAN EBERSOLE: Thank you, Bob. Great to be with you.

SHORT: If we may, we'd like to divide our conversation today into three parts. First, you and your early life. Secondly, your long-time association with Governor Zell Miller. And, finally, your work as custodian of Georgia's money. We know that you were originally from Pennsylvania. Tell us about how you got to Atlanta, Georgia.

EBERSOLE: Well, I came here in June of 1974. I was a volunteer with the Mennonite Central Committee and assigned as an aide to Atlanta City Councilmember Charles Helms. Charles represented the intown/downtown area. He had a fondness and a relationship with lieutenant governor candidate, Zell Miller. And in the summer of '74, when I was first getting my sea legs in Georgia politics, Charlie volunteered me to be a volunteer with Lt. Gov. Miller's campaign, and I first met Tom Houck at Tom Houck's house in Midtown one evening where they explained what I could be doing as a full-time volunteer.

And I signed on because the pay was right -- which was nothing. I first met candidate Miller at the old Decatur Federal Sky Room in downtown Decatur at a debate and signed onto the campaign. I was supposed to ask a question as if I was a member of the audience, even though I'd been on the campaign for a whole day. They, the Miller family, loaned me their '60s Chevy

which had a 3-speed on the column, which I had to learn to drive, which resulted in a lot of neck injuries and back-and-forth. And so I just did what campaign volunteers did, just went out, leafleted, got up early, just doing a lot of things.

We were based out of the old Penthouse Motel on 5th Street at the downtown connector where Tom Houck and Walter Gordon and Shirley Franklin and numerous other later-to-be famous folks volunteered. Judge Johnson; that's when I first met Ed.

And I did that for about six weeks through the runoff, which went through, as I recall, the day after Labor Day of 1974. Then I went back to work with Charlie, went to graduate school. And then Zell -- Lt. Gov. Miller at that time, in January of '78, gave me the opportunity to be a senate aide during the session and assigned to the Senate Research Office. And that, that continued. And then I worked on the 1978 lieutenant governor's reelection campaign and then in September of '78, after the primary, became full-time at Senate Research.

SHORT: Tell us about the Senate Research Office. Lt. Gov. Miller created that.

EBERSOLE: Yes, sir. And because there was a need for professional staff support for the state senators, he created it. It was a great group of young, well-educated, motivated folks, and I fell in and really enjoyed what I got to do. I started to learn, quickly realized that "follow the money" was the place to go, so I got interested in the finance and appropriations processes, followed those. Stayed. Became Deputy Director when a vacancy occurred in 1979 and, thank Lt. Gov. Miller for giving me that opportunity.

And then in April of 1980, went on the senate campaign for about five months – that uphill battle. Like Hank Huckaby and Marti Pingree who worked on unsuccessful congressional campaigns with Zell, I worked on the senate campaign with Marti, and we learned a lot. And then I returned to Senate Research as the Director in October of 1980 when a vacancy occurred, and I was the Director of Senate Research for ten years, getting to work very closely with Lt. Gov. Miller and other Senate leaders, and that made me what I am today.

SHORT: Let's talk a little bit about that 1980 race. That was Lt. Gov. Miller versus Senator Herman Talmadge and some other candidates. It got to be a very spirited contest.

EBERSOLE: Yeah. It was uphill from the get-go. Senator Talmadge had a number of ethical challenges that we tried to exploit. Turned out that we just didn't have enough money or we weren't able to generate enough paid media. As I recall, we had three weeks of campaigns during the campaign runoff, basically. And it was just too high of a mountain to climb. Dawson Mathis was the third candidate, as I recall. I just remember working very, very hard for many months and with Marti and just trying to mobilize a ground campaign, but without; without the money for media, we just never could get competitive and, but I think Gov. Miller will tell folks that he learned more from the campaigns he lost than the campaigns he won.

SHORT: How did he react to that loss?

EBERSOLE: I think it was interesting. He almost -- he was -- relief, I would say is the first. I just remember going up to his office after that and he was very at peace with himself. He was ready to move on to the next chapter. I think he and Shirley went to New York for a couple of days of theater that he always enjoyed, and there was never any second-guessing about that campaign. It helped him focus on being an effective lieutenant governor which meant that, I think that was the first step for him getting his appointment power back. And that's an interesting story.

SHORT: Yeah, I wanted to talk to you about that. Let's recap that. And correct me if I'm wrong, but after he was elected lieutenant governor the first time, he decided to share power with the members of the Senate by creating a Committee on Committees...

EBERSOLE: Yes, sir.

SHORT: ...to give the Senate leadership a voice in appointments. Now how did that work out?

EBERSOLE: Well, as he described it, it was a noble experiment that failed. You're exactly right. The Committee on Committees was formed in the '75 session, made up of the lieutenant governor, senate president *pro tem* and the senate majority leader. What you had in the 1981 session, which, 1980 was the failed senate campaign, in '81, you had the majority leader's race to replace Jack Riley. Jack was the long-time majority leader senator from Savannah. He did

not run for reelection in 1980. That created a race for majority leader.

Frank Eldridge was the Rules Chairman and Tom Allgood and he were in the race for majority leader. My recollection is that Senator Allgood prevailed by one vote. That created some leadership turmoil in the Senate, among the senators. There was some uncertainty as to where the power was headed and who was going to be in charge and, with three folks in a three-headed leadership structure, created a good bit of uncertainty and instability in the Senate in the '81 session and heading into the '82 session.

