

**Cathey Steinberg interviewed by Bob Short**  
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BOB SHORT: I'm Bob Short and this is Reflections on Georgia Politics, sponsored by Young Harris College and the Richard B. Russell Library for Research and Studies at the University of Georgia. Our guest today is Cathey Steinberg, longtime member of the Georgia House of Representatives, a state senator, and an advocate. Welcome, Cathey.

CATHEY STEINBERG: Thank you. Glad to be here.

SHORT: Kingston, Pennsylvania.

STEINBERG: Yeah, which is part of Luzerne County. It's northeastern Pennsylvania and it's a small town out of another small town across the river of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. And it gets very cold up there. It's in the snow belt, and it's an old mining town, which I grew up with. And then the mines died out, but it was a whole different environment. And so, of course, like many of us, we couldn't wait to move out. Should I look at you or him? Oh, okay. Anyhow, you know, we just couldn't wait to move out of there.

And then in '77, '78 – no, before I ran it was – I don't know if it was before I ran -- there was a

terrible, terrible flood in Pennsylvania, and everything dumped into the Susquehanna River. At that point, the worst flood in the history of the United States. And it was so bad that cemetery stones came up and everything landed in our back yard, among others. And so, the whole town had to be rebuilt. At that point, my parents sold their house to my first cousin, who was about my age and had three kids, and their house went completely under. They were in like a valley. And then decided to move to Atlanta. I was shocked that they came, because they had to get out. We had just decided – my former husband and I – to stay in Atlanta. Him being from Pittsburgh and me being from Wilkes-Barre, we liked the climate.

I was much more concerned about moving south, I have to admit, and because I think I'm a Yankee at heart – or I was. I'm much better at being Southern now, but a big change. And we moved in the sixties, and Atlanta was not what Atlanta is now, even when I came. And Buford Highway was two lanes. I think the only ethnic restaurant besides fried chicken they had was this one Chinese restaurant on Buford Highway. We were just talking about it the other day. It was like one room, and eventually it moved, I think, to Piedmont. But it went out of business. And, you know, I'm from a small town in Pennsylvania, but we went to Philadelphia, we went to New York, and I just could not get over Atlanta. I couldn't. It's very sad. And I remember – I know you may not believe me – but listening to the radio on the way down we heard hog calls and stuff on some of the stations. And I'm like, "Oh my God, who am I? What am I doing here?"

But we went. And my former husband, he was a medical resident here in cardiology, and what

happened is he was in Philadelphia doing an internship. He got drafted -- as doctors did, because this was during Vietnam. I know, ages me. And so, he came in as a captain, and we went to New England. And I loved it, because we skied. We had a nice house, which we didn't have. But he was terrified for two years that he would be drafted. And he wasn't, but we got to know New England really well, and they would have built an office for him to stay up that way. They really would have.

And then we went back to Philadelphia. We did a lot of traveling around. And there was a reason I was going to say it, and I forget it already. Well, anyhow, we went up there and then came back to Philadelphia and then came to Atlanta to do the fellowship. So, he was down here at Emory, and he wanted to come because a doctor named Willis Hurst had just written a very well-known book called *The Heart*. And that's how he made the decision. And so, we were here. After one year he loved it, because it was warm. Yeah.

SHORT: I was going to ask you the question of whether or not you came to Atlanta for business, career, or weather. STEINBERG: Right, well, it was a combination of -- as it was in those days -- his career, his business, and his appreciation of the weather. And I understand, because as a cardiologist in those days he had to go out a lot at night. Today, they find somebody else to do it. But it wasn't for me. I mean, you know, in those days you go wherever your husband goes. And so, I cried for about five years, and then I did some work in adoption and things like that. But on a fluke, a friend of mine -- who doesn't live here now -- recruited me to run for the Legislature against George Petro. And I said to her, "I can't run. I have no experience, and who's going to carpool my kids?" I mean, that was just the bottom line. And I thought she was

– you know, what’s she talking about? So after, coincidentally, I had a car. This is an unimportant story that’s significant in my life.

SHORT: This is the station wagon story.STEINBERG: Have you heard me? How do you know all this?

SHORT: You told me.STEINBERG: Really?

SHORT: Yeah.STEINBERG: Boy, you're good. Anyhow, yes, I had a station wagon that I couldn't get any two appliances to work without it going dead for about a year. I mean, you have to carpool. It's very hard, all that stuff. So finally I got myself a new station wagon, and I think within the first week – I was doing some part time work in international adoption. I was coming back through corporate square and a woman ran a stop sign and slammed into me. And fortunately I wasn't hurt and the kids weren't in the car. But all I could think of was, “Oh my God, how am I going to carpool my kids? Oh my God, I got this new car. How am I going to carpool the kids?” And I went into the phone booth to get the babysitter to stay, and I'm like, “Oh my God, how am I going to carpool the kids?” And then I sat there – and I really mean it – and I said to myself – God tells me through this accident that I love my kids, but I need to do something else besides carpool. And, of course, I didn't know it then, but God was a she. And we didn't know that in those days, but obviously she was. So, I came home and I said to my husband and kids – who are all sitting there waiting for dinner – and I said, “Thank God nobody was hurt. But I was in a pretty bad accident with my new car, and by the way, I'm going to run for the Legislature.” In one sentence. Of course, my kids didn't know what that was, and my husband was looking at my like, “Well, where's dinner?” I mean, they didn't know what to say.

And I didn't know anything about it. You know, my friend, who was recruiting me, I said, "Paula, I can't do this." And she said, "Oh, it's just forty days a year and seven thousand dollars. That's all." And I'm like, "Oh, seven thousand dollars, that sounds like a lot." This was in 1976. And forty days? I can do that. Well, as we all found out, it stayed seven thousand for several years and it became increasingly more than forty days. I didn't know a thing. And I admitted ten years after I got elected that I had never been in the state Capitol before I signed up. So, ignorance is bliss. What do I know, you know? I figure this will be fun. You know, I was so restless and bored. And so, I ran in house district 46 in the house, and it started pretty much down right where DeKalb and Fulton connect off of Lenox Road – up Buford Highway, I take that back. And I was in the same apartment complex as the guy I ran against, who had warrants – or whatever they call them – on his door telling him if he didn't pay up, he'd be out. But anyhow, it went up to Ashwood and Dunwoody -- Ashwood Park, which is on the edge of the Dunwoody area and very Republican at the time. But I worked very hard and I walked to every house. And then I had two other people in the primary, and then my friendly volunteers. None of them who knew anything, but who knew how to talk on the phone. They would call the people I met, and I would call the people I didn't get to meet. And we had little index cards and we knew everything about everybody we met. And so, believe it or not, we won the primary, and in Georgia it has to be over fifty percent without a runoff. And then people began to say, "Who's this Cathey Steinberg?" I mean, they're like, "Where did she come from?" But by virtue of doing that kind of campaign I really got to know the district well, particularly the Democrats. But I went to key Republicans that I was told, you know, were key leaders. And by

the end of my ten years there – well, it was longer than that. But anyhow, that Republican district was voting for me more than some of the other districts. So, I was very happy about that.

SHORT: So, you get to the Capitol in 1977.

STEINBERG: Right.

SHORT: When the House of Representatives was overwhelmingly male.

STEINBERG: Right.

SHORT: White, and mostly rural.

STEINBERG: Right.

SHORT: What was your first reaction?

