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BOB SHORT: I'm Bob Short and this is Reflections on Georgia Politics, sponsored by the Richard Russell Library at the University of Georgia and Young Harris College. Our Guest today is Ron Fennel, former member of the Georgia House of Representatives and of the legendary four horsemen and aide to Governor Senator Zell Miller. Welcome.

RON FENNEL: Thank you Bob.

SHORT: Odum, Georgia

FENNEL: It's a small town. You know when we grew up there, those of us in the farming communities who understood what it meant to go to town that meant to go to Odum. And when you went to the city, it was to Jesup and if it was the big city, it was to Brunswick. So small town America, it's a part of an awful lot of folk's life who get involved in something bigger than themselves like public service. I think it's an inspiration when you grow up out in the country and your family has all been farmers from the time you came over and you see things that need to be done; and if you ever get an opportunity, and you're given an education, you want to go out and do something with it. And that humble origin remains a part of who I am.

SHORT: And then I believe you went to college at Georgia Southern.

FENNEL: I did. After St. Simon's Elementary. After I left Odum, went over to Glynn County where my dad was a home builder. He and his brother built homes on St. Simons and Sea Island for forty years and I had the opportunity to go to Glynn Academy and then on to Georgia Southern. I was going to be a doctor. My mission-- I went there on a chemistry scholarship; was going to study to be a doctor. I got derailed along the way because I found that I enjoyed getting involved in different organizations on campus. I grew one into the other and of course I ran for student government president and I got--the whole chemistry department was totally alien with the concept of somebody wanting to do this. I had the head of the department build a helium balloon in the basement of the chemistry building and fill it with helium with my name on it; it was very bizarre. But we had a great time and I enjoyed public service to that point.

While I was running for student government president, something happened that changed the course and direction of my life. And it was as I was writing articles in the local newspaper, the school newspaper; I read one issue for this fellow who was coming to campus. I didn't know who he was, he had a funny sounding name, and apparently he was running for re-election and

he was going to give a talk. One of my platforms as a candidate for president of the student government was to get university status for Georgia Southern college at that time. And I said “well I don’t know who this student is but he sounds important, I am going to go over there and see if he can help us out”. So I sat through an hour long speech, and afterwards there was a reception and he and his young aide walked into the room and I dove into it. He was at this reception for about an hour and after twenty minutes, Zell Miller looked at me and said “I want to help yah but if you’ll talk to my aide and let him get your information, there’s some other folks who would like to talk to me, do you mind?” So it was that moment that I met Zell Miller and I didn’t know it at the time but he changed the direction of how my life would go. And I am grateful.

SHORT: Is that when you first got interested in politics?

FENNEL: Well I was interested in it, but I didn’t know there was an avenue to do something about it until I met him. And then a few months later, got an opportunity when I got a phone call from his office. And that phone call was from Rick Hutto the aide in question. And Rick who is now a member of the Macon city council, who married a young lady from Princeton whose roommate in college at Princeton went on to marry a fellow in the middle east and she is now known as Queen Noor of Jordan. So anyway but Rick Hutto was the aide to Zell Miller who travelled with him on that trip and he informed me by phone “I am leaving to go to work in the Carter White House and Miller has asked me to find somebody to replace me in this job”. And he said “how about call in that fellow down there--Georgia Southern that was annoying us so much”. Something to that effect.

SHORT: So you were with Miller for about four years.

FENNEL: Four years pretty much on a consecutive basis. He gave me every odd job that you could hope for as a young interested political person; intern, doorkeeper, general go fetch this and aide. And as it grew, being able to provide a little bit more feedback and a little more input for him.

SHORT: That is what I learned a long time ago was “hat and coat man”.

FENNEL: That’s right. “How about a cup of coffee?”, “I’ve lost my pen”. I don’t know how a man can stand in one place presiding over the Senate and lose ten felt tip pens in one day. But I have seen it done and it’s a miracle of magic that I don’t yet quite understand but I was there ready with another pen.

SHORT: How was it working for Miller?

FENNEL: It was terrific as a learning experience, it was challenging because as the marine corp drill sergeant, in him always demanded the best, expected the best, he was a workaholic himself and if you didn’t try to emulate that, you weren’t keeping up. And it made all of us around him better and we tried to learn every day from him and just nuances. We could learn just by watching a few little items and we all tried to do that and tried to make it better in his office and it was a lot of fun.

SHORT: You were there during his 1980 campaign for the United States Senate. What do you remember about that?

FENNEL: Well, I remember driving him an awful lot across different parts of the state and flying in little puddle jumper airplanes both in that campaign and then later on in the '84 campaign; where we were trying to help Walter Mondale. But I remember dropping him off one night somewhere in the middle of God forsaken nowhere and it was about 10:20. We had had a long hard day, worked an awful lot and he said "we don't have to get an early start tomorrow, you can pick me up around 5:30. And I got there at 5:20 and he was already waiting on me so it gave you the understanding and appreciation for the man, and his drive, and his energy, and it took a lot for all of us to keep up with it.

SHORT: Many people were I guess disappointed is the word when Miller failed to win the Democratic nomination. Is that not true?

FENNEL: It is. I remember I was in the office on his birthday in 1980 when he came out. We were trying to celebrate his birthday and he didn't like that celebration, the birthday cake and all that nonsense. He was more interested in talking about and thinking about the campaign and he came out of his pocket with a handmade brochure and the phrase "Best senator money can't buy" was seen for the first time amongst the staff. And I remember thinking "that's not going to work" but I the most junior member wasn't going to say anything. I got the point and I understood what his reference was to Senator Talmadge but, he had so much in a way of positive attributes and offerings that the people of Georgia would have readily responded to rather than that tact of trying to point out that Senator Talmadge was challenged. And I think that was my biggest disappointment of that year apart from the fact that he lost the nomination. Ironically, the guy whose office I later rented to run my state legislative race was Mack Mattingly. And I grew up around him while I was at school. I would go to Georgia Southern, his daughter and I went to school together so I would frequently stop by and pick her up. So I'd have to chat with Mack Mattingly and you know couple of years later here he was elected into the United States Senate. And I was baffled that Georgians could opt for inexperience and a disconnect in a lot of people's minds as opposed to a more informed and energetic choice but it was an interesting campaign in 1980.

SHORT: Well from there, from Miller, I believe you held a--several positions in the state party.

FENNEL: I did.

BOB SHORT: Democratic Party

FENNEL: Let me go to one point, I want to get this on the record because the first time I ever heard the name Bob Short I thought it was an invention; that this wasn't a real person and I will tell you why. Whenever I went to work for Zell Miller in '79, I would occasionally be tasked at lunch time when the girls would go to lunch just answering the phone. And I would get an operator call "collect call for Bob Short". Well the first couple of times I had no clue what to do with it and finally Marty Pangeri came out and said "oh that's Miller calling from the road, just

refuse the charges and get the number and we'll call him back". So we used the watts line, I think the statute of limitation has run out so AT&T is not going to chase us down Bellsouth at the time but this was a way to save money. Using the watts line to call out but not being able to call in from a pay phone and they still had plenty of pay phones back in the day. But Miller would travel everywhere and call into the office to get messages and check in. And he would call in "collect call for Bob Short". I don't know if you knew that but that is how for years I didn't know you actually existed until I finally met you. So I wanted to make sure that was on the record because it was an entertaining and an educational thing because he was saving money for the tax payers by calling back on the wide area telephone system network at reduced rates as opposed to calling collect and having to pay for the fees.

SHORT: Well thanks, I never knew that. I never knew that. But from the--from Miller's office is lieutenant governor where you held several positions in the state Democratic Party.

FENNEL: I did.

SHORT: Tell us about that.

FENNEL: Well it was a lot of fun. Miller introduced me to an awful lot of the people and having been a party operative himself, he understood that that is a great proving ground for an awful lot of people and he gave me an opportunity by introducing me to these people. I became a part of the staff; I worked for Tommy Coleman when he was executive director. I was the first executive director of the Young Democrats of Georgia; the first, the first one. It was a position a lot of young folks felt like was needed. We were a very active chapter of the Young Democrats and so I did an awful lot of things there. I grew that into a number of areas of service and then became a field director of the party in '84 at Miller's request. He was lieutenant governor but he was actually helping a candidate running for president and he needed somebody over there. And he said "I need somebody over there who'll run it the way I would, I can't be there, the legislature is going to have me tied up. I want you to go over there and do that." So on his behalf I did that and worked the field operation for the state.