Then what happened, Zell got reelected. You had a leadership race, as I recall. Joe Kennedy was running for *pro tem* against Al Holloway. Al had been the long-time *pro tem*. I remember Zell talking with me about helping Al stay in his position as a member of the Committee on Committees, the leadership. And I have a clear recollection, Governor Miller may have a different recollection, but I have a recollection of suggesting to Governor Miller that instead of helping Senator Holloway retain his position, that he ought to consider restoring the power of the lieutenant governor where the lieutenant governor, was clearly and solely the leader of the Senate. I have also this recollection of Lt. Gov. Miller at that time sitting in there, not saying anything, and then leaving. And a couple of days later beginning a campaign where he -- and he was a master; he was the very best at knowing how to get senators to do what he wanted them -- and that's when he started with the noble experiment that failed and he began his campaign to restore the sole appointment powers to the lieutenant governor.

He was successful and that was really important for him becoming a strong leader. He had been Lieutenant Governor for eight years. I think it significantly improved his ability to lead the

Senate. And then, ultimately, that led to strengthening of his position when he ran for Governor in 1990.

SHORT: Another of Miller's changes in the rules, as I recall, had to do with the opening of Conference Committees...

EBERSOLE: Yeah.

SHORT: ...to the public and to the media. And that did not go over well with House Speaker Tom Murphy. Do you remember that?

EBERSOLE: I was not a Senate employee. That was 1975, as I recall, when Zell refused to allow Senators to participate in closed Conference Committees. The Senate, as I recall, he got the Senate to pass a rule that all Conference Committees would be open or Senators would only participate in an open Conference Committee. The House had a completely opposite approach. I know that the Senate and Lt. Gov. Miller prevailed. As a little aside, the ACLU gave Lt. Gov. Miller an award for open government as a result of that.

SHORT: That also added fuel to the feud between the Lieutenant Governor and the Speaker. What is your opinion of that feud and was that good for the Legislature?

EBERSOLE: I think Richard Hyatt characterized it the best, as “sibling rivalry” where it was an inevitable conflict between two strong-willed individuals who were creatures of the legislative process who felt strongly that their body had a right and a duty to represent their constituents and that you had a difference of philosophy on many matters, but both were two individuals who felt very, very strongly about their positions. In Richard’s biography of Governor Miller, he mentioned that if it hadn’t have been for Ms. Shirley, there might have been bloodshed between the two. I really think it was an inevitable conflict based on the structure, the situation and the personalities. I think ultimately it was to the benefit of Georgians because it was a free exchange of ideologies, of proposals. That is the inevitable nature of the political process to resolve those conflicts. So, I – I – those two had enormous respect for each other though. It was not personal in the sense that they didn’t call each other names. They didn’t insult each other. It was more based on their positions and the proposals and the defense of the legislative bodies they led.

SHORT: You worked in the Senate for how many years?

EBERSOLE: Twelve, sir, from 1978 through 1990, the end of 1990.

SHORT: When the Lieutenant Governor went out of office?

EBERSOLE: Yes, sir.

SHORT: What were some of your fondest memories of working in the Senate?

EBERSOLE: I think the relationships with the Senators. The difference between the '80s and today, in my opinion, is that most Senators stayed in Atlanta in a hotel and, as opposed to today, I think probably half of the folks commute. When you are -- I read somewhere someone said, "When you are playing poker with someone 'til 3:00 in the morning, it's hard to get up in the well of the Senate the next morning and insult their integrity." Those relationships were deep, you know? When I got here in '78, 52 of the 56 Senators were Democrats. There were four Republicans. So the Democratic Party had to compromise among its factions. The Senators represented deep south Georgia to extreme north Georgia, the cities, suburbs, and the Democratic Party had to represent all of those views to come to a middle ground proposal. And I think that's one of the things Lt. Gov. Miller did extremely well is to forge that consensus position. But the folks were all here, and I remember folks like Bill Fincher, a delightful gentleman from Chatsworth, one day had his name badge upside-down and I told Senator Fincher, I said, "Bill, are you aware that your badge is upside-down?" He said, "Well, it helps me read it better." That kind of self-effacing humor by the gentleman. Ah. You know, I remember Al Holloway one time, I would follow the Conference Committee on the budget and they would go all weekend. They would be here all night Sunday night. And one night, he came and put his arm around me and said, "I want to thank you for what you're doing." You know, just little things like that. These were dedicated servants. These were folks who put in long hours, who really forged a consensus to help the state make progress. Really, it was a -- really didn't know what a good job

it was.

I do remember in the summer of 1991, to jump ahead, Hank Huckaby was Budget Director at that time. I was the Deputy Budget Director. Zell was Governor. We were driving back during the special session where we cut the budget in '91, and Zell looked at us and said, "You know, we had the three best jobs in state government last year, and we gave it up for this!" So I really think that I didn't know what a good job I had at Senate Research until I'd moved on and had much more responsibility.

And but I do want to say I did develop an appreciation for the – the sacrifices that Senators made by serving. I remember what Tom Allgood said one time when Zell was Governor. He said, "It's gotten to be such a tough job that anybody with the sense to be senator has enough sense they won't run." So I have an enormous appreciation for our public servants who give up so much, sacrifice for their state.

SHORT: Besides Holloway, who are some of the other most influential and colorful members of the Senate?

EBERSOLE: Well, you'd have to start with Culver Kidd as influential and colorful. And always I knew that when Culver was insulting me in a friendly manner, I knew I was on good terms with him. It was when he was being nice to me I got a little nervous. But he was someone who worked 80 hours a week on the job, represented Baldwin County so well, who knew so much, who knew the legislative process inside and out, and I'd start with Culver.