STEINBERG: Oh my God, who am I and what am I doing here? But what I learned later is that people – if you act smart and you're a Yankee, Democrat, Jewish – they think you're smart. I mean, you don't have to know a thing, but you know, they think you're smart. And I found that out over the years. One of our nice rural guys said to me about eight years after I was in there, "How are you Jewish people all so smart?" Honest to God. But I gave him a serious answer. He was a guy whose father was in the legislature, and none of them would talk to me. They were scared. And then a lot of them would come up and they'd look at me and they'd say, "Do you know Bella Abzug?" She was an old feminist that probably a lot of people don't know now. She was really a New York congressman, a big hat. And they assumed that because I was in the legislature I therefore knew every Jewish woman of any note in the whole world. And they would kind of look at me, and I always felt they were looking to see if I had any horns or if I was

Gloria Steinem. And very shortly after I came in they were calling me Cathey Steinem – and not necessarily on purpose. But Gloria Steinem was the big woman then, and that’s what they called me. And there were a handful of legislators that would never vote with me no matter what. If I voted and said today is Tuesday, they’d vote no; just enormous distrust. And then I also sat through our preacher of the day every day. And Sidney Marcus -- may he rest in peace -- and I sort of had a pact. And we would go up to the preacher, and if he didn’t pray ‘In Jesus’ name’ or too much of that, we would say, “Thank you for your consideration.” They didn’t know what we were talking about. Or we would go up and say, “We enjoyed your sermon, but by the way, we’re Jewish.” And we just did that as a matter of trying to do something. But there were several years that I was the only Jewish person at the time. And Sidney died, Mike Nichols left, and the guy from Columbus – I forget – he moved; so there were several years that I was the only Jewish person. I didn’t realize it, because I grew up in a small town and I went to a Methodist school, and it wasn’t ‘clikey-like’ Jewish like some of the bigger cities. So, I was like, you know, what is going on here? And, you know, the preacher would say something to me and everybody would look at me. I mean, it was like, “It’s ok. It’s ok.” It was funny. It was an education for all of us – for me and for them.

SHORT: How many times were you called ‘little lady’ or ‘honey’ or ‘girl?’

STEINBERG: Yeah, I’m still called that.

SHORT: Before you got the attention of your colleagues?

STEINBERG: Well, I was called that a lot and it used to bother me, because that’s not where I came from. But then I realized it’s the culture. And the other thing that happened is someone

whom you know said to me one day, “You know, Cathey, it might help you if you were a bit friendlier, because they’re sort of unsure of you. And if Henry Reeves comes over and says ‘hi, miss Cathey,’ you need to be nice to him.” I said, “Oh.” Because I was raised where you don’t talk to people you don’t know well. And I said to her, “Why would he want to talk to me?” I mean, you know, that’s how I was raised. Don’t talk to strangers, and you don’t go patting people on the back. And so, I had to learn to let that roll off and then enjoy it. And I did. It made me, I think, a friendlier and nicer person. I’d say that, and when I would have people down to help me I would warn them; because I know that most people I know are not used to that at all. And that was a real learning curve. As I became nicer – friendlier is a better word – they became friendlier, and they began to trust me more, I think. So, it’s a two-way street. It’s not like, “Who the hell is she?” And I wasn’t a “Who are they?” kind of thing.

SHORT: Tom Murphy.

STEINBERG: Tom Murphy. Well, you know, Tom Murphy would come walking in with his cowboy hat and his cowboy boots and cigar hanging out of his mouth. You know, tall, and in those days spitting tobacco. We used to do that. The first two days we were there and they were calling roll, I had no idea. They were like, ‘dadada’ and they were like, ‘dadada,’ like an auctioneer. I’m like, “What did he say?” And I talk fast. “What did he say?” He just pushed this button. I mean, they were all pushing buttons and I’m still trying to figure out what he said. So, it took me a while to kind of get the flow – and not that I didn’t talk funny to them. But I just had no idea what was going on. And it took us – I don’t know – I’d say three or four years at least to kind of connect, because one of the first bills I did -- the second year there – I and several

others, but I kind of became the key leader – was this anti-rape legislation. There shall be no conviction unless there's – well, bottom line is there shall be no conviction unless there's a witness in rape. We were the last state in the country not to repeal it. And you can't count on a witness, you know, for rape. It's usually not done. Well, Murphy hated it, hated it, hated it. Over the years it had come up several times. But we did a big campaign and the media got behind us and everything like that. And I managed to get it on the floor when Randy – big, heavy guy from middle Georgia?

SHORT: Karrh.

STEINBERG: Yeah, when he was out – and he almost died. So, we had to get a bunch of people not to come to the Judiciary Committee. And we got a lot of press, and Mr. Speaker was not a happy camper. But we won. I mean, we passed the bill. It had already passed the Senate, and he was, you know, like this. But after that, you know, that sort of passed over. He said, "You know, we have to live with them. I might as well." But I think before that even I found out that there was no ladies' room as I walked into the men's room. It says 'Member's only' right off the anteroom of the thing. I opened the door and there's everybody standing and having fun and conversation. I'm like, "What am I doing?" But I came back and was just, "Where's the ladies' room?" "Down the hall." So, we had none, and it was a big, big to-do. Oh, we had Fran Hesser, who was a reporter, took a picture of us standing in line in the public ladies' room behind all these kids and people saying – anti-ERA people and all that. We kept telling the speaker, and then every time I had to go to the restroom I ran up front and said, "Mr. Murphy, I've got to go to use the restroom." "Go use mine." And you know, that went on long enough. Finally he

said, “Ok, get the ladies of the house out to the anteroom.” And he says, “Stop pestering me. I’m giving you a restroom.” So they divided it. They had one restroom and one toilet and one sink. Well, that was the most important thing I did in about the course of two or three years – getting that ladies’ restroom. And I heard they now have two, I don’t know. But that was symbolic, because I knew we were here to stay, and he kind of knew that. And when he would get angry at me, which was not uncommon, he would say out loud one time, “If you’re not careful, I’ll take away your ladies’ room.” But we just smiled.

SHORT: How did he treat you in the way of committee assignments?

STEINBERG: Well, after the passage of the rape bill, I wanted to get on the Judiciary Committee. I was not a lawyer, but you know, I was concerned about women’s issues and divorce and families. And I wanted to get on the judiciary committee, which I tried to do for at least ten years. Other people – Betty Jo Williams, people like that – they just got right on. Not me, not me, not me. Finally, after about ten years I got on the Judiciary Committee and the Rules Committee. I must have done something right that year, but it took a long time. Meanwhile, everybody that came in with me was either a chair of something or on these committees. So, in those days you kind of paid a price. That’s the way things were done then. And I think also, you know, he didn’t trust me. And I can’t imagine why, but he just didn’t. When I came down to Augusta -- in those days when the Forestry Commission had their retreat – maybe they still have it, I don’t know – we decided just to come. There were no women even invited. Well, they were invited, but no women ever came. And so, a couple of us came. The first thing the speaker said to me is, “Well, did you bring the media? Did you bring the TV

cameras?” Like, she’s trouble, she’s trouble. And we didn’t. And you know, we had a good time. So, it was a concern of a lack of trust. I did get a lot of media coverage. I was unique in those days. I mean, somebody actually came over and took a picture of my family having breakfast. You know, it was unique at that time. And, of course, we never had breakfast, so I had to pretend. But that was so unique, being a woman with kids. Eleanor Richardson came in and she was much older – oh, she was probably what I was then – but she didn’t have any children at home. And Betty Clark, you know, the standard family was not -- oh, and Grace Hamilton -- was sort of unique. And I still remember, because I made my kids all get ready and we all sat at the table and I had plates. And then, when I look back after they put it in the paper, we had nothing on them – no food. You know, my family fended for themselves. But anyhow, and then the other exciting thing to me in the beginning was going to the breakfasts. As a woman, I never went out for breakfast. I was home with my kids. And of course, it required a lot of organizing in my life. And I realized that it’s men’s timing. And then I got tired of it after a while. But anyhow, when I left the House in ’88 to go to the Senate – no, I left the House to run for the public service commission. When I spoke to everybody and said, “You know, I really learned a lot. It wasn’t just me who was right, by any means. I learned that most of the people here, they’re Georgians, and I’m a visitor in a way or a guest. New.” And I really felt that I learned a lot. And I hope that they learned something. So, I was appreciative by the time I left the house.