Ironically, we were basing our office in Atlanta but Andrew Young was the Mayor of Atlanta. We kept getting into priority differences. He thought all the resources ought to be spent in getting out the vote in Atlanta which was a laudable goal but I had more of a mission than that to help win more of the state. And so after a couple of fights, as it were internally and behind the scenes, I went to him and I crafted a three page memo to Z-M from R-F. He had Marta retype it and it said memo to R-F from Z-M and it was everything that I had written which was flattering but it was a mission statement and it was a plan of action and we took it and ran with it. And I moved my office to Macon. When George Israel was the Mayor; we ran our campaign there, we even brought Ronald Reagan to town to Macon. We won Bibb County at the end of the day so I am proud of the operation we had. Obviously we didn't win the state or the national election but we did what we could. I remember Andrew Young had an opportunity to be confronted about those of us in the campaign and he called us S.A.W.Bs. If you remember this term--pardon the--but the historical record should reflect called the "smart ass white boys". Because we felt like we knew what we needed to do and very soon they are after Bert Lance and a couple of the others stepped in to mollify this situation.

We had a reception with Mondale in Cox Chambers' house and there--that evening, all of us

gathered around. Andy Young came out of his briefcase and handed each of us who were on the team an S.A.W.B button and he said “you white boys are smarter than I thought you were”. And so it is one of those moments that you appreciated being involved in the battles but being on the same team. And so that operation as a field director gave me an awful lot of experience and a lot of enjoyment. And later on, Miller asked me when he became governor to be executive director of the party and that was a great privilege and an honor to do that. I did that for almost a year; it was mostly a fundraising position at that point. Part of the business I hated, still do to this day but is a necessary part, we raised about a million dollars in less than a year and at that time, that was a record. There were a lot of good people who were doing the fundraising but there wasn’t a role that I preferred. I preferred the more nuts and bolts field operation, more grassroots. And so I did my fifteen years of service to the Democratic Party from being a member of the local committee, my local county chair, my Senate District Chair, Field director, Young Democrats and un-executive director. So after fifteen years I felt like that was my ample service to my party and I am proud of it but that was enough.

SHORT: Well Ron while we are on the subject of parties, let’s talk a little bit about Georgia becoming a two party state after 137 years of Democratic rule. How do you define that growth??

FENNEL: Georgia has always been a conservative leaning state; always; Probably always will be. Atlanta, urban areas have more folks who vote democratic on a consistent basis but Georgia’s as a whole was a conservative state. We voted nationally most every time for the more conservative candidate unless we had a reason. Lyndon Johnson stands up with the governor, puts his arms around, John Kennedy said “this guy will be alright for us, then we have a tendency to support that he can run. Native son like Jimmy Carter or almost native son like Bill Clinton; but otherwise, we have pretty well selected on a national basis the more conservative candidate on a national ticket so it is not surprising that we’ve have that bent. But it is surprising in some of the elections because we’ve had some political lions that have been Democrats in Georgia that have endured over a long span. From Carl Vinson to Richard Russell to Tom Murphy, the Zell Millers that had a long reign as a Democrat incumbent who happened to have a conservative philosophy of government. You know, balancing the budget, encouraging strong defense, supporting the second amendment, a lot of things that people consider to be on a national basis now are just automatic Republican based issue or into philosophies. It has always been a part of Georgia’s mindset and behavior.

SHORT: Some disenchanted Democrat believed that their party is too liberal, too urban, too dependent on minority and labor votes. Is that fair to say?

FENNEL: There is a lot of truth in elements of that. For rural Georgians, unions have never been a part of their experience. For rural Georgians, urban crisis and challenges and issues have never been really a part of their make up so they don’t identify well with those. So when the issues that are forwarded by, in this case, the modern Democratic Party on a national basis, they focus on those types of issues. And you know the little guy living out in Hayhira or Odum doesn’t quite connect with those issues. You are not talking about my issues and so it makes it easy for them to seek an alternative and the alternative has always been “well this party seems to be a lot more identifying with my conservative values”. And so I think that has changed the way party perception among Georgians has allowed for a turn. And I watched it up close. I had already left the legislature.

I remember I left as executive director to the party. At the end of 1991, I handed the keys over to Scotty Greenwood and she was the last executive director to preside over a majority in the congressional delegation. '92 we elected Republicans and we had one Republican in the congressional delegation when I was executive director. A fellow by the name of Newt Gingrich. I don't know whatever happened to him but it was 80% Democrat legislature house in Senate. You had every constitutional officer filled with a Democrat, no prospect for a Republican even to get more than 40%. It was a different day as recently as '92 in that regard and then '94 happened and the Newt Gingrich revolution and the Wash--and all those things that occurred thereafter.

SHORT: How difficult would it be for the Democrats to regain a majority in the state legislature?

FENNEL: I think we are now in the sixties as of this week Democrats in the house. That is a daunting challenge. I remember when I came into the legislature; the Republicans had sixty two or sixty three seats. They felt totally disenfranchised, were never heard and God loving Tom Murphy made sure of that. In the house, we had a different dynamic working. Even though most of us who were moderates, how we term that, many of the young faces that came in were a little more progressive but we weren't considered liberal. A couple maybe but mostly we were moderates and we were just looking to operate in this environment which was trending more conservative. And the alliance had been there like Tom Murphy was a conservative bonafide, had all the credentials in the papers but still remained a Democrat. So it was an interesting dichotomy to live through.

SHORT: What do you think of the great number of Democrats who have switched parties in order to hold on to their seats?

FENNEL: If you will resign your seat--I tell you the one example that impressed me the most and that was in Texas. A Georgia boy by the name of Phil Gramm, University of Georgia product; He resigned his seat in congress because he said the party had let it. They held a special election; he ran as a Republican, got himself elected. That is the way to do it. If you are honest with the voters "I am no longer a member of this party; I can no longer serve therefore as the party's nominee and elective representative" I am okay with that. But when you switch after you have been elected, I got a little bit more of a challenge in a problem with that.

SHORT: Let me ask you this question.

FENNEL: Sure.

SHORT: If you were in office today, would you still be a Democrat??

FENNEL: It'd be more difficult for me. Where I represented, I represented Glynn County in the legislature, Brunswick part of coastal Georgia; St. Simons, St. Jacqueline, that area. It would be very challenging; even though my district as it was carved at the time was pretty much a fifty-fifty district. And remember I was elected to the legislature having defeated an incumbent Republican; the only one that year to be defeated in the entire legislature House or Senate. So I was one of those unique guys. I remember Buddy Darden had a similar distinction in 1980 when he was elected in that race. He was the only one as the trend went and waned Republican; he got

elected in that unique situation too. But for now, where I live in Cobb County, I live in Smyrna so I'm in South Cobb but I could probably still get elected as a Democrat in some parts of the county. Much like that dividing line Buddy used to talk about between the east and the west but it would be a little bit more challenging. It might be used or still pretty much where they were all along. Most of us have strong conservative views on a number of issues and we are pretty socially compact--and I consider Tom Murphy the first compassionate conservative I ever met. I heard it later on used to identify the Bush family or Ronald Reagan--Tom Murphy was the original conservative who was compassionate that I saw with my own eyes.

SHORT: So you were elected in 1988?

FENNEL: Correct.

SHORT: And you defeated--tell us about that campaign.

FENNEL: Well, growing up you think about things that you want to do in life and this never was on my radar screen till I met Miller. And after I saw how it operated and how an opportunity to serve existed, I started studying it and I ran for the legislature in '86. I lost by four votes in the democratic primary to a local political legend who went on to serve two terms on the county commission and three terms in the state house. But after I was out, that's another story and we'll get into it in a little bit. But I lost by four votes after having campaigned for well over a year. I worked my construction job; I worked in the family construction business. We built houses so seven o'clock in the morning I had to make sure we had materials on the job site and that the right guys showed up and knew where to go and what to do. And I had to stay in and make sure everything was buttoned up at the end of the day. So four o'clock, I'm taking a shower, putting on my white shirt, my tie and I am knocking on doors with brochures until dark.

I had done an awful lot like a lot of candidates. And after having done that part time for a year, and to lose by four votes was quite traumatic. And you know back then as today, candidates stand near the polling places and they wave at voters by holding a sign and give that last visual image before a voter goes in. I watched a later model car, a large car, five guys drove up, had my opponent's bumper sticker on there and they drove up and they were laughing and waving "Hey!" Then they drove up, parked and went in the poll in place at five minutes till 7:00 p.m. Those five gentlemen cast ballots, that I watched, which defeated me. It is very--it seared on my brain at that point. But I lost to an interesting fellow, Rev. E.C Tillman, Shiloh Baptist Church, the largest African American congregation between Savannah and probably Orlando. And he marched with Dr. King in Daytona Beach. He was a bonafide legend, had been school board member et cetera.