Al Holloway, who died in 1987.

Joe Kennedy was *pro tem* in there and then later ran for lieutenant governor in 1990.

Frank Eldridge was Rules Chairman.

Tom Allgood was the Majority Leader, one of my -- a friend said that, you know, "If you needed one person in the Senate to represent you, who would it be?" And we all agreed it would be

Tom Allgood. He would be your best advocate in a court of law.

Paul Coverdell was minority leader then. And Paul was a surprisingly influential Senator from a minority party in the extreme minority. He got, for example, he got motor vehicle safety

inspections repealed because they were not cost effective. Another influential person was State

Senator Bob Bell, who ran for governor in 1982 and lost. Bob was able to get some things done.

One of my favorite memories is "Zell-Bell". I take some credit for bringing those two together

in the 1980 session. Bob's position was that you should not pay cash for buildings. You should

borrow. It was an appropriate use of State G.O. bonds to borrow to build school buildings, for

example. The Governor's proposal was to pay cash. I looked at it. Talking with Bob, we said,

"If you bonded those cash projects, you would free up money for teacher pay raises." That was

very attractive to Lt. Gov. Miller, who was running for Senate or was about to run for Senate. It

was not publicly acknowledged during the '80 session.

So they created "Zell-Bell." I have a fond memory of Bob Bell presenting that proposal to the

Senate Appropriations Committee, to which Chairman Paul Brown, Sr. said, "That's the craziest

thing I've ever heard." It was defeated. Well, then Zell got involved and guess what? On the

floor of the Senate, it passed! So then there was a compromise with the House as to the amount,

but it did result in teachers getting a larger pay raise as a result.

And that's one thing about Zell. Zell was, from the very beginning, passionately committed to improving public education. And that is a story line that goes throughout his career and, when we get back to the lottery, I'll be glad to talk about something that's very appropriate to that.

SHORT: Well, Miller waited what? Ten years, before he ran for Governor after his defeat in 1980. In that election, Miller sought outside counsel in James Carville and Paul Begala, who later became famous, as you know, with Bill Clinton's campaign. Did you know those fellows?

EBERSOLE: Well, I was a state employee and so I only occasionally would interact with those folks. I'd be in a couple of meetings here and there. I heard Dr. Wrigley had the first-hand experience, and he can tell you. I'm sure he has told numerous stories, regaled the camera with stories, about about James and Paul. I have mostly indirect, secondhand knowledge of their escapades. But they, I do know, that James was instrumental in helping to develop a message around the lottery.

Now the lottery predated -- Lt. Gov. Miller's proposal for the lottery predated James and Paul. He proposed the lottery in the '90 session, and it failed. It passed the Senate and didn't go anymore, which was good. That gave him a reason to run for Governor. What I alluded to earlier, was something that I will take some credit for is when Zell started talking about the lottery to three of his advisors, Dr. Wrigley, Bill Stephens and me, Zell said, "I think the lottery should go for education." And I agreed. I agreed heartily. And we then, mostly with Dr.

Wrigley's lead, developed a campaign platform where the lottery would go for education. We made it clear part of the milieu was that that the Florida Lottery was widely perceived as being ineffective to helping education, that lottery dollars came in, and state funds went right out. It was a leaky sieve. And Zell made it very clear that the lottery would go for new programs and including pre-kindergarten and scholarships. And that was something that resonated with the public.

Where James and Paul I think were instrumental in all that were developing that message, tailoring that message. But I think it's indisputable that the Lottery for Education for scholarships and pre-kindergarten and did a little bit for computer equipment and telecommunicating/telecommunications, that was very popular. People agreed that was a good thing and Zell delivered.

SHORT: Whose idea was it to make the lottery a corporation and not a state agency?

EBERSOLE: Well, I was in the Budget Office when that was going on. Cindy Wright was the Governor's counsel, Dr. Wrigley was the Governor's Senior Executive Assistant, and Keith Mason was the Governor's Chief of Staff. I think those are the folks who developed the format. I do know the intention was to keep lottery out of politics. We learned from other states' experience. We learned from Florida's mistakes. We learned from other states' experiences we needed to keep the lottery independent and let the lottery do what it's good at, which was to sell tickets and use the proceeds. Our job was to make sure that the proceeds were going for the

intended purpose, to benefit Georgia's children.

SHORT: Let's talk for a minute about Governor Miller's senior staff. In addition to you, most of the inner circle was composed of long-time aides and assistants. You've mentioned some of them. Give us a brief synopsis of how he operated with his staff.

EBERSOLE: He used to say that he always wanted a group of bright young men around him. And people like Dr. Wrigley, Keith Mason, Cindy Wright, who's a bright young woman, Howard Mead, another bright young man. I think it really speaks highly of Zell that he wanted those kinds of folks who could challenge him. He didn't want a bunch of "yes people" around him; he wanted folks who had experience, knowledge. And I'm remiss to omit Hank Huckaby, who went all the way back to Young Harris in the '60s with Zell. Hank was Zell's first Budget Director. I was Zell's Deputy Budget Director for the first two years. Those were the kinds of people.

Hank had been a department head. Steve had been Zell's Chief of Staff. Keith had been in and out of politics for a long time. Cindy was counsel for Hank at the Housing and Finance Agency. Those are folks with 10 to 15 to 25 years' experience, new career folks, who could, when Zell became Governor, could hit the ground running and needed to because Zell took office in the middle of a financial crisis similar to what we've gone through in the last year and a half. We didn't realize that we were in the middle of it, unfortunately, until about June of 1991. And that's when the bottom started to fall out of the budget.