SHORT: Let’s get back to your early years in the House. To whom did you look for guidance and counseling?

STEINBERG: Sidney Marcus most of the time, because he sort of looked after me. He's sort of that kind of guy. For people that aren't aware, he passed away at a very young age – fifty-five, I think he was – from cancer – the year after he was running for mayor of Atlanta. And it was just horrible, because he was so young. But I went to a couple parties – that's not all I did, by the way – that no women had ever gone to. And he went with me. I don't think he'd ever gone either, but he went with me. He really was like a big brother. And, in terms of women, there were no role models. When I finally decided to run – I think back to what I was thinking. I said, "If Marlo Thomas and Gloria Steinem" – wait, was it Marlo Thomas and somebody else? It wasn't, it was Marlo Thomas and somebody else – could run for public office, why can't I? That's all I knew. We didn't have role models of any significance when I came in. And it still fascinates me how much things have changed. I don't think they had any women in the U.S. Senate at the time. And, you know, the women's movement really kicked off in the '60s; Betty Friedan's book and all that. I was very much an admirer of Virginia Sheppard. She did a lot on adoption, which was what I worked in.

SHORT: This was a state senator.

STEINBERG: Yeah, a state senator and the only woman, I think, in that time in the state senate. And so, I thought she was really special. But in terms of women in the legislature, I really didn't have any role models. I mean, I liked Grace Hamilton a lot. I had a lot of respect for her. But there wasn't really anybody that I would go to and say, "Help me do this the right way." I learned the hard way.

SHORT: You mentioned working on the rape bill. Let's talk about some of the other women's

issues that you spear-headed.

STEINBERG: Yeah, well...

SHORT: You were really the spokesman for the female movement –

STEINBERG: Yeah.

SHORT: In the state of Georgia.

STEINBERG: Yeah, it was a different climate when I came in. I mean, most people kind of only went so far and then they backed off. The anti-rape bill put me on the map, and then I sponsored the Equal Rights Amendment, which had been around long before me. But I got about seventeen legislators and that started it, because they didn't know me well then. And of course, all of a sudden I became the ERA lady and I'm this raving liberal and I'm like, "Who are they talking about?" I'm driving the station wagon with two little kids married to a doctor. I didn't know what they were taking about, but I figured I might as well play it up. And Jimmy Carter got elected the year I got elected, you know, and they were very pro-ERA, but they were panicked about it being in Georgia when he was about to run for reelection. I don't think I ever lived that down, not that, never. For years and years people would say, "There's the ERA lady." And I would say to some of the press, "Do you know anything else about me?" You know, or the Yankee ERA lady – and oh, just unbelievable. But it wasn't easy. But also one of the things we tried to do during this period of time is to work with legislators with a certain style. We tried to train people, because they were used to then a lot of aggressive, scary kind of women. And we made it in our mind that we were going to try to 'behave,' quote 'behave.' But it did work. Of course, we didn't pass the Equal Rights Amendment, but I think there was some guilt. And

therefore, we had a bunch of stuff pass after that. Domestic violence legislation – there was a huge divorce bill that actually the courts struck down when they had it. We got that passed. I mean, it was really ninety percent easier to get things passed. And I think they were trying to make up for it. And I remember Larry Walker taking the floor several years later for the education bill for Governor Joe Frank Harris. I remember him saying, “I want you all to pass this education bill. I don’t want to look back like I did when the ERA vote came up. I don’t want my children to ask me, ‘Daddy, why didn’t you vote for the Equal Rights Amendment?’” I almost passed out. I wasn’t in the legislature at the time, so I was glad to know at least people cared about it. But it was an organizing tool, that’s what I told people. It organized the women from across the state, many of whom I’m still connected with in some ways. And then gave us the strategy to move on. The Georgia Women’s Political Caucus really became organized, and things fell into place even without the Equal Rights Amendment. Actually, it was George Busbee’s last year, and he got Roy Lambert to be the second signer, and we got a whole bunch of people, but we couldn’t pass it because Joe Frank was running.

SHORT: As I recall, the amendment needs ratification by only three states.

STEINBERG: Right.

SHORT: At the present time. Do you think it’ll ever pass in Georgia?

STEINBERG: Debatable. I don’t know what or if it will ever or when it will come up, because by the time it comes up, I assume it’s going to come up like it’s nothing like some of the others. We had a bill that said the husband is the head of the household, and -- it basically said women have no rights, no access to property. It’s a great few lines, but I can’t remember. Finally, it

took several years and finally it passed. And it was just like another day. We had drummed it in and finally they said pass and that was it. And I think if the Equal Rights Amendment still comes around and they do it, it'll be like that. It will be "Why did we oppose it?"

SHORT: Hmm-mm.

STEINBERG: Although, when we were trying to get it out, I think a lot of people felt that they had committed to their districts that they wouldn't vote for it. I had several people say to me, "I really wish I could help you, but I can't." And a lot of the things they predicted will have come true – women in the military, coed bathrooms. This is what we heard all the time. And they've come true and nobody's the worst for it; for the reasons of the Equal Rights Amendment and many other reasons. So, I think if it does pass, I think people won't pay much attention, even though Georgia's one of those states that hates the federal government. And that's still pretty strong. They don't mind taking the money if it helps the budget, but they don't want the federal government to have anything to do with us.

SHORT: It's the old states' rights approach.

STEINBERG: Absolutely. And I didn't know that much about that. Of course, when I came down here I knew a little bit, but not how much it impacted people. And my being a Yankee and trying to pass the Equal Rights Amendment, I didn't understand a lot of it until we were kind of done with it. So, it was a real educational tool. That was the main thing they didn't like. They used it as a political wedge. But what do I know, you know? They didn't have kindergartens. I thought it was a civil right to have kindergartens where I came from. And so, there're a lot of assumptions that I made, but there're also a lot of assumptions they made about me. But

somebody just said – I can't remember who – when this snow last week, I can't remember – somebody said to me – but this reminds me of when you were in the legislature and they had a snow day. And somebody got a hold of my Equal Rights Amendment bill and tried to kill it in the Judiciary Committee, because I wasn't there. But the state patrol picked me up and I came flying in and caught them in the middle. It was Rudy Johnson and he went, "Ahhhh." You know, I caught him. But since then, I've learned always to be careful. And it was somebody that out of the blue remembered that just last week. So, obviously, it made an impact. I did a lot of family stuff too, like child uniforms, the child custody bill, which actually was requested by Phyllis Kravitz, who was a judge in Savannah. She's now federal. And she asked me to do that through Tom Taggart. So that was exciting, because she's so well-respected and it's a bill that has to get passed in every state. And so, he helped me with it and we got it passed. And we did a lot of family -- well, the moving hte head of the household was huge. And so, we just, you know, did a lot with domestic violence. You'll remember this – it may not seem like a big deal, but everything was a 'he.' You know, I remember Roy Lambert, "Ok, gentlemen." And I loved him. "Ok, gentlemen, you have to listen to me." I'm like, "What?" You know, they're not life and death, but it's a culture. And I think not too long after that – and I think Tom Murphy was involved in that – they degendered the language. And it would be either he or she or they or the legislators, and for the most part it changed, pretty much.