And he had been the nominee twice before and this was his third time getting a nomination and lost to two different Republicans. So it was obvious that the voters in that district, while they may have been able to elect Democrats, just chose that it was not his time and that he was not the right person. But that didn't help me in having lost by four votes. So I had to spend the next two years working at it to go again. Well the month after the election was over and Rev. Tillman lost, we had our local Democratic Party meeting. And I had been active there for a few years and I went to that meeting and I stood up whenever the Chairman said "anybody have anything you want to offer regards the election". And I stood up and I congratulated the Rev on running a great race and I appreciated it but I am now a candidate for the next time around. We have given the Rev three times and I'd like to just put everyone on notice that I'm running right now for the

next time around and I'd appreciate everybody's support.

And so I put that out and then when you are in your twenties and you do that and all the old guard is sitting there, it makes them sit up and take notice. And for those of us who are young and brash and really wanted to serve--I didn't run against him, I just ran for the job and I wanted to make sure that I had my head start that I had missed out on the time before. As it happened the following year, he and I worked out an arrangement. I lost in the absentee box. I was up by fifty three votes until he opened the absentees. I didn't have an absentee, precinct coordinator or manager or whatever but I found out who his was. And the day after I found out who it was, I went knocked on her door and I sat on her porch for three hours and we became fast friends. And the next time around, she was my absentee, ballot coordinator, and we won. It was a great privilege to run a campaign where I just talked about what I wanted to do, why I wanted the job, and I just acted like that was an open sit. I never mentioned my opponent, never responded to anything. My opponent ran like a challenger; attacking me, attacking my lack of a record and saying bad things about me. I just ignored it and ran a campaign for the job and the voters of my district saw fit to hire me so it was a great moment. Like I said, I ran my campaign out of Mack Mattingly's old typewriter's shop there in town. It had a historical significance that I couldn't overlook. It's an ironic twist.

SHORT: So January 1989 you went to the Capitol.

FENNEL: You know when you walk in that building, I don't care who you are; if you have any sense of history and appreciation for the value that your government has, you get chills walking in the building. And I did that day. I was trembling when I put my hand on the bible and raised my hand and Tom Murphy said "repeat after me" and we all had the oath--the whole team was sworn in and he said "ladies and gentlemen, you've hereby been sworn in, be prepared hereafter to be sworn at". And it set the tone for those of us and I looked around and this august body and I saw this ornate structure and this history and I said "Man, how did I get here?" And after the second or third day, I looked over and I said "how did he get here? How the heck did he get here?" And I guess that's what happens when good people don't vote; at least that was my conclusion.

SHORT: Well who were some of your friends?

FENNEL: Well, it was a great treat to come in with an awful lot of folks; Democrats and Republicans that are friends till this day. There was a small group of us. We had twenty three Democrats in our crowd and I think there were twelve or thirteen Republicans. Harold Earl Ehrhart was in that group, we had in the Democratic contingent we had quite an interesting bunch. Cynthia McKinney to Judy Poag the former Sheriff of Murray County, yes his nickname was Judy, don't ask me to explain that. We had Karen Erwin who served just a term. We had a couple of people that spent some time. A guy named Thurbert Baker, I'm not sure really what happened to him (laughter), but his going on to become attorney general was a proud moment for a lot of us to know that he had the confidence of the governor. But there was this group that kind of whittled itself down and became fast friends. Four young thirty-year old aggressive, semi-polished, aggressive, active, young guys who were all single and we had a blast. There was--

SHORT: Four Horsemen

FENNEL: The newspaper dubbed us the four horsemen; I am not sure where that term came from for the reporter. We were termed a lot of different things but it was Doug Teper whom I had met many years before when I was on the campus at Georgia Southern. I was writing an article for the local newspaper--the school newspaper, The George Anne. And I was writing a story about this organization trying to be created on campus- GANE, Georgians Against Nuclear Energy. Oh at the time, I was in the chemistry program and I was studying nuclear chemistry and I was actually pro nuclear. I thought it was a great alternative energy source but I was a reporter on this story, fourteen people showed up to organize this chapter and they needed fifteen. I didn't have a story so I joined the chapter as pro-nu in order to get the story and Doug Teper was the organizer of that meeting. And so I met this young--he had a giant afro, he was a wild child and I learned an awful lot about his history over time at The University of Georgia and his running for student government president, the unknown candidate, the race for congress, all the rest. But there are ten thousand Doug Teper stories and you'll have to get those straight from the horse's mouth.

But Ray Holland, very bright lawyer, extremely focused and a guy who had perfection written all over him. And in south west Georgia, I didn't understand how perfection could get elected. Here is a guy who might have been in a pick-up truck in his life; he used a picture of one on his campaign brochure but he drove a red corvette. His hair was always perfectly in place, his suits were Brook's Brothers and well-tailored, he was extremely detailed and everything and a very bright lawyer. How does somebody like that get elected from farm country in south west--we didn't understand. But not only did he get elected; he beat every other challenger in an open primary. His first time out he beat five opponents without a run off. So it was--here's a guy who everybody understands he is the smartest kid in the room, let's bring him and let him be our guy. And so he was the one--and then my buddy McCracken Poston; who has gone on to do some incredible things but in the end that freshman class, it was obvious he was the guy who had the angle on how to communicate the message best. He has a grasp of the issues readily, he is very smart obviously but he also went with two things in mind I think. One, he wanted to do a great job of his area of the state and look after folks. He later grew more and more attuned to the constituent service component. But in the beginning, we wanted to just get noticed and we did. And Tom Murphy and the leadership embraced us sort of cocooned for whatever reason, the four of us sort of became the fair hair children I'm sure frustrated an awful lot of folks watching. Particularly those who had been around a little bit longer and--Larry, Terry, group. But it was fun in that first period of time to make sure we were on the team they were making sure that we were catered to to some degree. It was fun, we all became happy and maybe a little too cocky as young legislators do but we had some interesting experiences. For the first two years I was in the legislature; the speaker invited a very select group to his birthday party. We would have just a private dinner and had a little country band and speaker would get up and sing "your cheating heart" with the band and dance with his lady friend at the time, but it was a lot of fun. These four guys, they became known as the four horsemen. We had tons of fun together and did a lot of interesting things and got involved in so many interesting things.

SHORT: You mentioned Ray Holland. Tell us about the Holland Manifesto.

FENNEL: Well one of the things that the four years generated for all of us was a degree of excitement, a challenge and frustration. And the frustration centered on the progress path that we

were on. Many of us realized watching Terry Coleman and Larry Walker, and Tom Burke and these guys who've been in the legislature for over twenty years finally get their committee chairmanships and are still hanging their weight to ascend into the ultimate leadership post. And we're going like "I'm not going to be here in twenty years. I want to actually get more involved now". So we started thinking about ways in which we could improve the mechanics of the House. It's a race they'd focus on this. And we did several things like we all were early adopters of computers. We got elected because we used databases on these new little fancy things that were being used out there and we got computers and we asked to have those used to have ready access to information.

Secondly we had a degree of expectation on what legislation before us would be evaluated before we voted on it. Frequently a bill will get introduced, sent to committee, voted out of committee that afternoon and it was on its fast track; it's on the floor couple days later. You really haven't had a chance to study it, to vet it, to have public hearings; we just didn't think that was right. We felt like there are a lot of issues where we ought to put them out there early, let people debate, then we'll have public sessions before we come into this abbreviated forty day session and get it all done there. Some of us even felt like we ought to split the session into two parts. You could only introduce bills the first twenty days, take a thirty day break and do--the other 20 day is broken into pieces of ten and ten so that you could vet, have hearings on, and actually evaluate these bills before you actually pass them all the way through the process. Many nights on the last night of the session, it was a nightmare for the voters of Georgia because things that passed in the middle of the night were the amendments and a conference committee report that nobody except the people who wrote it had ever read. And it is very frustrating and we felt like that reform needed to be included. We did several things but Ray Holland reduced them to writing. He focused on it and just after I left office, they started pursuing these reforms after the couple of battles that we fought that I'm sure that you will want to talk a little bit about with retail divorcement and then the ethics and--

SHORT: You know what, let's talk about them now. You had several measures that as I recall, ethics among them. You had some environmental legislation.

FENNEL: Well, I grew up on the coast. Environmental issues were important to us. I had a natural ally in Doug Teper. He was an environmental activist, that was his role before he came to the legislature. I wasn't crazed about it. I wasn't a wild-eyed liberal environmental activist. I had major employers in my community: Sea Island Company--you know the major employer--I had Hercules, Georgia Pacific, ultimately--major employers in my community. But the balance between the environmental sensitivity--we live in a very delicate environmental situation--with the rivers and the marshes and the estuaries. It's very important for us to protect those marshlands. But at the same time, we had 800 jobs at one facility, 1500 jobs at one, and 1200 at the other. And my challenge and my job was to represent my constituents, the last thing I wanted to do was put one of these companies out of business because of a simple environmental regulation. But at the same time, I wanted to protect the environment because the beauty of the Golden Isles is well known and it is well known because we've protected it to some degree. Once Hercules and Georgia Pacific end their reign in Glynn County that is going to be a total 100% tourist economy. Well we can't yet afford that, and so we have to pay the bills, and this pays the bills and keeps people fed and keeps jobs in the community. I mean even our hometown boy, Pete Correll, grew up in Brunswick. He went on to run Georgia Pacific in a terrific way.