And I do remember the Friday before the July 4th holiday, Dr. Thomason, Dr. Thomason was the Governor's Revenue, Economic Advisor and Revenue Estimator for, since Maddox. Hank Thomason came in to tell Hank Huckaby and me, "I think we might have a budget problem. We might have a big budget problem. I'll let you know the first thing Monday morning." And guess what? We had a big budget problem. We had missed the revenue estimate markedly and we then developed a plan to address it through a special session. The plan was for agencies to submit 10 percent cuts by program. And it was brutal. It was gruesome. But we did that. We had a special session. We laid off some 800 state employees. We cut a lot of programs. It was hard. It was tough. And, but it resulted in a lower base, a more efficient state government. And then when revenues came back towards the end of Zell's first term, he was able to do some really good things around education, teacher pay raises, a tax cut in 1994. While the budget was really bad, at least he had the lottery proceeds to spend. So that was the first stage, '92 and '93, we had lottery proceeds. In '93 and '94, we started to have general fund revenues come back. That coming together gave him something positive to talk about during the 1994 campaign. But before we get to that, I do want to mention one thing. When Hank and I went to see Zell right after the July 4th holiday, to tell him, "You've got a big problem. It's unavoidable to have a special session to cut the budget. You're gonna have to repeal some of the good things you got approved in that '92 budget, gonna have to eliminate them or defer them." And I remember his reaction was to first go to the window, which is a classic. That's when we know things are really, really bad. When he came back from the window, he said, "So what am I supposed to say? I've got a Revenue Estimator who can't estimate and a Revenue Collector who can't

collect.” I said, “Yeah, that’s pretty much it.” Zell was not very happy. But he got over it. He buckled down. He did the hard work that was needed. He showed leadership. What we did was, which I think may be unique in Georgia history, he convened the conferees of the House and Senate to the Mansion where we wrote the budget. Ninety-five percent of the budget was written before he introduced it in the special session. We had reached agreement on 95 percent of the items. We had at least three meetings. I remember we would meet in the basement of the Mansion. The first meeting, Governor Miller laid out his proposal. The second meeting, we came back and we started to mark it up, make changes, reach agreement. The third one, we came back and finished it up. And then that third product became his budget introduction. So the budget passed in about two weeks of the special session. We passed the budget long before congressional reapportionment was finished in the ’91 special session.

SHORT: Yeah.

EBERSOLE: There are two funny stories that, if I could relate from that process. One was I was at the second session where we were starting to write the budget. I was seated across from Speaker Murphy. And we were going through each department and we would say, “Okay, here’s the Governor’s proposal.” House, Senate would say a little bit. Well, we got the corrections and there was a proposal that Speaker Murphy objected to and the Senate didn’t say much. And so Speaker Murphy said, “Governor Howard, what’s the Senate position on this?” And Lt. Gov. Howard said, “We’re not prepared to take a position at this time.” Well, I’m sitting across from

the Speaker. He stands up (audio gap), throws his pen down, and says something I'm not allowed to repeat on camera, that he'll be blank-blank if the Senate -- the House'll sit there and spill its guts and the Senate won't take a position. Well, that broke the ice and we made a lot more progress after that.

The second story was Governor Miller was determined to cut the fat out of state government, and his position was that the co-op extension. The Cooperative Extension Service had a lot of fat. And he was proposing -- you remember we're asking all agencies to cut their budget by 10 percent -- well, his first proposal to the Legislature was a 42% cut to co-op. I believe, if memory serves me, we compromised with the Legislature at 28%, which was a substantial cut. In his address to the Legislature, he said, that their job is not to advise homeowners about brown spots on azaleas. They had strayed from their mission. So Majority Leader Wayne Garner was one of the conferees and he tells us during the meeting that his co-op extension agent called up and said, "Senator Garner, I've been told that you might cut our budget by 10 percent." To which Wayne replied, "I can assure you for a fact we will not cut your budget by 10 percent." It ended up being 28.

SHORT: Dan, what comes to mind when I mention the word "rebound"?

EBERSOLE: Well, that's a fascinating story because it shows Governor Miller's approach of wanting to continue to make progress in state government even in the worst of times. He was not content to sit back and wait. He was determined to make progress. Unfortunately, the only

way to make progress was to raise some fees. License tag fees, primarily.

A little story about that. We were meeting; Senator Terrell Starr came in and he was the Appropriations Committee Chair at that time. The proposal was to change the fee from a one-time fee of, my recollection was \$35, to an annual fee of \$35. And Terrell came in and said, "Governor Miller, my constituents are upset about having to pay an annual fee." Governor Miller said, "Well, we wanted to make this a prestigious tag. And so we have to pay more." So those were fairly controversial, those fees, but he got most of them through. And we used it to give some pay raises, to fund the Georgia Research Alliance, to do some other things in education. Betsy Weltner was the Arts Council Director at that time, and I believe she deserves the credit for the name, coming up with the name, Rebound, Georgia Rebound.

SHORT: That was the name of his recovery program.

EBERSOLE: Yes. Yes, sir, in the 1992 session.

SHORT: Let's talk for a minute about your legislative priorities. In addition to Hope scholarships and pre-kindergarten, Miller also had some initiatives in the field of justice and taxes, removal of taxes on groceries and that sort of thing.