SHORT: Do you remember what Speaker Murphy said about the Equal Rights Amendment?

STEINBERG: About being...

SHORT: That no one from his district had written a letter except one lady...

STEINBERG: Well...

SHORT: And she moved out?

STEINBERG: No, but I also remember, "I don't want to bring women down from the pedestal that they're on." I remember stuff like that. However, when his daughter, Mary, you know, his little baby – when she began to teach school in Gwinnett County, she had so many kids who were getting pregnant and so many problems and everything. And you know, he adored her and she really sensitized him to life with real women, and he became much more open-minded as a result of Mary. And also, I think, his two other daughters both got divorced and dumped on. And they became sort of allies of us. They never were before, so it made it just easier if his daughters could get to him. And he became more open-minded.

SHORT: So, after twelve years of being the ERA lady and the Yankee person you decided to run for the public service commissioner.

STEINBERG: Right.

SHORT: What prompted that decision?

STEINBERG: Well, I kind of wanted to move on, because the last thing that happened to me in the House is the governor created a zoning commission. Before I left the house I sponsored a bill that created zoning laws for DeKalb, Fulton, and Atlanta. It was a – what do they call it? – local legislation, which we don't do anymore. And I was very lucky, because the big developers went out for lunch and they went, "Hey there, Steinberg." Well, we passed it when they were out to lunch; so funny. They hated it. And it went to the Senate and Roy Barnes got up for me and passed it. The only one. And when it went to the Supreme Court it was challenged by

Willis – was that his last name? – Willis Hurt. When they ruled on it in our favor, they named it the Steinberg bill. And so I thought, it's a big committee, but I should be entitled to get on that committee. No. But she's too much trouble – no. And I mean, they were going into the governor's house, then Governor Joe Frank Harris, and I shouldn't have done it, but I just slammed my door. I said, "You know, I can't do anything right." Slam the door, and I said to myself, "I do much better with the people than I do in this legislature." I can't move anywhere. And so, there was an open seat. Oh I know. That was the year I did the computerized telephone bill, and I got more calls and media coverage on that bill. It's a bill that would make it illegal for computerized telephone calls in Georgia, which was a major problem for us, because we have the largest toll-free telephone district in the state and, I think, in many places in the country. So, I got very well-known for that and I decided, "I think I'll run for public service commission." It will keep me off the Equal Rights Amendment and off whatever, and let me focus on some other issues that I could do. And I ended up running against Bobby Rowan, whether he talked about it, I don't know. It was an experience. I can't believe I even did it. I look back, but it was time for me to move on. And I did – considering – very well. I was in a runoff with Bobby Rowan, and then I remember a friend of mine looked – and she knows South Georgia better than I do – and she said, "Oh, there's a runoff there, runoff there, runoff there, runoff there, runoff there, runoff -- and there's you." Nobody else had a runoff. And she said, "You can't win the runoff, because they're all down here with the sheriffs and all that." But you know, I wanted to come down and do a debate with Bobby Rowan in Albany. I won Albany, believe it or not. And he wouldn't do it with me. But to make a long story

Short, it was such a vicious campaign, in the sense that he brought this guy in from Augusta. He used to be in Georgia, I think, and another state -- you'll know his name in a second -- with Georgia power and their state -- whatever that was called -- Alabama. And ran the dirtiest campaign against me; all about my being Jewish and about being a Yankee and everything you could think of.

SHORT: And the ERA lady?

STEINBERG: And the ERA lady, and how I went to college in New York -- Carnegie-Mellon University in New York, which happens to be in Pittsburgh. And it was vicious. And there was a reporter who went into Georgia Power. I don't know whether he went under a different name or what, and he got a lot of information about what was going on. They were not allowed to give to candidates, Georgia Power. But he got a lot of stories on a lot of people in Georgia Power. But they told him -- the press then -- that they couldn't release the story until the election. It was like a really close to the election. The other thing is that -- what's his name -- Barr. Bob Barr. He was district attorney? Was he ever...?

SHORT: Federal attorney.

STEINBERG: Federal attorney. He would not let him -- that's what it was -- he would not let them release it. He had some kind of say-so about the stuff he had -- the reporter -- until after the election. That's how it was. And when it came out, which was, I think, the day of the election being over, it was horrible. So, what they did -- Mike Bowers, 'Mr. Good Guy,' of course, gave them a slap on the hand. Other people might have gone to jail. And they were able to make some kind of agreement with Mike Bowers, and they sent what's his name back to Alabama and

they paid a fine and they were done. And I mean, all this was done behind closed doors. I didn't know anything. I knew what they had done, but I had no idea they were negotiating a deal. And what really bothered me was, you know, Mike Bowers ran on a white horse. I'm Mr. Good Guy. And we had a good relationship. Rose did some stuff for him. But they all had agendas, including Bob Barr. Little did we know, but they all had agendas. And so, I think, you know, I really got dumped on there. But it didn't surprise me.

SHORT: That's ethics.

STEINBERG: Yes, and it was considered one of the dirtiest campaigns ever for people that knew. I mean, even Dick Williams wrote an apologetic sort of column about using my Jewishness and blah blah blah. So, that was an interesting experience. And of course, Bobby Rowan became very difficult on the commission, which I loved. And they all kept coming to me, "Won't you run now? Won't you run now?" I said, "Hell, no." So, I thought that would be something I could manage, even though it was state-wide. I don't know what I was thinking. But I did well in a lot of areas that maybe I wouldn't have expected. I thought it was a miracle. And that's how that happened. And then I stayed out a term, and I had a business. It's called Ahead of the Curve, and it was not a lobbying business, but it was an educational advocacy business, which was very successful. We didn't get rich, but it was successful. And then Pierre Howard decided to run for governor -- lieutenant governor -- so his senate seat became vacant. That was my Senate seat, which he'd had for sixteen years. So, of course, I couldn't turn it down. And Mary Margaret and I discussed it, and I went and ran in that seat, and she ran in, I guess, my old House seat and all that. And I loved it. I mean, it was such an easy district and I

loved it. But then we did redistricting and that was very political, not only in terms of race, but in terms of women and blah blah and all that kind of stuff. And I was on the Appropriations Committee and I went through all that stuff and tried to be fair to people like Sanford Bishop. I said, "Sanford, are you running?" "No, no, I'm just, you know, blah blah." So I gave up. I mean, I didn't fight for some things, because I wanted to be fair. Not be fair, that doesn't work in politics. And so, they all ran and won and everybody asked me to run, because we needed more women running. And so, my district was vacant, so to speak, but it was predominantly Republican. And so, I left the senate and I ran for Congress against John Linder. I don't even know if I had the primary. Whoever it was, it was insignificant. Oh no, it was not insignificant. Bob Wilson, district attorney – how could I forget -- of DeKalb County – big, big, big. Ran against me, and everybody thought for sure he would win; he's old-line DeKalb district attorney. And there's me, you know, crazy ERA lady. But I swamped him. Killed him. I didn't kill him, but I could have; because he also gave out such stuff you wouldn't believe. But he was done. I mean, he was done. And then I ran against John Linder. And it was really hard for me for several reasons, aside from John Linder. But it was really a majority Republican – borderline, but majority – but a lot of Republican issues. It went up into Gwinnett and Duluth and all those places, which now are much more balanced. You know, people keep moving up. And so, after that, though I loved my two years in the Senate – let me step back in that, which was really an experience; because you could kind of move into more leadership than you could in the house, because it was so big. And Pierre – and I love you dearly Pierre, if you ever see this – promised me a chairmanship, which, of course, he didn't give *me*, because I think the guy from

Milledgeville –

SHORT: Culver Kidd.