Relocated the company to Georgia ,and you know it's a wonderful success story. He still lives in the Golden Isles. In addition to splitting time in Atlanta, he still lives on Sea Island--in a house that we built, Fennel Construction Company built. The house that he ended up buying from one of the Jones family members that we built it for. But the fact that I wanted to get involved, I was very interested in the river protection component and there were several folks who'd been working on this for years. So I came late to the party but I was happy to be on the Natural Resources Committee, which I requested, working with them to help fashion a bill.

And Miller on the senate side had a bill that was the Mountain Protection Act. And he felt very strongly, coming from the mountains, about that. So those two bills were merged ultimately in what became the River and Mountain Protection Act. And I was proud to be one of those who were cosigners in the beginning and I sat on the committee that helped with the final versions of those bills. It just was important, natural resources was important to all of us.

I served on Defense and Veterans Affairs, didn't quite understand why I was appointed that but it was one of the junior committees that--I happened to enjoy it. McCracken Poston and I got a chance to serve on that. We studied the civil defense components, we actually learned about earthquakes. I don't know if you know but Georgia has many earthquakes a year, minor tremors. But we got to go to Louisville, Kentucky to see the civil defense bunker just down the street from the state Capitol underground. We've since instituted an awful lot of those things in Georgia for emergency conditions and Georgia has a pretty extensive defense network and a civil defense component to what we do. Not many people talk about it but Buswise could probably help you out on that. But that was one of the committees, but the one that I coveted most and the speaker was very kind to appoint me to was the Transportation Committee.

Transportation was important to the whole state but it was important to my area for two reasons. One, we had some small road issues with bridges, crossing over railroad tracks, crossing over these rivers to get to St. Simons in Jekyll Island; and we needed some state help to get these done. But the biggest one, we had been stymied by a political decision that had been made back in the forties and fifties and that was the location and construction of the Sidney Lanier bridge across the Brunswick river. It was assured that Savannah as a port would grow and Brunswick would not by the location and the structure that was placed across that river. And I was going to make sure that if I had anything to do with it before I left my time in public service, we would alter that opportunity and give Brunswick a chance to at least compete and breathe. And I'll go back to 1986, I'll remember when Rev. Tillman was running to get his third nomination, he had defeated me and there was a fundraiser held at the elk's lodge. Tom Murphy came down to help raise money for Rev. Tillman and he stood in this hall and eighty some odd Democrats gathered there to support the Rev, and he said, "folks, until you guys send me a Democrat, I can't really help you with any of your issues. So y'all better elect me". We didn't.

Two years later fast forward, I win the election. The next morning, when Tom Murphy arrived at the state Capitol with his stetson and his cigar, I was sitting in his office waiting. He said "son, I'm happy to see you congratulations, I saw where you won". I said "yes sir, Mr. speaker" he said "so what is it you want?" He was very straight forward and very blunt about things like that and if he told you something, it was bankable. And I said "Mr. speaker, It is just a little ol' bridge" and he smiled and he said "I figured that is what it was, let's see what we can do about it". I said "Mr. speaker, we have raised 2 million dollars in commitments locally; through the chamber and through the local governments. We can get more if we need to but we wanted to come to the table with something besides just an ask and an emissary". And he said "well, I appreciate that, that helps a lot and we are going to work on it". And true to his word, he and Zell

Miller made this this happen for my community. There is a new bridge spanning that river; the Sidney Lanier bridge reborn. And it was a challenge; we worked for an awful long time and among a lot of folks. And I said “Mr. speaker, what do you need me to do? I am a soldier here, you tell me what you need me to do”. He said “I need 100% of your delegation to vote for the budget” “yes sir Mr. speaker, I’m on it”.

I had a Republican in my delegation named Willou Smith; wonderful lady. Coplen was her main name, her grandfather was the Coca-Cola bottler locally so she never really had to do anything. Public service was her calling and she owns a Burger King franchise as among other business interest and her husband worked at Sea Island; great people. And she was a true public servant and a great friend but she was a Republican. Johnny Isakson her leader in caucus made sure that no budget was being voted for by Republicans. It was a consistent pattern. Every year the Democrats proposed a budget, the Republicans are going to vote against the budget every time and it was almost unanimous every time.

This one was different; and I would never forget the day the vote occurred on the budget. I am sitting in the back row--second to the back row, the old sawmill gang as it was called and Willou sat on the opposite side of the aisle, third row from the back, and Johnny Isakson of course the Republican leader sat closer to the front on the aisle on the other side. And the speaker said “all members voted, all members voted”. We are all watching the board and Willou is like “well it’s not yet lit” and the speaker was looking, I was looking at her, Johnny was looking down and he was looking up at the board. And Willou put her head on her desk and put her finger on the green button as I was two paces away from my desk and as Johnny was two paces away from his desk. We were both headed for her and she voted green. And the speaker said “the clerk would lock the machine” and it was done. I met my commitment, Willou met her commitment and we got our bridge in Brunswick. And Tom Murphy and Zell Miller and Terry Coleman and guys like that helped make that happen.

SHORT: That is very interesting.

FENNEL: Yes

SHORT: Let’s talk a minute about Ethics.

FENNEL: Okay

SHORT: Your four horsemen had some ethics legislation as I recall that might have ruffled a few feathers in the House of Representatives

FENNEL: Well, you know we were a different breed; these young guys and I had seen things happen. The first time I ever met Tom Murphy for example, I had seen him from afar but I was working for Zell across the way and I went to my very first Jefferson Jackson dinner in 1980. The day of the event, everybody is buzzing “we’re going to the event, we’re going to the event”. I am just a junior staffer on Zell’s staff; I didn’t have a ticket, heck I didn’t have a tux. I didn’t--I only owned a couple of suits. So, Cappix said about three o’clock in the afternoon he said “Son you’ve got to take it for tonight to Savannah”. I said “no sir I don’t”. He said “you do now” and he handed me a ticket. I was just over the moon; I am going to the Jefferson Jackson and I had no idea what to expect.

So I go to this event, I show up a little early because I realized when I got to the check in, everybody had a numbered table. You're supposed to know where you're sitting. Mine didn't have a number on it; Cappix just handed me this random ticket. So I walk in and I'm looking around for Cap to find out where my seat is. And as I walked in, Tom Murphy walked in the side door and he walked over to where his table was and he put something down there. And I said "Hello Mr. Speaker" and he said "son" and I said "have you seen Cappix?" he said "no" I said "I'm just looking for my seat; I don't know where I am supposed to seat". He said "you don't have a seat?" I said "well I've got a ticket but I don't know where I am supposed to sit". He said "my wife wasn't feeling well tonight, she's not coming so why don't you just sit here with me". So my eyes bugged out, I am not going to tell the man no. He is very kind to offer me a seat for his sick wife. So I beautifully plot my butt down right there.

Well, Miller comes in about half an hour or forty minutes later sitting at a table, you know next table over and everybody is eating their salad. He looks up and he looks over at me and he raised it up and looked at me like that and I went like that. He just shook his head. We never talked about it but I told Cap later, I said "I got this seat because the speaker asked me to sit down".

Well I tell you that story to lead up to the ethics debate because I found the man to be polite, congenial, somewhat shy, a bit of an introvert which was different than the public persona I had read about, and seen and heard about through the rantings and out of Miller's mouth; which was part of how that dynamic worked across the House and the Senate. But I had the opportunity that first couple of years to go through an awful lot of changes; we all did. We were taken out to dinner, out to lunch, and different things. A lot of people showered an awful lot of attention on us and a lot of benefit. Ken and I were invited down to the masters by the phone company and the oil companies before we even got elected brought us into town to the Ritz Carlton, took us down to the races, Texaco, put us up in there, private suite, we got to go down on the track and meet Dabby Allison and Richard Petty and you go down the list, they were all there. We got to do that and it was very hearty stuff.

Well what we didn't know is we were being curried favor relative to protecting their interest. It's logical but we just didn't realize it at the time. And we didn't realize we would have to end up being an issue having to decide between various parties. And Ken had an issue with a local constituent problem where the guy who was a gas dealer who's selling fuel and he was competing with a company store not far away and so Ken was asked to try to make this right. Well a lot of people got involved in this issue after Ken introduced his simple little bill to help his constituent. And he beat up an awful lot of people and try to divide an awful lot of people; spent a ton of money. We didn't realize at the time how much or what they were spending money on but after the fact, we heard these wild numbers; well over millions of dollars being spent on this one issue, on this this one bill. By the various constituencies, the association that represented all the oilmen and ancient oil companies and it was bizarre.