EBERSOLE: Yeah. Well, Zell was, in my opinion, the best Governor because he changed state government. He improved state government but it was all about making the state better,

improving education. He was an activist Governor. His campaign slogan from 1990 was “The Georgia that Can Be” and that was an extensive document with lots of things he wanted to get done. Remember, I was in the Budget Office in 1991 and 1992. All I was doing was cutting. I was doing bad things. Dr. Wrigley and Keith and Cindy were over in the Governor’s Office doing constructive things. They were passing 40 bills each of the first two years. Former State Senator Frank Albert, a Republican of Augusta, Richmond County, was famous for a quote. Zell was having legislators to the Mansion for breakfast, and Frank said that, said, “Governor Miller doesn’t need a floor leader; he just needs a chef!” We passed 40 out of 41 bills each of the first two years. It was an unbelievable accomplishment.

And then in ’93 and ’94, we got a little bit more focused on passing fewer bills but larger-encompassing bills headed into a reelection campaign. Rick Dent came on as Press Secretary in ’93, and he’s famous for a quote of saying that, in the ’94 session, “Miller passed 11 out of 11 bills, a grand slam.”

One of those was -- in the ’94 session -- was passing a tax cut, and that was a little – a little bit of a risk. It was a \$100 million tax cut for children and seniors. It was an increase in the exemption. I remember Governor Miller calling the leadership in, the afternoon before he was going to announce his tax cut and he said, “I’m having a press conference at 9:00 tomorrow morning. I’m going to announce a \$100 million tax cut. I’m cutting that money out of my revenue estimate.” He said, “Y’all are welcome to join me at that press conference. If you’re there, you’ll get some credit. If not, I’ll take all the credit. Then I’m getting on an airplane and going around the state doing six press conferences. I’m gonna pass this tax cut with or without

your help. What would you like to do?" And guess what? They got on board. I think that's an example of how he was so effective as Governor. He knew how to use the tools that he had, but they were tools that were to benefit the state and its people. During that time, he was enhancing the lottery. And the lottery, the lottery passed as a proposed constitutional amendment in the '91 session. An aside there was I think the tally of House members was off by one. That's how good a job the staff and the floor -- had great floor leaders then. The House floor leaders were Dubose Porter, Thurbert Baker and Jeanette Jamieson, a great team. And I think they nailed down the vote count to within one vote, which is very impressive.

So then in the '92 session, the enabling legislation was passed so that we could get the lottery up and running as quickly as possible. I don't think it's a secret to know that Zell's an impatient person who wants to get as much done in as short a time as possible. So when the lottery passed, we were able to get it going.

Then in the '93 session, we budgeted money in the '93 session in the '94 budget because the lottery got up and running in June of '93, as I recall. So we were ready to get going with the lottery as soon as possible.

Shifting ahead to the campaign, there's a famous quote from Guy Milner's pollster the day or two after the '94 election by saying, "You wouldn't believe how many people we had in a focus group who knew someone on either the Hope Scholarship Program or Pre-Kindergarten." By getting those programs up and running as soon as possible, it was good for the state. You'll never find a more popular program than Hope or Pre-K, but it was also good politics. And I think the fact that Zell in the '94 reelection campaign was able to talk about the accomplishment, how the

lottery worked as he said he would, how it benefited Georgians was instrumental in his reelection.

SHORT: He gave Denmark Groover credit for helping him pass the lottery.

EBERSOLE: Yes. The story I remember from Denmark's speech is that Denmark got up and said, "There are three things a man will do. He will drink, and eventually his stomach will stop that. He will chase women, and eventually he will get too old for that. But he'll never be too old to gamble. And if men are going to gamble, we might as well let the state take advantage of that and help educate our children." And he made a closing argument and asked people to vote for the lottery. It was very instrumental, very influential.

And Denmark and Zell had a very close relationship, very unique. It was very respectful.

Denmark was someone like Culver Kidd who got up in the morning, started writing legislation, ended the day by reading legislation, consummate, very accomplished. And you are very familiar with the term "Grooverized," what he could do if he was not helping you. So they, they worked very closely together, and it's probably something that will be a footnote in history but needs to be recorded.

SHORT: Let's talk for a minute about 1994. Governor Miller, after having promised he would only serve one term, announced that he would, in fact, run again. What were his legislative plans at that point for a new term?

EBERSOLE: Oh, well, this is a long way and, you know, I think there's a certain amount, a point at which I get a little hazy. Well, he wanted to run for reelection because he had unfinished business. The recession of '91 that caused the budget cuts caused him to not be able to do everything he wanted to in his first term. I remember what Hank Huckaby said one time early in about '92, saying, "The reason Zell doesn't want to run for a second term is that he wants to do eight years worth of work in four." Well, we needed eight years to get 12 years worth of work done. One of those delayed priorities was the food exemption. And the food exemption was something Zell taught his students at Young Harris in the '60s, and we didn't have enough money to do the food exemption. Now when the combination of economic growth in the mid-'90s and a well-managed budget; we cut out a lot of fat in the '91 special session, Zell watched the budget like a hawk. He wanted to make sure that we didn't have any waste in state government so that all the new money could go primarily to promote education. He watched the position count like a hawk.

One of the hardest things in the world was to get Zell to agree to adding a state employee. He really had to be convinced that that was a critical position. And it was always doing more with less, or at least the same amount of money.