STEINBERG: “What you doing giving her the chairmanship? What you doing, Pierre, giving her a chairmanship?” Of course, he backed out, and Culver Kidd subsequently died. But anyhow, and then also when I had the telephone bill. I think he’s the one that took it and hid it in his drawer. And Zell, who I always thought was a good friend of mine. Over the years, you know, he changed a little bit. And he was one of my favorite people when I came in, because he was sort of moderate to liberal, you know, with the unions and all that. But the year I did the bill with the telephones he adjourned signing time that night about five minutes early to keep my bill off the floor. So, I don’t know who was behind him. I never did find out. But I was talking to Roy Barnes, and all of a sudden signing died and we all went, “What?” And they even had a picture of me and Roy in some of the papers, we were so stunned. But he did do that. And I know you can’t imagine, but he did do that. But I had a good time that year, and it was hard for me to give it up. But I needed to move on. And I was divorced and I needed to try to earn some money and, you know, just have another life.

SHORT: So, what happened after the Congressional race?

STEINBERG: The Congressional race? Well, after the Congressional race – hmm. We had our business, and then Roy became governor. Was he the next one?

SHORT: Hmm-mm.

STEINBERG: Yeah, he was after Joe Frank, correct?

SHORT: Hmm-mm.

STEINBERG: So, he became governor. And a year after he got elected – and I gave him a lot of credit – he appointed me to be the consumer’s insurance advocate for the state. And you know, I was amazed, because nobody ever had had the nerve to appoint me to anything. And it was probably poor Bobby Kahn who did it. Even though everybody picks on him, I’m pretty loyal to him. And so I said to Roy, “How can I do this? I know nothing about insurance.”

“You’ll learn, you’ll learn. John Bevis, who works in this law firm, is going to be your deputy. I hope you don’t mind.” And of course, he was wonderful. And that was my favorite job. I loved it. And I did not expect him to lose. So, I had the chance to be involved with the legislature. Be involved with public policy. And believe me, they needed it. And to actually earn money and not have to run. But then, it was three years I had the job, and I remember we were hiring somebody in the last year and this woman said to me, “What will I do if Roy loses?” I said, “He won’t lose, don’t be ridiculous.” And she hasn’t talked to me since. So that was like sort of an extension. It was a lot of fun. You know, it was a good fit for me. And then he lost, and then I left immediately. I mean, Oxendine hated my being there. And oh, and then Perdue, who I got along with very well in the Senate -- you know, he was real friendly to me the first week – then they must have said don’t be friendly with her. He never talked to me since. And I eventually got dumped by Hank – what’s his name? The budget guy who used to be with George Busbee and everybody, but he left? He was working with Perdue at the time. You would know in a minute, but anyway –

SHORT: Hank Huckabee.

STEINBERG: Yeah, and he said, “Cathey, I’m sorry to tell you this.” He felt so bad for me.

And I never could get in to see Perdue. I didn't ask for an appointment, but I thought it would be courteous. Could never get into see him to this day. I don't know if I took a year off or not. And I ended up working for the Juvenile Justice Fund, which is pretty big. I mean, it deals mainly with runaway girls. And I forget the right term. These were young girls who were raped or whatever, and we had a home. The Juvenile Justice Fund had one of the only homes in the state for about twelve kids – Angela's House. I don't know why I did it, because I don't like to be a manager and it was too managerial for me.

But I know what happened. I took a fair amount of time off. My father died and all this kind of stuff, and I was hesitant to go back into something. I'd been out such a long time. But I made a big mistake, because I had eight years for health insurance, which I still have. And I just needed ten years to get a pension. I get a pension – it's four hundred and some dollars a month – I don't want anybody to think that I'm taking advantage of the state. But to be honest, if I would have been in a few more years – being that I was working at a high salary – I would have had something to fall back on.

And so, I worked for the Juvenile Justice Fund for a while, and we mutually agreed to part. And you know, like I said, my father died and all this. My mother had died, all this kind of stuff.

And so, my husband, whose older than I am and retired, we began to travel. We always traveled, but we *traveled*. And we've done a lot of that. I mean, almost around the world completely. So we've just taken advantage of that. And I was doing some consulting. I still, occasionally, would do that. But I kind of learned how to booey tires – I'm not too bad, you know. And I love

doing things like this, but not having a daily commitment. I would never work full time again, hopefully.

SHORT: Let me ask you a question about reapportionment. It seems that every time that Georgia reapportions its Legislative and Congressional districts, the outcome is a result of whoever happens to be in office at the time. Do you think there's a fair way to reapportion our state?

STEINBERG: Well, I'd like to think it's fair to do it by non-legislators, but I don't know what is fair. Truthfully, I don't know if anything can be fair in politics. It's like the Justice Department, you know, every bill -- every law -- having to do with race -- elections and race -- have to go through there. I don't know, I think they still do to get approved. Well, you know, when you have Republicans, they don't care. They'll either approve it or not approve it based on their political whims. And the same thing with Democrats based on their whims. I'm not being critical, but you just can't get politics out of politics very well. Whether or not they would actually do it by a committee, like at the University of Georgia or something -- it's an interesting concept. But I don't know. I don't know whether it will ever happen.

Something has to happen, because my district was done mainly for the Republicans. It wasn't done for me. Because I just decided, you know, I don't know, there were too many black areas that would have been affected if I would have made a big fuss. Not that anybody would care. They certainly in those states they didn't care about women. And I was in for -- what? --

two reapportionments, and I can see the complexion change. You know, a significant number of African-Americans got elected. And then Republicans, I mean, look – they didn't all get elected. They got elected basically to start with on the districts. I mean, you know, they put everybody in one district to give them a Republican district. So, the Republicans won't go in any other districts. So, those people will be there forever. Although it changes. When I came in, my House district was represented by Republicans. And aside from Jimmy Carter coming in, which gave me that little edge, they keep moving north. And when I was running for Congress, I'd be in Tucker; I'd see all these people that were from my district. They keep moving north, and I'm seeing that from Gwinnett and Lawrenceville and Duluth and those places; they're all moving. I don't know where they're going exactly, but it's much more Democratic than it was when I ran for the congress. So, they do move and you have a better chance. But you know, I don't know. I don't know what the solution is, but it's certainly just very political. You know, very political. And it's not a very objective way at all.

SHORT: In our case, the courts usually wind up with the –

STEINBERG: Right.

SHORT: With the final plan.

STEINBERG: Right. But you know, the final plan will often have – just like now, I mean, we have a bunch of districts that were pretty solidly Republican. A bunch of districts pretty solidly black. And then there were those of us in the city. We were sort of, “We'll put them somewhere.” You know, we were kind of squeezed into the other districts. And I'm not blaming anybody. I'm all for fairness, but it's tough. You know, it's just tough.

SHORT: Do you think race will always be a political issue in Georgia?