Ken and I went down to--and when I say Ken, McCracken Poston, we call him Ken; these are the last three letters of his first name. But we went down and Ken was asked to speak on the retail divorcement issue at a conference at Ponte Vedra Sawgrass Resort. And so went down there, we were each dating at the time so you know we had an outing down on the coast. And in the bar on Saturday night after his speech, after we had done all of our glad-handing, they were having a special on mud slots. It is a chocolate, liqueur, heavy layered drink and we drank those till we got sick. The next morning, he was supposed to meet me for a foursome to play golf and he didn't show. When we made the turn I came to check in, he was sick as a dog; and he ended up coming home that evening and they admitted him straight to the hospital and he was diagnosed

diabetic. I nearly killed one of my best friends with this chocolate overdose and I didn't realize it. And he didn't realize he was diabetic until that moment.

But while he was recovering from this almost diabetic coma that we had put him in with these chocolate drinks, he started thinking about--you know because it's a life or death situation. They said "you were about to go blind if you had not watched this, you could have been three more months, you would have been reverse--irreversible". And so it scared all of us, him mostly but it helped us understand somethings. He'd been getting threatening--not threatening, assertive and challenging you know, communications from folks "we are going to cut you off from going to these fun events and you're going to be just banished" and all these stuff and so it started affecting him. Well bottom line, he got a version of that bill passed while he went through all that and the health issues. It gave him a greater sense of where he was in life and what he wanted really to accomplish. And the fact that they were spending so much money on one issue, on one bill, and nobody knew how much, there was no reporting, he felt like it was crucial that we have some sort of reporting requirements. Basic ethics law where people could have some degree of confidence, create a committee that looked into challenges and go out and tell the world that Georgia has this on the books. This person is trying to influence these legislators, they are spending this amount of money, if it's just dinner or a drink or whatever, its fine; just tell us what it is, we'll make up our own mind. So it wasn't nefarious, it was pretty straight forward. We thought it was sensible as the young Turks "yeah ethics were important, why wouldn't anybody be for ethics in government?"

Well when he introduced this bill, there were a lot of folks who thought it was radioactive; they weren't going to touch it because they were disrupting the way of life. And I was a little reluctant at first to be honest because there were a lot of us who had hoped to be in the house for a number of years and we wanted to walk our way up the chain and be in leadership positions as well. But it was obvious to me; I mean I had been a Miller loyalist so I wasn't going to be on Tom Murphy's priority list. Not that that was a bad thing but it was obvious. And then secondly, when you are in the legislature and you impatient like we were, there were more technical strategic and legislators. They wanted to pass bills, I wanted to help my folks and I was less about writing laws than trying to repeal some. In fact they chuckled at me whenever I told them that I thought we ought to--for every bill being introduced we ought to repeal two laws until we ultimately can put ourselves out of business by having the one. You know "do unto others as you will have them do unto you" and we'd be finished with the legislature, we wouldn't need this anymore. They said "yeah that is going to work there non-lawyer" so they just dismissed me right out. That's fine.

But Ken asked me and I agreed to sign on. I am the number two signer on the Ethics and Government Act. Ken took the bullets, the arrows and led the way. I merely signed on and supported him the whole way. I gave a talk on the floor of the house; it was brief but I showed support. I even quoted Spike Lee, he was popular at that time with the movie that had just come out and ended it with "just do the right thing". It was very straight forward. A reporter, an opinion maker for the local publication here in Atlanta who is still working to this day, wrote a couple of paragraphs about my making remarks and he attributed that--he used the word "bunk" like I had said virtually nothing and it meant nothing. He didn't bother; he looked that I was the number two signer on the bill. He thought that I was just electioneering out of it. But none the less, that was the year I ran for congress; in 1992. But the Ethics and Government Act changed the way people looked at the legislature, at the leadership structure and how we interface with the lobby and community. A lot of really good people out in the halls who were telling their

clients story and all we were asking them to do was just put on the record what you're spending. We don't care how much it is; we are not asking for limits, we just want you to tell the public what you are doing.

SHORT: You mentioned Murphy and Miller. Tell us about your experiences with our extinguished lieutenant governor and Murphy's mausoleum.

FENNEL: (laughter) Well let me give you one story from early on that I don't get a chance to tell. We're all freshmen. We're being feted by the speaker and the leadership. He sends word down to the three of us, "Ken, Ray and Ron, the speaker wants you to go to lunch with him today." We jumped in the car with Butch who was the driver and the speaker and we go to the Commerce Club, we sit in one of the little alcoves over there with our friend from Savannah's-- Mill's picture on the wall. We listen to Butch, and he and one other fella who had walked up, chat about various issues and then we talked about almost nothing the whole time. Have a nice lunch, eat our ice-cream. We get in the car and on our way back, I am sitting in the right side, Ray Holland was in the middle and Ken was on the other side and the speaker says "You know I think we ought to get Ray to go fishing with us this weekend," talking to Butch. And the Speaker didn't think anything more about it. And then Ray, in the back, perks up and says "Me, Mr. Speaker?" (laughter). He said "No, Ray Goff." (laughter) He was talking about the coach. So we gave Ray a pretty hard time about that, still do till this day. But, he said, "Can you talk to that friend of yours?" "You talking to me Mr. Speaker?" "Yeah, that friend of your across the hall, did you talk to him?" I said, "What do you want me to talk to him about Mr. Speaker?" We were just getting out the car at the Capitol. He said "Come on to my office and I'll talk to you." So just the two of us go into his office and he gives me the message he wants me to deliver to Miller. And I am going like okay "There's a phone, there's a phone, there's a phone over there and I am thinking to myself "Why don't you just pick up the phone and call him?" No dutifully I--"Yes sir Mr. Speaker." And down I go downstairs and over to the lieutenant governor's office and I said "Martha, I am here to see the chief" and she said, "Well he is on the phone but he'll be off in a minute" and I said, "Okay I'll wait". So I waited. And then she said, "Okay he'll see you now" I go in there, I said "Chief I don't know what this means if anything but I had lunch with Tom Murphy today and he sent me over here to deliver a message and here it is". So I delivered the message and he says "You tell Tom Murphy" And I said "Hey, hey I'll tell him whatever you want but I don't work for you anymore, I'm not on the staff, I am not an elected offi--" "You tell Tom Murphy". I had to become the relay guy that session because these two stubborn mules would not talk to one another on the phone. It is just one of those interesting moments that I had a chance and a privilege to be a part of.

The two guys were so much alike it was scary. Two old guard, southern Democrats, come from families where they had challenging circumstances growing up but achieved beyond all measure of the obstacles in their way. Both had a feeling that the little guy needed fighting for, who as North Georgians--I mean the speaker was proud of going to North Georgia college and how he fought often to protect their interest in the growth of the school and the legend behind it and Miller about Young Harris. And it was really a fun thing to watch, the two of them very much alike not getting along but they ran the chambers. I watched Zell--I used that number four earlier; four votes, I served four years under Miller, four years at the Democratic Party, four years in the House and four years at the Trade Association. It seems like four is a common thing but those two guys fought one another over the simplest things and they ran each chamber virtually the

same in some respects. I think Zell regretted his early days where he gave more power out to other folks but he had seen what had happened prior to him and he ultimately regained control and Murphy kept control on his side of the--

SHORT: Don't you find it interesting that this current Republican Senate has done the same thing to the lieutenant governor?

FENNEL: Yes

SHORT: As Miller gave up freely?

FENNEL: Yes

SHORT: When he was lieutenant governor?

FENNEL: It's very odd what has happened this time around because a similar group did this as you'll recall to Mark Taylor when he became lieutenant governor; took the power of committee appointments and even assignment of bills away. Mark became a figure head presiding officer and standing for photo-opts. And it was very awkward and I think this group of Republican leaders, there may be one in there who wants to challenge Casey for the nomination the next time around for governor. And they want to thwart his ability to reach the big chair. But there is an ambition in the group but there is also a fear that they are all going to be brought down by some people's failings. And they watch some things that the outgoing governor has done that they haven't liked and that the lieutenant governor was involved with that they didn't like. They are a little frightened by the new story surrounding the existing governor and they feel a domino effect might spoil their whole deal. But it does have a reminiscent quality to the Zell Miller giving up power voluntarily but in this case, he had the opportunity over time with proper allies to get it back.

I think he regretted what he did because there was more influence coming out of the second floor thereafter for a while. And by the time I came to work for him '79, I think the compromise on the two term governor thing and no limits on lieutenant governor and those negotiations to get the power back made a huge difference in how he ran things. And I got to watch that up close for those four years and it was interesting.

SHORT: Similar also I think is the economic condition of the state.