So then in the '95 session, the General Assembly passed late, late, late in the last day of the session, passed a property tax cut which Attorney General Bowers opined as unconstitutional. Zell vetoed it. And then we quickly developed work on proposing the food exemption. My recollection is that we proposed that in late '95. It got adopted in the '96 session. It was phased

in taking effect, 2% taking effect October 1st of '96, additional 1% October 1st of '97, and the last 1% in October of '98. So he got it done in his term. And that's really an amazing -- I mean, probably something that he doesn't get the credit he deserves for that food exemption. It provides an enormous benefit to low and moderate income working families.

SHORT: I think history shows that he was very successful at working with the Legislature, except for the time that he attempted to change the Georgia flag.

EBERSOLE: Yeah. He was ahead of his time. Shirley used to say that Zell was always six years ahead of his time, and that's, on average, about right. You know, he saw it as a divisive symbol. He wanted a symbol that unified the state. And he proposed that, and that would've been in the '92 session. I remember, he would've proposed that in the '93 session. He proposed it in the fall of '92. It was considered in the '93 session. The Senate passed a version which I think had a referendum attached to it. We didn't have the votes in the House.

One long-time staff member I neglected to mention is Cap Hicks. Cap came in and told me, he said, "I think this'll be the first thing the boss gets beat on."

I remember coming in on one Sunday afternoon after the Senate passed the flag proposal, writing a memo to Zell and faxing it to the Mansion. That was before email. And sending it and saying, "We don't have the votes. We can't pass this. And I think we need to pull the plug." He agreed. He wrote a letter to Bill Lee at House Rules asking Bill not to proceed. And really his first significant defeat. It was just one of those things where he was a leader. He showed leadership,

but he was too far ahead of his time.

SHORT: Looking back over the election of 1994, he had a difficult time not in the primary, but in the general election and that seemed to be the period when the Republican Party in Georgia really began to move forward.

EBERSOLE: You're right. I think you had the suburbanization of the Republican Party in the early '90s. Johnny Isakson was the nominee. Johnny is an outstanding public servant, someone who has served this state admirably and he ran a very good campaign. He focused, one of his advertisements was to stand in front of the now Coverdell Legislative Office Building as an example of waste and excess. But you had a conservative wave in '94. It was a backlash to some of Bill Clinton's proposals. Don Johnson got elected in '92 and got defeated in '94, so you saw the beginnings of rural Democrats vote Republican in state elections, not federal elections. As I mentioned earlier, I think the thing that made the difference was the Hope scholarship and pre-kindergarten. Cobb County, as I recall, and, hopefully, somebody can look this up, but Cobb County I believe went for Zell over Johnny and that was his home county. I attribute some of that to the lottery spending. These are folks who value public education, who saw what Governor Miller did and was doing in education as a good thing; it was good for their kids and they wanted him to be around to make sure that those good things, Hope and Pre-K would continue.

SHORT: Miller will forever be known for the Hope Scholarship Program and the Pre-K Program, but there were other legislative efforts that, for example, Preservation 2000.

EBERSOLE: Yeah. Zell was always environmentalist in the positive sense of the word, and he wanted to make his mark by preserving his goal of 100,000 acres. Preserving 100,000 acres. And he got that done in his first four years and it was a unique program. It involved working with the private sector. Georgia Power, for example, donating conservation easements on thousands of acres. The state, through bonds, purchasing many thousands of acres of land in endangered and sensitive areas.

And then other ways that Joe Tanner took the lead on at that time. Joe Tanner was the Commissioner of DNR. And then Lonice Barrett, who worked very closely with Joe, they put this together. They sought out partnerships. We worked with the Woodruff Foundation, for example, to get their donations. It was a classic public/private partnership that benefited the state. It something Zell should be proud of.

In his second term, he, when he was running for reelection, he campaigned on River Care 2000, a very similar program but focused on rivers like the Altamaha, Ocmulgee, very sensitive areas. And that's continuing. In my current job, I serve on the State Properties Commission and practically every meeting we're preserving land along one of those rivers, and so it's continuing with long stretches of these sensitive areas have been preserved. And that's something that's another, perhaps because the lottery shines so brightly, people don't see the other accomplishments such as Preservation 2000 and River Care. So we should not forget some of

those great accomplishments.

SHORT: Privatization of state property.

EBERSOLE: And privatization of state initiatives, that began I believe in May of 2005, and that's the connection with the transition for Joe Tanner. Joe left DNR, as I recall, to be the Governor's Privatization initiative. I think this was a continuation of Zell not being content to sit at ease, but to try something new.

Zell read this book called *The Death of Common Sense* by Philip K. Howard, and he brought Philip K. Howard in to talk to his department heads to say, you know, "You, you can't just rest on your laurels. You, you can't hide behind rules and regulations and not do the right thing."

And Joe came in to take a top-to-bottom look at better ways to run state government, and he got a lot of interesting and effective alternative delivery approaches in privatization.

And then Lonice Barrett became the DNR Commissioner, and Lonice did a great job as the DNR Commissioner.

And we, upset one or two apple carts through privatization. We looked at all different kinds of ways to do things. Zell's reason to privatize wasn't for the sake of privatization. It was for the sake of running state government more efficiently so he had more money to promote initiatives and education. I think you have to remember that in his '95 inaugural address and his first State of the State and Budget speech in '95, he promised to raise teacher salaries to the national average or to lead. That was a very ambitious goal to achieve.