STEINBERG: I think it will be less and less. I mean, I look at the kids now – and I can't speak about the Legislature, because I don't know if they're fully representative of the people that they represent – but I look at kids now, high school kids, like at Lenox. They all come to Lenox and all that. And there're so many kids that are hanging out of mixed race that I just think it's going to happen more and more. I don't know how accepting the grandparents are; I just think it's going to happen more and more. And a lot of these kids, you ask them, they don't quite know what you're talking about, which is a good thing. I've always laughed and said it's harder for like Jewish people than maybe African-Americans, because they kind of have known over the years what they had to do with blacks. You know, whether they wanted to or not's another story. But the Civil Rights Movement and the courts said, "You have to this, you have to do that." So they could blame it on somebody else. But it's forced schools and everything – it's forced a lot of mixing of races. But nobody's ever said, "You have to do that," for women. I mean, if you do you do, but nobody says, "Well, you need to put a woman on there." They're doing it more and more. There's more consciousness for women, I can't say that there isn't. But I think there's more consciousness, legally, of the courts and all that with races. I've always felt that. And I guess maybe what I think -- I don't know, because I'm not down in the Legislature now -- but I think there's more acceptance of the races. And more acceptance even of mixed races. But I think among older Georgian's, they're still talking sort of behind their backs. And I'm not saying everybody, but I think that it's hard to give up power. I mean, I look at Atlanta with amazement. Because when I came in it was run by Citizen's Bank or Seanness Bank – I forget the

guy's name, nice guy – and First National Bank. They were the big players, right. And I used to say this -- every time I walked out of a door I felt somebody was talking about me. Not necessarily good. Not, "Oh, isn't she great," in this city or climate. And now I look around and I see Bernie Marcus, you know, the football. And that community is running this city, which is a big difference. I mean, they're Jewish and -- I mean it's a different cultural -- hmm. And that amuses me to no end, because I remember when I always felt out of it. And I think that's one reflection of the change.

**SHORT:** It seems to me that reapportionment has created black districts and white districts, and you no longer have the mix to which you referred. You'll have a John Lewis district, which is totally black, and you'll have a Northside district, which is totally white. And therefore you get into political ideology, and the issues become really moot, because in a Republican district those people are going to vote Republican. It doesn't matter what the issues might be. And the same is true in John Lewis' district. Now, it doesn't seem to be a fair way to moderate politics and government in our state.

**STEINBERG:** I think they're not maybe the greatest examples, because John Lewis has a lot of white people and Republicans. But he's our saint. Nobody would vote him out of office. And I love John Lewis, don't get me wrong, but white people like the white Jewish communities there, they love him. I mean, they love him. And so, I think he's probably not a black district like he'd find maybe in the south or something. But it's a lot of in-town whites. I'm in his district. I didn't used to be. But with John Lewis, John Lewis is John Lewis. He's going to vote the best way, he thinks. And he listens to people. I mean, he's very responsive. But they wouldn't tell

him not to vote. And if he did, I think they have so much reverence for him. I don't mean this, because he certainly is, but he's not -- I'm trying to think of who he's not. He's not a typical person -- you know, he can walk the walk and talk the talk no matter where he is. And who else did you refer to? Oh, whites. Yeah, that they'll do. But they'll do it maybe, I think, more with Republicans vs. Democrats. In other words, when they make white districts, they're not for Democrats, they're for Republicans. So it's a Republican. And I remember the year -- the first time in reapportionment -- it was Republican and black coalitions. So, in-town whites like us, we were just on the outside. So, I think it just happens that Republicans are white, most of them, and that's how they can gerrymander a lot of these people together. And they can't be found guilty too much, because they have black districts. So, I don't think it's black-white as much black-Republican. And if you look at the changes over each reapportionment, you're either black or Republican in congress. Maybe you'll have that one guy down in Macon area that fights for his life.

SHORT: Jim Marshall.

STEINBERG: Yeah, and what's his name got it up in Athens. His old-line family?

SHORT: John Barrow.

STEINBERG: Right.

SHORT: Who moved to Savannah because they reapportioned him out of his district.

STEINBERG: Oh, okay, there you are. Now, he has the liberty to do that. But I think there is a tendency to put everybody together. And I think one of it was not just to keep blacks in their place, but the courts. And you know, in those days you had to have a significant majority black

district, whatever the proportion was. So, the best thing for them to do was to make it black and Republican and then fit the other ones around.

SHORT: Well, do you agree that that has almost eliminated the type of congressmen we used to have; the compromising, moderate –

STEINBERG: Absolutely.

SHORT: You know, willing to compromise candidates that we had in Washington at one time?

STEINBERG: I mean, Nathan Deal. I mean, I served with him in the Senate. He's off his looney. I mean, he might become president, and please forgive me if I'm not here and that happens. But I'm just stunned; continually stunned at how people will, in my mind – maybe that's the way he always was – but how they'll sell out to get political power. I could never do that, which is why I'm where I am now. But you know, he ran when I ran as a Democrat, and now he's this far to the right Republican. And so, you know, you were asking me a question. Yeah, I think that the partisanship, however, is national too. It's not just Georgia, and as a reflection of something – I'm not sure what. But I think if we don't get our act together – and I hope I'm wrong – we're in big trouble all over the country, because everybody is very partisanship. And maybe it's having to raise so much money or to win; I don't know what it is. But I think we're a reflection of much of what happens around the country.

SHORT: Cathey, if you will, let's go back for a moment to your role as the insurance advocate for the state of Georgia. What do you feel you accomplished in that job?

STEINBERG: I think we accomplished a lot. We were certainly watch dogs for consumers with insurance issues or with regulations or with legislation that was done by Oxendine. We very

much were consumer-oriented, and we got some good legislation passed. And it's interesting to me, listening now to the debate on health care and insurance, because I'm sitting there going, "Aha, aha." And we did some of those things, like you can't go back and tell somebody after they've had surgery that, "Well no. We're not going to cover you, because you had a cold when you were seven and you're trying to get your sinuses done when you're fifty-five." That was not uncommon. And we had a lot of consumers call us. And so, through the governor we were able as part of the package to get some good legislation passed. And you know, I think even the insurance companies were okay. Oh no, they weren't really okay, but we were happy to do that. It was very important. And they're all coming to fruition in this discussion. Not as far along, but in the discussion with the national public today. We also represented consumers. And Oxendine's office is very inconsistent on who they're going to help, and who they're not going to help. And you know, a lot of what they were saying when we came in was, "Well, your insurance company can help you with that. Well, it's in the law. You're insurance company can help you with that." And then gradually as we began to do a lot they began to get better. You know, "Well, we'll try to help you." I used to feel that the first year or so they would only try to help like doctors or people like that. And so, I have to say – and I don't know now – but that they did try, because we just caught them on so many things. You know, we got a chance to review rate increases. Not for everything, but for a lot of subjects. There was something with Medicare, and something else – I can't remember, but it affected the elderly and they got big increases every year. And we said, "No good. No good." And we, you know, tied them down and kept that from happening. We worked a lot with small groups, 2-10, especially, which we

have in Georgia. And their rates were going up seventy-five percent. And my deputy, John Bevis, who came out of Roy's law firm, and went back -- he's there now -- and was brilliant, and what an advocate. And so, he was able to pick up all these formulas; very complicated, so the average person can't understand it. And I'd be very surprised if John Oxendine could understand it. And you know, could tear it apart about what they were doing wrong and get a reporter. And so, we did a lot. And our office grew and we gave a lot of talks about it and did brochures on what to look for. People don't understand. It's a very complicated subject, and it always shocked me to find out what people don't know or don't understand. And that's part of the whole insurance issue is education. And we did a lot of that all around the state.

SHORT: Do you agree with the president's suggestion that the insurance commissioner in Georgia should be appointed?