FENNEL: Yes

SHORT: From when you were in the House and today

FENNEL: Correct

SHORT: You had a special session where you called--

FENNEL: on the budget, absolutely. We didn't realize the condition that we had when we first came aboard. But you remember there was an election in 1990 and in 1990, Miller was elected governor. There were only three of us in the House that were supporting Miller that year; everybody else was either forced to support Bubba or they were supporting Johnny on the

Republican ticket. I say forced to, they were encouraged to. Tom Murphy was very clear as to what he wanted without giving direct orders. It was pretty unique artful talent that he had “I don’t think that is a good idea boys” and that’d be pretty much the end of that. But when you have a budget crisis like that, you have an outgoing governor leaving no money in the reserves in the kitty and then you have a downturn, yes you are going to have to deal with some issues. I think this time around might be a little different and that the transition between the two governors is a lot more amicable and it has less of that reserve robin because we put some checks and balances in there after that occurrence before.

But there are difficult decisions that have to be made in budget crisis like that and it tests the mettle of the leadership but it also puts every member of the House or the Senate in almost untenable position. You are forced under the budget balance rule to have a balanced budget but you are also telling your folks back home “I am not raising your taxes”. And then you have to go in there and you have to either cut folks, cut jobs, cut programs or raise somebody’s taxes and it is very uncomfortable. And they are going to find that to be the case this time around as well.

SHORT: One piece of legislation that I recall that you were very active in was the Solid Waste Management Act.

FENNEL: That’s correct. Tires. We have an opportunity so rarely to deal with some environmental issues. We were facing a crisis; we were having some problems and we needed to fund certain things that the environmental entities. And you recall back in the day, the regulator who was responsible for looking after protecting the environment and they guy issuing permits to businesses were two different people. And those were melded under the Reorganization Act of ’72. Miller actually pulled them back apart again ultimately once he became governor but it was after some hue and cries; a lot of it contrive but there was some degree. But the Solid waste Management Act was an important element for us to address we had a finite, real estate and a growing state; we have to manage our waste somehow. And for those of us who were on the Natural Resources Committee, we went and looked at the landfills, they said five years from now, this will be filled and we can no longer add capacity. Here are the fifteen other locations that are going to go offline in the next 15 years. What are you guys going to do about it? We have to permit things, we have to handle the solid waste, the municipal waste, we have to handle a sludge, all these things with toxins in it, tires, you know you go through this entire list so we had to get a handle on it. We wrestled with a lot of knotty issues that I’m not sure we total solved some of the issues but we at least got our arms around it and established the baseline to go forward.

SHORT: Well, you and your fellow horsemen certainly had an impact on the legislature during your time you served. Allow me to read an excerpt from a house resolution passed on March the 6th 1996. “Whereas, said four horsemen have galloped through and trampled over custom, tradition and convention thereby redefining the role of the modern state legislator”. Don’t you think that that’s true?

FENNEL: We might not have intentionally meant to be disrespectful, we might have been considered to be disrespectful. Our purpose was clear; we felt like young, energetic talent ought to have an opportunity to serve. We felt like conventional, old methodologies for doing business might have met their final day. And then we ought to institute some new ways of looking at how

we govern ourselves as a state. Ethics and government act make it clear that we can pre-file bills; make some of the changes necessary to allow us to have access to ready information clearly, easily and properly. Give every member an opportunity to have their bill heard; give the public an opportunity to hear what is going on as we decide these things. Stop all these middle of the night amendments and back door dealing. We thought those were very common sense, rational, reasonable things. If we were defying conventions, so be it. It was what we felt; what we felt like the state deserved and earned and we felt like the leadership would adopt many of these and ironically, they did overtime, but it had to be their idea. We learned some very valuable lessons as young, aggressive maybe impolitic behavior which we were. We were just impatient; we wanted it done and done now and that's the idealism of youth. You recall Winston Churchill's famous quote, "if you're not a liberal when you are in your twenties, you have no heart. If you are not a conservative by the time you are forty, you have no brain". So we were learning along the way, tempering what we had gained as idealism in our twenties. Here we were in our early thirties and we were trying to move the needle probably far more quickly than some of the others. And many others in the chamber, leaders who had been waiting their term for fifteen or more years agreed with us. They just couldn't take the king out yet. And it made for an uncomfortable environment for an awful lot of them.

But it--we were--truth be told, we were being egged on by some of these guys; "yeah keep going, keep going, keep going" but they couldn't say that publicly. They were in a system where they were trapped in this stair step to the top and they all wanted to get there but they didn't have any way out. But they did have a degree of power where they were and so it was in interesting dichotomy for them, it was a frustrating challenge for us because we saw what our future looked like. And it was fifteen years of stair stepping; that wasn't happening for us. We weren't going do that.

SHORT: Well what was the king's reaction? Meaning speaker Murphy to your efforts?

FENNEL: I think he was hurt more than anything else. I think we hurt his feelings because he had done--in his mind he had done so much to embrace us and to bring us along and to show us that he cared about us and that he liked us. I don't think he disliked any of us. Well, Poston might have had a couple of times that tested him but I think in the end, he appreciated what we were trying to do. He saw a little bit of himself in what we were doing from his early days. He was a rebel early on. Bob you saw him early on, you know exactly the fire brand he was early on. I only read about it, you saw it. And we were doing many of the things that he would have done had he been in the legislature in a similar situation just like us. And we did it the right way. We offered legislation, we offered changes, we encouraged, we built consensus, we started doing the things--Ken was better at managing the media side of it because he became the lightning rod I think. Much to Murphy's chagrin sort of helped create that and that foil became a storyline that the press picked up on and lived on for four years or so.

But for those of us who really wanted to just make change and improvement for the better, all we had to do was just hearken back to Murphy's early history and Miller's early history and see that this is exactly what they would have been doing were they there at the time. And so we didn't feel like we were being radical or rude or crude or unusual, we were doing what we felt was right and we were doing it in a way that we knew how at the time and the situation that we were given. Now I do think it hurt Murphy's feelings that he felt like we were being disrespectful to some extent as the way he was running the House. I have an awful lot of fondness and fond

memories of Tom Murphy. He was kind and polite to me; I'll always give him credit for helping get my bridge and to remove the D.O.T commissioner that didn't want to build the bridge the way we wanted it; he and Miller and Terry Coleman.

But we had an opportunity; a rare opportunity. Here was a guy who had been the speaker of the house for twenty five years when we got there. I don't know how long any one person is supposed to have a job but we only let our president and our governor serve two terms. Now I am not a term limits oriented person, I think the voters ought to have the opportunity but I do think in leadership roles, there are tons of talented people who have an opportunity, ought to have an opportunity to get a shot. Its showing what they can do and to help and lead the state. He was probably hurt that we were taking away something important to him and he felt like in the environment he was in, he was the only one uniquely situated to handle the task. And maybe in some of those cases, maybe he was right looking back at it.

SHORT: What is the toughest vote you ever cast?

FENNEL: It wasn't tough at the time but it proved to be interesting for both Poston and I. The speaker had a fight with west point Pepperell and a bill was offered that the speaker wanted but we felt like was anti-business but he was making--the speaker was making a point to a single company. I wasn't in on the back room meeting that told everybody that that was what it was about. And so Poston and I were the only two who voted no out of 180 members on the speaker's bill. It wasn't a tough vote to cast because I knew what I was doing, what was right. But in the end it cost me with the speaker and I looking back at it, I made my point but I got nothing out of it with the speaker in terms of standing up to him. And I didn't tell him in advance that I was going to do this; that probably more than anything else. Whenever I supported Miller for governor, I went to him in advance after the word had gone out that Bubba was going to run and he was supporting Bubba. I went to him ahead of time, I said "Mr. speaker you know that I worked for Zell for four years and I am very fond of him and I think he'd make a great governor and I am going to be out there supporting him and I just wanted you to know that so you didn't hear it from someone else". He said "I understand son, I really appreciate you coming to tell me" and I never had a problem with him after that.

The day after the election I was at the Capitol and I had just gotten re-elected to my second term and I was at Zell Miller's victory party, standing on the stage behind him, all the cameras rolling. The next morning I went by to see speaker, they asked me to come in there for something and he said "I saw you on TV last night with your friend". I said "well we are really proud Mr. speaker; we are looking forward to what lies ahead". He said "he'll do fine" and that was it. But he acknowledged that early on I had to be where I had to be and he had no problem and he didn't hold it against me.

SHORT: They became good friends at that party.

FENNEL: Yes. It was important. They had so many similar experiences, the state was facing such crisis and they understood that the leaders that they had become overtime and what they knew. They knew way more than anybody else; about how government worked, how the state was structured, how its finances were and what the moment called for. And they had fought their battles as the leader of one chamber and then the other. Murphy understood; "this guy now has a different job, I actually like the guy and I know the guy knows what he is doing; I'm comfortable

in the role he is now going to be playing. I'll turn my attention to go fight the other asshole across the hall just like I do all the time". And so it was fun to watch for some of us; to see to how they interacted with one another differently.