The goal we did achieve was to lead the Southeast. We, Georgia, by the end of his term, and then it continued, led the Southeast in average teacher salary. That was quite an accomplishment. Now to do that, we had to raise teacher salaries by 6 percent per year. And then when we set that goal out, we knew that was going to require looking at existing parts of state government. And, as I often heard Zell say, "If I'm gonna say yes to this education initiative, I have to say no many times to other good things because we're gonna get teachers to lead the Southeast."

And so privatization was a way to enable that teacher salary goal.

SHORT: Dan, I'd like to talk to you for a minute about another Ebersole who served in the Governor's Office, your wife, Sarah.

EBERSOLE: She, I really think that that's the thing Zell appreciated the most about me was introducing Sarah to him. Shirley used to say that she could always tell when Zell was talking to Sarah because he used a different tone of voice, a lot nicer.

SHORT: Sarah being, ladies and gentlemen, Mrs. Ebersole.

EBERSOLE: Yes, yes. We got married in 1978 and I was on the '78 campaign working at a hundred hours a week perhaps, maybe less. And Sarah was volunteering, and she had a journalism master's degree so she was buying media and she helped Zell save some money on

buying some radio spots. And that really impressed him. And he was impressed with her so he hired her to work in the Lieutenant Governor's Office and, eventually, she became his Press Secretary. And then we had children and she stayed in the Lieutenant Governor's Office until 1988. We had two children. It was a very demanding job. She went to Georgia Tech for two years. When Zell became Governor, he brought her back as his speech writer and they had a very, very close relationship.

One time, I remember walking from the Governor's Office across the street to OPB for some meetings, and Zell was walking down the street reading a speech draft. And he says, "Sarah is so good, she gets inside my head like no one else. She is so good." Looked at me, "You're okay too."

So they, the only funny thing is in the summer of 1994 during the reelection campaign, I was the Acting Chief of Staff and Sarah, ostensibly, reported to me. We all know that she reported directly to the Governor and he drew the organizational chart so that he had direct access to Sarah. We would work on speeches together and she's a great writer. And you'll see that when you read some of the books that Zell has written. He has a great deal of respect and affection and appreciation for the wonderful job that she always did for him.

SHORT: There's another Miller aide that we haven't talked about and that is Bill Burson. You worked with Bill. What was he like?

EBERSOLE: Bill was an interesting character. Bill was always very good to me. When I was

in Senate Research and Bill was the Administrative Director for the Lieutenant Governor's Office, I would work with Bill on matters involving administrative paperwork. And he was always very good to me. I remember talking with him during the 1980 presidential campaign when Jimmy Carter was running for reelection. And in imitable style of Bill Burson, he said, "If Jimmy Carter needs my vote to get reelected, he is out of luck."

SHORT: Well, explain to them why.

EBERSOLE: Well, Jimmy Carter abolished the elected office of State Treasurer – in 1972, putting Bill Burson out of work. And I was not involved. I was a college student at that time, and I don't know all the stories. Bob, you know them. But Bill was a great writer, a man of great passion. There was always a little bit of an edge. You could tell when Burson had written something because it had an edge to it.

SHORT: Yeah.

EBERSOLE: And...

SHORT: Well, he had quite a career, you know. He worked with Governor Talmadge and Senator Talmadge in Washington. He came back to Georgia and worked for Governor Sanders as a speech writer. And then he became Director of Probation. And then, during the Maddox

administration, he was the Director of the Department of Family and Children Services and created quite a controversy with his War on Hunger that some elected officials didn't particularly care for. So he had a great background in government.

EBERSOLE: I do remember Bill Shipp writing a column in late 1979 describing Bill Burson as Zell's "wool hat weapon."

SHORT: Dan, when people who know him speak of Zell Miller, they usually use words like "stubborn," "courageous," "tough." If you could use one word to describe him, what would it be?

EBERSOLE: Leader. Zell was and is a great leader. He's someone who would develop a plan and a policy, a proposal, to fix a problem, to make progress for the state. He knew how to get it done. He knew how to accomplish that. And he would get it done, he would implement it, and then he would go on to the next problem. Leadership is very demanding. There's an element of risk. It's part of that being six years ahead of your time. But he made the state better during his eight years as Governor and 16 years as Lieutenant Governor. He gave his life to improving this state, to making it better, its citizenry better, having more opportunities. When he left office in January of 1999, you could, by many indicators, quantitative and qualitative, you can say, "Georgia is much better." And that is, to me, a successful conclusion to his two terms and as exemplified by his leadership.

SHORT: Did you ever imagine that when the Williams Commission recommended creation of the State Office of Treasury and Fiscal Services that you would someday be its head?

EBERSOLE: No, sir. No, sir. I always thought of myself as a creature of the legislative process, something that just came natural to me, it seemed. I thought I would then, that in the budget, I thought I would also be involved in the budget. Then the opportunity came to work in the Governor's Office. And then, as I told Zell after the 1996 session, I went in to him, just the two of us, and I said, "I love you and I love what I'm doing, but this job is killing me! I can't. I've given you six years as Governor, six sessions. I need to do something else." And he said, "Would you stay one more session?" I said, "Oh, sure, of course." And then as department head vacancies came open, he would say, "Are you interested in this?" And I'd say, "No, not really." Then the Merit System came open and he said, "Are you interested?" And I said, "No." And I said, "Well, let me think about that," because, at that time, the Merit System ran the health insurance plan: 600,000 covered lives. And I thought, "Well, this could be interesting." I'm not a Human Resources person. I've always been a numbers person, a bean counter, as Zell would say. A propeller head, yet. And so I thought about it and so, the end of 2006(sic), the Governor appoints the Merit System Commissioner, and he named me, but not effective until April 16th. So during the '97 session, I was still in the Governor's Office, but I was the presumptive Merit System Commissioner.