STEINBERG: I've said that for a long time. I'm a little nervous now, because the states' changing so much. You know, you always feel confident when the leadership is with you on things. Like if for me, I might have gotten appointed by Roy Barnes. With Perdue, I'd certainly not get appointed. And I don't know who would get that. But it's something to consider, no question about it. There's too much money involved, there's too much business involved. And it's important that you have a fair and decent person, because like anything else, you're regulating industry that you're taking money from all the time. And you also judge -- at least in Georgia -- you sit sort of as the judge when there're a lot of issues that come before the insurance commissioner. You can't have both, you know. You either have another -- what do they call those attorneys? There's a group of them that come in? They're independent? They work for

the state? I forget what they're called, but they do stand –

SHORT: Administrative judges?

STEINBERG: Yeah. And they do come into a lot of other departments, but they don't in this one. So therefore, John Oxendine sits and rules and regulates over people that give him money and people that he regulates. Every time I would go I'd just, "Oh." And we went to all of them, you know, to make sure that we followed what was going on. And that's very, very scary.

SHORT: Well, back during the Barnes administration, you were recognized as a member of his kitchen cabinet.

STEINBERG: Hmm-mm.

SHORT: What did you do as a member of his kitchen cabinet?

STEINBERG: Well, I didn't cook, I'll tell you that. But you know, I loved it. I mean, it was so much fun, because I've always been on the outside, not on the other side. I've always been hanging out somewhere, but not with anybody. Although I always loved Roy, because he helped me a lot in the Legislature. Brilliant. Whether you like him or not, he's brilliant. And so, it was fun to kind of be a part of what he was trying to do, rather than being the person that walked out of the room knowing that the boys were talking about me. "She's not as bad as we thought she was," that kind of thing. And so, it was kind of fun to be part of the group and to be part of doing good things. And it was fun, you know, just being part of somebody's birthday, being part of what I thought at the time was a very exciting – not perfect – exciting administration. I was proud of it.

SHORT: Well, speaking of Governor Barnes, let's go back to 2002 when he was defeated in his

attempt to serve a second term. What happened?

STEINBERG: Well, the first thing that happened is I don't think anybody expected it. I mean, we went to wherever the party was, I forget, and I was with somebody that we all know and I can't remember. Nobody when I walked in there thought he was going to lose. And everybody tells me that his poles looked like he was going to win. So everybody was in shock. And a bunch of these lobbyists were saying, "I better leave and go to the other party. I've got to go. You better go to the other party." And I'm like, "Oh my god. Oh my god." But I have some theories about that. And I know you can't eliminate, I guess, some of the things he did – maybe too aggressive or Bobby or whatever. But I think to some extent politics is luck and opportunity. Like me. I came in with Jimmy Carter. You know, I was running against a guy who was not well-liked or anything. But this is not the only thing, but one of the things is he was running against Guy Millner, who was running for the third time, I think. And he's a very wealthy Republican, not politically astute, and made comments about, "I don't have to leave Atlanta to get elected." Remember, they used to say that. And also, I think a lot of educated Republicans in that whole area didn't like him either for a lot of good reasons. And they liked Roy. He's out in Cobb County; he was county attorney or something. And they liked him, so I think that's a combination of Roy being very skilled and building up a lot of support and having an opponent who was going to give Roy the benefit of the doubt. Now, that doesn't say that he didn't deserve to win. I am not convinced that the teachers defeated him. I could be wrong. I am not convinced. Maybe they didn't vote for him, but I am not -- oh, and this last time. I'm not convinced that the teachers voted him out of office and this kind of stuff. I think, you know,

Perdue probably fit the bill in some ways at the time that Roy didn't. And I don't think it's because Roy did anything bad, but I might be biased. Oh, the flag. Okay, here's Roy trying to do the right thing, right? There's Perdue saying, "Keep the flag. Keep the flag. He shouldn't have done that. He shouldn't have done that." But push came to shove, once Perdue won there was no way he was going to do it. I mean, Roy did what he needed to do. But there's no way he was going to get an amendment, which is what he ran on. One – because he wouldn't get the votes in the house and senate. Two – it became known that they would lose a lot of convention business. Shirley Franklin, well-liked mayor – there's no way. But he still used it as an excuse. So, I don't think it had much to do with what the average person does, which is education and something else. I just don't think people get defeated that way.

SHORT: Do you think Roy Barnes can reinvent himself?

STEINBERG: I'm less concerned about him running as a Democrat, because I think he could – unless, you know, I learned one thing – I mean several things. You never know in politics. It's early, and what you think is one thing can turn out to be completely the other. I mean, life is what happens when you're making other plans. I think he could be the Democratic nominee. I wouldn't guarantee it, not because I don't think he should get it, but there are some other decent people. And it depends on -- just like that whole thing with the teachers, that took a life of its own; or the flag, took a life of its own. I'm still more worried about the Republican race; the general election. And I'm not sure. It depends maybe on who wins. And you know, the state is kind of Republican right now. And you know, I don't know what they're thinking of Obama. When is the election? A year? No, ten months from now.

SHORT: It's in November.

STEINBERG: Yeah, and I think a lot can happen. So, I think it's more the November election than Roy himself.

SHORT: Well, in 2004, as you know, the Republicans took control of both the House and the Senate. Were you surprised at that?

STEINBERG: In Georgia?

SHORT: Yes.

STEINBERG: Yes. I mean, let me just put it this way. I'm more fascinated by the whole thing, how it's changed. I'm sure you are. It's just amazing, because it was how long? A hundred years or something? I don't know.

SHORT: One hundred and thirty-seven years.

STEINBERG: One hundred and thirty-seven. And you know, everybody's "Well, Roy Roy Roy." But I'm not convinced of that either. I mean, it's happening nationally. And so, whatever the climate is -- and that's democracy, it goes from one side to the other and ends up in the middle. But yeah, I'm not used to it. I look and see the legislators now, I don't know a lot of them. I don't even know their faces. And it's just amazing to me that I'm so out of it. You know what else? How many people change parties.

SHORT: It's often said in Georgia and I guess also around the South, that to be a Democrat is to be a liberal, and to be Republican is to be conservative. What happened to the middle of the road?

STEINBERG: Right. Well, that I've always heard down here. And years ago my father's family were Republicans. It still amazes me, because he's a big Democrat. But I think it was a different

kind of Republican, they were fiscally more conservative, always socially liberal or whatever. Socially like Mike Egan in many ways. I think he sponsored the Equal Rights Amendment many years ago. And he was more a middle of the road kind of Republican. Phil Townsend always put the welfare bill in. You don't see that today. And I don't know. Well, Kathy Ashe, she was like that and she left. There's not room for people like that to really fit in, and there were a lot more. And I thought, maybe, when there were more Republicans that they would moderate. But I haven't seen it yet. Unless David Lawson -- unless he does something to help that.

SHORT: You hear some dissatisfied Democrats say that the state party is too liberal, too urban, too dependent on minorities and labor unions. Do you think that's a true statement?

STEINBERG: Well, I don't know a lot of details about the state party. I mean, I just don't. But I think that's what they would probably say anywhere in the country. I mean, I see it in the columnists, I see it on the talk shows about the partisanship and the labeling. And I think that to some degree they're right, but the rest of it is just stereotyping.

SHORT: Well, you've been a Democrat, a loyal Democrat, for a number of years.

STEINBERG: Right.

SHORT: What do you think is down the road for the Georgia Democratic Party?