SHORT: So you left the House to run for Congress.

FENNEL: Yea what was I thinking?

SHORT: What prompted the decision?

FENNEL: My congressman for ten years was a guy by the name of Bill Stuckey. My congressman for the next ten years was a guy by the name Bo Ginn. My congressman for the next ten years was a fellow by the name of Lindsay Thomas. Lindsay Thomas announced the first week of January of 1992 that he was not running for reelection; that he had taken a job with the Atlantic Committee for the Olympic games with his good friend Billy Payne. And he was going to help run the government affairs operation and help put on the world in the gaming operation in Atlanta and he was leaving Congress after ten years. Open seat. Ten years, ten years, ten years. I have served in the House for four years, I have some name recognition, I was on Miller's staff for four years, I was at the party for a number of years, why not me?

I never had true ambition to be in Congress. I was interested in it and I had spent some time with Bo Ginn in Washington when he was there. I was in school with his daughter, I used to babysit his son on the weekends in Milan, Brian who ironically in 1992 was a staff member of Lindsay Thomas and who ran that year in that race and the two of us, having a similar demographic profile, young, politically connected, worked in politics, knew the same people, he was from the north part of the district and I was from the south part of the district. We in essence knocked each other out of the race by running at the same time; we split the demographic bar. Barbara Christmas and the Mayor of Hinesville out of nowhere ended up in run off and Brian and I, with just a few hundred votes separating us worth third and fourth knocked each other out of the race; it's a field of seven. But the bottom line, I ran because I knew it would be another ten years before could get a chance to serve.

My colleague in the state house, Republican Jack Kingston, we were great friends and we posed for pictures during the sessions and we were looking forward to the general election campaign; him versus me. We know it is going to be a clean campaign because our families know each other; we're not going to say negative things about each other. We were just going to run on the issues, what distinguishes you from me on these issues. We were actually looking forward to the first positive race for a lot of people in a long time. Well it was the year of the woman; '92. Did you get that memo? I didn't get that memo in time apparently. And Barbara Christmas won that nomination and went on to lose to Jack Kingston who ironically travelled around the district with a giant poster board with TV cameras in tow. On every court house steps, he signed this term limits pledge "Six terms and out." That's twelve years. That was eighteen years ago and he is slated to be the-- maybe the appropriations chairman come January because of his longevity in Congress.

I've told you ten years; I saw ten, ten, ten, the next opportunity for me to run would probably be at least ten years down the road. It's been eighteen and there is still not an open seat so that was what prompted me. I felt like if I was ever going to take an opportunity. Let me give you this one little story as an aside. Everybody said go, do it, run, except one person; one person out of the

entire state of Georgia. Everybody was encouraging to me except one person. The person I wanted most to say "Yes I'll help you", Zell Miller. The boys and I that I call the gang of four, the boys, we went down to his office and I waited and I went in, just me and sat down with him. I told him what I wanted to do and this was right after Lindsay's announcement and I had spent a few days making phone calls and talking to potential fund raisers and such. And I said "I'll like to run for this open seat in Congress and I wanted to ask for your blessing and your support". He plomped down in his chair and said "I can't do it". I said--I mean it was just like he poured cold water on me. I was hurt to start with. He said "you can't hit this in Washington. Now pick up that phone right there and raise your \$50000 right now if you will run for the state senate instead". He was the only person in the state of Georgia who wanted me to run for something other than what I what I was asking to run for.

And you know what? the old codger was right. I've regretted that decision all this time; it cost me an awful lot of money, of my family and friends to lose. And it knocked me out of politics for a while. In fact, I have not run for office since but it was important for him to be clear about doing that. This is where a true leader is. He said "you can help us more by being in the state senate seat. I would have walked into that state senate seat. The state senator at that time was weak, he was not well liked in the Senate and he was disenfranchising people left and right at home. I could have beaten him easily and I could probably been there for a number of years. And you might not have heard about lieutenant governor Mark Taylor. You might have heard about somebody else. But it's one of those moments in time, I felt like I had to do it at the time. Like I said we had already gone through this whole procedure and I was pretty much done in the House after being the number two cosigner on the Ethics and Government Act. So I felt like it was an appropriate exit for me to take from the House.

SHORT: Well have you ruled out politics? Do you have any plans to run for public office again?

FENNEL: Not sure that that's in the near future for me. I wouldn't rule it out, I enjoy public service, I enjoy doing an awful lot of things to help other folks and I have been doing that since I left the legislature. I spent a year totally away from politics; totally. And then I said "You know I want to do something different than the home building business. I had spent ten years of the family business and I wanted to do something different. I was tired of chasing sub- contractors down; it just didn't interest me anymore. My dad was a year away from retirement; he and I talked about it. I had the prospect of either replacing my dad's expertise, contacts and the working relationship I had with him as he retired with somebody of seasoned nature like that to keep the business going. Or I could fold the tent and move on; which is what we ultimately decided to do. We took three years and ratcheted down the company.

But I wanted to do something different. Something that was people oriented and I always wanted having to spend some time working for Miller in Atlanta. I wanted to make it in Atlanta and see what there was. It was growing fast, I knew there would be opportunities, I didn't necessarily want to go work for corporate America and be on this fast track to make a billion dollars; that wasn't my mission. I wanted to help folks and do it in such a way as I could be around politics, I could help folks and I could still survive. And so Sea Island company called me and said "we have an issue that you would normally be helping us with in the legislature but we can't seem to get help right now with our current delegation. We want you to help us". So I said "well I'll come over and talk about it". I went over to Sea Island and we talked about it.

And I worked over there as a young kid. I've worked summer jobs, and I worked internships, I

worked you know my way through college at Sea Island Company. I did everything in the hotel and the restaurant side of the business work; the beach club, the golf club on the weekend, bussing tables to you know every job you can imagine a young teenager would do to work in a hospitality business. And it was an awful lot of fun. The company was great to work for and with, and the people were ones that I became lifelong friends with. But when they asked me to come over and study an issue, it was an issue on workers' compensation insurance. They were insuring, self-insuring every employee at Sea Island. And they had set up this self-insured program and they needed to some help with the insurance commissioner and crafting the legislation to make sure that they were allowed to what they had been doing.

And so I came to the Capitol in '95, I had left office in January of '93 so I let two years expire before I came back. And I helped re-draft that section of the law on self-insurance funds; and Georgia captives, domestic captive insurance companies for Sea Island. And I did that during the session of '95 and I liked it. I liked spending time in the atmosphere again but I enjoyed representing folks that I represented as an elected official but just in a different capacity articulating their views. And Sea Island Company was a member of the Georgia Hospitality and Travel Association, an umbrella group and Bob King had lobbied me on a couple of issues over the time I was in the legislature so I was familiar with him. Great guy, Georgia Tech product, family at Sea Island, his son still lives there today. But Bob said "I've got an opening coming up at my shop, the guy who was my vice president is taking the similar job at the national the American Hotel and Motel Association" So I went over and talked to him about it, bottom line, we decided that we'd give it a try for three months to see what each one of us felt about the job and my performance and whether I liked it.

After three months, Bob felt like I had taken to it and I kind of liked it and so we agreed on some terms and I spent nearly four years at the Trade Association Georgia Hospitality and Travel Association. Bob hired me with the intent on allowing me to be the successor CEO to him when he retired and he said it'll be between three and four years. And so three years, Bob and I had this conversation. I said "are we needing to start this timeline of your retirement?" And he said "I think I want to stick around another three or four more years". Well that was my clear signal; it was time to exit. So we took several months over the course of that year, it was '98 and I said I'll get you through the elections. I helped--part of my roles, the advocacy role and so I actually put together the debate; the first debate that actually occurred that year of all three candidates for governor. Guy Milner, Jack Cashin the libertarian nominee and Roy Barnes and it was well televised, it was a great event. I gave a package of material to each of the candidates and then allowed them to ask each other a question and it was a ton of fun. But I left there and started my own business in the consulting business and brought that client along, along with the workers comp client from Sea Island; those were my first two clients.

I did that for a year until I partnered up with a young man who had been the executive director of the Republican Party of Georgia, John Teasley. We were both on the food bank board at the time. And during the breaks at the planning session, he and I were talking about how we left our long time employer and started our own consulting business and we were finding some of the same problems, how do you get insurance, worker's comp, what do you do about office space, phones; we were sharing some of the same war stories. Well the irony was he was executive director of the Republican Party the year I defeated the only incumbent Republican. He hated me for years before he ever met me. And the irony was that we ended up being partners and true friends and eighteen months later, he was dead of cancer at forty seven. But we started a company together called Georgia Capital Associates. With his Republican rolodex and my

Democratic rolodex, it was a good fit.