So when I got to the Merit System, I started making a lot of changes in the health plan. I was

also, we had, in 1996, Governor Miller had, as of July 1st of '96, Governor Miller had "abolished" the Merit System. What that meant, that is all new hires starting July 1st of '96 were no longer covered by the Merit System rules and regulations. They were exempt. They were non-covered. And so a lot of people said, "That's the end of the Merit System." If you ask any state employee, they can't tell the difference about who's under the Merit System, who's not. So we were implementing a lot of those Williams Commission and also some of Joe Tanner's Privatization Commission recommendations.

Then, in the fall of '97, the incumbent at the Office of Treasury and Fiscal Services was moving on, and I had a chance for this job. And I'm thinking, "Yeah, this is managing money. This is back to what I'm more comfortable with." A former Merit System Commissioner came in as I was leaving to say, "You're doing the right thing. It's a lot easier to manage money than people. Money does what you tell it, unlike people." So this job, as Director, works for the State Depository Board, chaired by the Governor. Governor Miller got the Depository Board to name me as the Director of the Office of Treasury and Fiscal Services, effective December 1st of '97 and I've been there ever since.

If I could tell one little story? When Zell swore me in to this position, my deeply religious parents were there and they heard him say about how loyal I've been to him. And one of the things I'd done for him over the years was to "cuss out a critic," to which my father looked at him kind of like, "What?" I explained later that that's just a generic term for explaining to department heads why they did the wrong thing and correcting them.

So I've been there ever since and it's been an honor and a pleasure to serve the taxpayers in my

32 years as a state employee.

SHORT: Well, you've been very busy. What do you do in your spare time?

EBERSOLE: Read a little. I don't have many hobbies. I remember when I got to OPB in January of 1991 and the long-time employees there were like, "Well, does Governor Miller golf?" "No." "Does he play tennis?" "No." "Well, what does he do?" I said, "He works all the time and so should you." So I've always enjoyed working. I don't have many hobbies. I've outgrown some of my hobbies.

There are two things that I do give credit to Governor Miller for. Developing a love of country music -- traditional country music, not this crap that they call country music today. The George Jones and the Don Williams. And so that's what I love to listen to old, old-timey country music, bluegrass. And Zell, I would not have developed that love without him.

Another thing I did develop on my own but he helped nurture was baseball. All the Miller people were baseball fanatics. And I think that some of it has to do with the nature of the game. You know, it's a strategic game. There's a lot going on. It's a numbers -- baseball fans like to keep statistics. And all the Miller people were baseball fanatics, and I still am. I have season tickets with the Braves. Sarah and I enjoy just sitting there watching, watching Bobby Cox, see what his move is.

SHORT: Well, we've discussed in length the accomplishments of Zell Miller as Governor.

Let's talk about the accomplishments of Dan Ebersole. What do you consider as your major accomplishments in state government?

EBERSOLE: Well, I think I have faithfully and dutifully served the taxpayers without embarrassment. I've done some good things. I've helped Zell Miller do his job as Governor, his job as Lieutenant Governor, providing senators fair and accurate and impartial information.

At the Merit System, we reconfigured the health plan, developed the first PPO, Preferred Provider Organization, which is now the core healthcare offering.

At the Treasury, one of my favorite accomplishments is to have started the Georgia Higher Education Savings Plan. We've now named it the Path to College. I started that and we launched it in April of 2002. We have 106,000 accounts at the moment, \$750 million under management. We're helping Georgia families send their children to college. That is, I feel like that's a spiritual inheritance of Zell Miller. If he had been governor at that time, he would've done it. It's a complement to the Hope Program. It helps Georgia families do something that's really important, and I feel very passionately committed to that and promoting that program.

We run an \$11 billion money market. We started a second bond fund, a short-term bond fund, that we offer to state agencies and local governments that was began in 2000. We started that.

I professionalized my office.

I've done a lot of work with retirement systems. That's what gets me my notoriety. And we have really, I think, improved the professional management of the \$62 billion in funds at the retirement systems. That's what I can do now to help teachers have a safe and secure retirement,

as well as state employees.

I think I've been a custodian of the public purse. It's been an honor. There's never been any allegation of misdoing. My motto has been "dare to be dull" and to keep a low profile and just do the job, do it well, go home, and feel good about it.

SHORT: Have we missed anything?

EBERSOLE: Can I tell the Don Williams story?

SHORT: Yeah.

EBERSOLE: I'm just this kid from Pennsylvania who Zell embraced. He took a chance. We went to Rome and Don Williams, in Rome, did a benefit concert. It was a free concert. And I didn't know anything about country music and that's the first time and the first time I heard *Amanda* was from Don Williams live. And I think that really -- Don Williams got me interested in country music. That was electric.

But this Yankee comes in and we were trying to -- the goal was to get everybody's name and address who attended. And zip codes were fairly new and I was walking around the audience helping people remember their zip code, and I swear I was an embarrassment because I couldn't understand them and they couldn't understand me. I didn't know these little towns around Rome, and it was really hilarious in retrospect that they let me do that.

But that's it. No, one last thing. Zell would, if he thought that you would do a good job, that you were dedicated and you were honest, he'd give you a chance. And 35½ years later, here I am.

SHORT: Well, it's been a pleasure talking with you.

EBERSOLE: Thank you, Bob. The pleasure is all mine. Enjoyed it.

[END OF RECORDING]

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