STEINBERG: Oh, I think they'll come back to power. Is that the right word? I think so. I don't think anything is ever permanent in politics, as I've learned. I really don't, and things can change -- one, two, three. I mean, I don't know where Obama's going to end up. Here he came in with a huge mandate, and look at what they're doing to him now. And so, I sit and I try to figure out whether he got elected for completely different reasons than what he has to do now. You know, did he get elected because of people's conscience? You know, he's a very good type. And I'm not saying that because he's African-American; he's very bright. He's a new face. And then when reality comes in they don't want that. So, who knows? I mean, I never thought an African-American would become president. I swore by that till the day he got elected. And now, I'm like, "Well, see? This is what they really meant." When you're seeing all this nastiness. But I don't think you can ever say never with anything, including most especially politics or party. They're back and forth and back and forth.

SHORT: Do you think Georgia will ever elect a woman governor?

STEINBERG: Possibly. It will probably be a Republican. The woman here -- Jan Jones? Is that her name? Jan Jones, the new president pro temp?

SHORT: Yeah.

STEINBERG: I don't even know her. I heard she's pretty nice. For some reason, Democratic women who're pretty loyal don't move up. I mean, and that's a topic of conversation. It always seems to be Republicans are the other party. I mean, it's just very frustrating. The Democrats who feel pretty loyal just don't move much. There's never been a Democratic elected woman. And there's Cathy Cox now, and this one and that one. No.

SHORT: You know, I've noticed that every Georgia governor since Herman Talmadge -- except for Lester Maddox -- has served in the Legislature. Do you think the Legislature is a good training ground for a governor?

STEINBERG: I think it is, but I don't think it's necessary anymore. And you know, I think that the voters are more diverse. I mean, historically the governors all came from rooted counties or states or whatever. But that's changing so much. I mean, even in rural areas, I think, people are moving out, people are moving in; diversity of people -- Mexicans, Indians -- everything is very different. And I don't think that's going to require coming out of the Legislature. No, I don't.

SHORT: Well, as you look back over a very successful and meaningful career --

STEINBERG: Thank you.

SHORT: What would you say has been your greatest accomplishment as a public official?

STEINBERG: Well, one of the things I'd like to say is that I worked very hard to get the respect of the good ole' boys of Georgia for women; not just for myself. And I found myself being aware of that after maybe my first term. And I was nice, but I said something even quietly to raise the awareness and the respect of women legislators. And that's one reason the Equal Rights Amendment -- you know, we lost, but I knew -- or the rape bill. I mean, the fact that we went from getting slammed to getting it passed -- not just me. But I worked very hard to try to get the respect of the Legislature.

I mean, I remember when I would go to like Ways and Means for something and I'd raise my hand. They'd say, "Now what do you want little lady?" You know, but they don't do that now. They're used to women on committees. They're used to women businesses. You know, they're more used to it. It doesn't ring a bell every time a woman sits anywhere. I mean, I watch television. I see these women newscasters and women being interviewed. It's changed a lot everywhere, but it's not easy here. And I've seen an enormous change.

In terms of legislation and stuff, one of my most important bills to me -- we didn't talk about it, but it was at the time -- was the Nursing Home Residents' Bill of Rights. And in terms of people I always think of that as one of the most important pieces of legislation I sponsored. And it was not easy, because in those days we had nursing home people on the Health Committee. You know, Billy Randall, that sweet guy from Athens -- we had a bunch of them. And I remember Barbara Nivens. Do you remember her?

SHORT: I remember Barbara.

STEINBERG: Coming into the Health and Ecology Committee.

SHORT: She was on TV.

STEINBERG: Right. And she would zero in on anybody related to nursing homes, like Billy Randal. He sold his in the middle of all this. I mean, she went after them. And it's not perfect, but it was significant. And I still see these things on the doors of the nursing homes requiring the Bill of Rights. I mean, they still need a lot of help, being that I was in one for a couple of months last year when I broke my pelvic bone. But that was very important to me. It was substantial. And so, I always say that for some reason. But you know, I like to think that maybe in some way I made a little difference with the zoning or the women.

SHORT: What's your biggest disappointment?

STEINBERG: My biggest disappointment? I guess the Equal Rights Amendment in one way, but I think probably -- I don't know how to say this -- being so hard to become part of the team. It's not a disappointment -- it's hard, it's very hard. And in the house I would look out and see women that I knew that were lobbyists. You know, and I'd think, "Oh, it's so nice to see a friend." I mean, it's hard to really have to push your way in. I don't know if I'd call it a disappointment, because I felt better as the years went on.

It was a disappointment not to win the public service commission. It was a disappointment not to win Congress, but I was sort of relieved in a way, because I didn't want to raise that money again. It was a hard time. But you know, I try to look at all of those things as experiences -- positive experiences. And it's made me a better person. Much more understanding of different people. I've had the pleasure of meeting huge numbers of people I would never know in my life. And I think it's exposed me to a lot that I wouldn't have been exposed to. And I'm very glad of that.

SHORT: Did you once walk out on a national ERA meeting?

STEINBERG: Yes. Oh my God, you didn't miss a thing. Yes, I did.

SHORT: Tell us about it.

STEINBERG: Boy oh boy, who talked to you? We went up to Washington. I happened to be up there for something, I don't know. And they were having an ERA America meeting. And they were having the leaders of the coalition, which was that year Sherry Schulman and Joyce -- who I love, but I can't remember her name. And so, I came in to listen. I mean, I didn't sit at the big table, I don't think. And next thing I know, the president -- whoever that was then -- said, "You can't stay, Cathey." I said, "Why? I'm the sponsor of the Equal Rights Amendment in Georgia." "You can't stay. This is only for leaders -- non-elected leaders of the ERA in different states." And neither of the leaders in Georgia stood up for me. Neither of them. So I left, and I forgive, but I don't forget. And I said to myself, "No wonder they can't win. Use your head. I mean, whose side are you on? Idiots." I mean, that's all that I was thinking to myself. You're not good ole' boys yet -- or good ole' girls -- if you can't learn how to make the best of anything. Most sponsors probably don't want to be bothered to come. Do you think Roy Lambert would come? I wouldn't expect him to. But it was very personal to me. I had two daughters and all that. And so, that was it. I learned a good lesson.

SHORT: Finally --

STEINBERG: Uh-oh.

SHORT: If you had it to do all over -- a young mother of two children with a broken down station wagon. Would you have decided to run for the Legislature in 1976?

STEINBERG: Absolutely. Now, I did have my parents. And I say that because my kids were three and six when I ran. And they would come down off and on, and I asked them if they would stay -- they had an apartment -- did they they ever have an apartment -- if they would stay while I was in the Legislature. And I thought my mother would say, "What? Why aren't you having dinner parties or something?" And they said, "Absolutely. You can count on us." Because otherwise I don't know what I would have done. It's not easy to do with two little kids. But it

worked out fine. I mean, I had extra to do, because I had to fire a housekeeper in the middle who I think -- she was a Jehovah's Witness, so I wasn't worried, but she was kind of almost abusing the kids. And I always had my seat right next to the anteroom where the phone was, because in those days we didn't use cell phones. But I always had somebody to look after my kids. And it was the best thing that ever happened to me.

SHORT: Well, good.

STEINBERG: I still feel blessed, and I'm still amazed that I did it.

SHORT: You've had a wonderful career.

STEINBERG: Thank you, and I appreciate that.

SHORT: Well, listen Cathey. I want to thank you on behalf of Young Harris College, the Richard B. Russell Library at the University of Georgia, for being our guest.

STEINBERG: Thank you. And I hear Young Harris -- that's Cathy Cox now, isn't it? Now, there you talk about progress. Everybody wouldn't get that, but she should have won lieutenant governor, but that's a nice appointment. Ten years ago or twenty none of us would ever have expected that in a million years. So, there is progress. Thank you.