We had an awful lot of clients. We had some interesting people come through our shop. We had John Stuckey the Republican Party Chair, Gene Stuckey, the former Democratic National Committee finance member in a long time; Dodge County politico. We had several people come to the shop including Rich Golick who worked in a law firm side under Stuckey who ended up being the former leader for the governor etcetera. And a number of other people; Megan Middleton who is now the chief of lobbyist--internal lobbyist, the manager of governmental affairs for the city of Atlanta under Shirley Franklin and now Kasim Reed, Elmer Stancil worked for me for a while; he is now the governmental affairs guy for the department of Economics and development. It was just an awful lot of really interesting people that we had a chance to work with and clients that we worked with. That's what I have been doing since the legislature; helping clients, a variety of clients. I still have the hotel industry and restaurant industries clients as well. So it's an awful lot of people.

SHORT: How is Georgia doing now that it's in the tourism and hospitality business?

FENNEL: We had two times over the last decade, the 9/11 stopped everybody from flying so that hurt our business an awful lot. And then this downturn in the economy, we experienced a little bit of a dip but we're on the way back. We have a growing hospital--we have 125,000 hotel rooms in Georgia and we do an annual occupancy; it is 60% a little bit better. So every night there are that many people, some hundred and some odd thousand people a night staying in these on average and then some nights we sell out. And then we have--you know we serve meals to 10 million Georgians or 12 million. We have 6-8 million visitors; we are serving 10-20 million meals depending upon what conservative or average measure you can make a day in our food service establishments. You don't hear of any food borne outbreaks so we are doing well. We're turning over to Dallas; local and state government relies heavily on the World Congress Center as they draw the Georgia International Convention Center at the Comp Galleria, The Savannah Maritime, Trade Center, the--other locations around the state. So we have a vibrant tourism economy and we're second only to Agri-business. As a revenue stream for the state of Georgia and we're very cash flow near term oriented. So if the planes quit flying, the state of Georgia gets a real problem on its hands with its cash flow. And so our job is to make sure that airport continues to have a lift-off every 30 seconds and that they keep landing. And that the tourism product in town is fresh, appealing, attractive, and that we have good customer service in our hotels, restaurants and other attractions.

SHORT: Some people believe that casino or gambling will be profitable in the city of Atlanta.

FENNEL: Probably would be. Other states have done it. I don't think you want to rely on it; I don't think you want to budget against it, but I think the reality is if you look at the number of tags at any of the casinos in our neighboring states of Mississippi and Tennessee, and those places where--rubber tire market is what we call the cars traveling to visit another destination. Look at those car tags, look at the destinations for some of these aircraft leaving Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport. Tunica, Mississippi is a nice hotspot. All these places in Alabama, Las Vegas is huge; we do spend money as Georgians on such things. Miller understood this whenever he established the lottery and he had a focused purpose for the revenues derived to fund education; brilliant. That ought to be the same model for any future opportunity and I think

the new governor is going to have to take a look at that because for the first time in the upcoming fall semester, there is a potential shortage of money available for scholarships that we've promised to these students. I think we are going to have a fund shortage in the lottery account for the first time. We are going to have to replace revenue, we are going to have to either tighten standards or replace revenue; you tell me which. And I think that is a very tough decision the upcoming legislature and the upcoming administration will have to deal with. Governor elect Deal has said that he has an open mind and an ear to any of these suggestions. So we'll see, they have to make the decision collectively.

SHORT: What about horse racing?

FENNEL: I'm for it. We have a lot of horse flesh in the state of Georgia. A lot of people who understand horses, who raise them, who train them, who stable them, who cared for them; I am baffled frankly that the outgoing governor whose degree from the university is in large animal veterinary and he understands horses better than anybody, why he wouldn't have allowed the voters to consider. That option--I am baffled frankly by that and it is going to have to be considered by the next administration. I know we have been talking about it for forty fifty years in the state but folks are going to go to Kentucky or elsewhere to spend their money if that is what they want is the horse racing but remember that is only a small sliver of the revenue opportunity in that business. The rearing of quality horseflesh and marketing and branding them as Georgia-raised and stabling and training and that sort of thing is a huge industry. We have a great amount of real estate in the state of Georgia. We have a lot of quality locations for making these things work and we are tourism oriented. We are growing faster and agri-business is number one, tourism is number two, this marries those two entities of revenue streams for the state of Georgia in one activity. It makes way too much sense for us not to give serious consideration to.

SHORT: Let me ask you this question. Which political figure do you most admire and why?

FENNEL: Well this probably is the easiest question I have been asked in a while. It's Zell Miller because I have seen him up, close and personal. I haven't always liked things I have seen from a distance but I'm extremely fond of him as a person and his principles. And I watched a lot of things happen without realizing at the time what I was learning but I have replicated an awful lot of those things in my life and I've seen mistakes that have been made and I have tried to avoid those. I've made mistakes, he ran for Congress three times and lost; at least I had sense enough to stop at one. Sorry governor. But it was for me the best learning that I could have ever hoped for at that time in my life. I think he has been--after his political career he has been dissected in so many different ways by others and many of them have hit the nail on the head. There is a guy who is fairly principled; there was a seminal moment in his life and in his political life where things changed right there. The Daschle and Biden launch, the bombing of the World Trade Center, the moments in time where you say "okay I don't have to answer to anybody anymore, I am going to be who I truly am inside and I'm going to say whatever the hell I want" and I admire him for that. He is a courageous fellow and it was an honor and privilege to have the opportunity to learn with him overtime.

SHORT: That reminds me of the famous Herman Talmadge story about when he was defeated

and was walking down the streets one day and fellow walks up to him and said “senator, I bet you don’t remember me do ya?” And Talmadge replied “hell no, and I don’t have to anymore”.

FENNEL: That senate campaign of 1980 with Herman Talmadge was a sad thing for me to watch up close. I traveled with Zell once to the Jekyll Island Convention Center where we appeared in front of different groups and we did it three or four times I guess. We showed up one time, I drove up and Dawson--it was the Jaycees convention. And Dawson Mathis was there and his big RV that he had his big face painted on “Dawson Mathis for the US Senate” and Zell chuckled when we drove up; he said “It figures he’s here on that.” And when we got out of the car, he said, “Let’s go over there” and knocked on the door and Dawson came--opened the door and he was all ruffled and it was obvious that he had been awakened. To watch the interaction between these two longtime buddies just jibe one another was a lot of fun.

Later that summer when we had Herman Talmadge on the program at the Aquarama and after the speech, I drove Zell to the little airport over there on Jekyll Island and someone had dropped off Senator Talmadge and he was waiting on his plain to arrive to pick him up. And we were there to load up and send him on and I was driving separately, I was just putting Miller on the plane. And Talmadge was sitting there in the lobby and he had his shoe up and he was picking at a hole in the bottom of his shoe. I wish I had a picture of that; it is framed in my mind of him with a shoe he had worn a hole in. At the end of his political career, it was sort of a melancholic statement in one visual shot that seared on my brain; and he was alone and looked forlorn in that moment. And I heard a story many months later about an aide who pointed out to him that he had to replace his shoes. He has worn those and the senator said “okay these are still fine, I just need them fixed”. He said “no you need a new pair of shoes senator its time”. And he took a \$10 bill out of his wallet to give to the aide to go get him a pair of shoes. That is how disconnected ultimately from the real world that twenty-three year political career had insulated him to be. And that snapshot was reinforced in my brain with that commentary from a staffer of him sitting there picking a hole in the bottom of his shoe at that little airport in 1980. It was interesting.

SHORT: Ron looking back on your political career, what was your proudest moment?

FENNEL: Getting a new bridge for my community. It would endure for fifty to a hundred years. A lot of people wanted to see Brunswick prosper and we knew that as a port city, there are only three ways to prosper. Number one you can import, number two you can export or number three you can fill it up with jobs that are probably not advantageous to your community like paper mills and such. Because our bridge blocked our port for fifty years, we were unable to get a port traffic that generated enough activity to make it profitable. We got paper mills instead. And over the next one hundred years, my hometown, thanks to the good folks who helped support it along the way; it started with Lindsey Thomas and Jack Kingston helped us an awful lot. Once he got to the federal level but Tom Murphy, Zell Miller, Terry Coleman, Joe Kennedy, these guys at the state level helped an awful lot after the local community did two crucial things. Number one they committed two million dollars in front loaded funding, and number two, the sent a Democrat to the legislature because that’s what Tom Murphy needed.

In social groups and in civic clubs, I used the phrase that I had learned as a valuable lesson about when I was in party politics prior to getting elected. And I said if you want to get an audience with the pope, you are not going to send your Baptist minister, that’s it. I’m a Democrat, the leadership are Democrats, I know them, they know me and I’ve offered myself and they said “if

we send a Democrat, we'll get a little attention and maybe something of what we want". And so, getting that bridge was the seminal moment in my career. I am very proud of it; it's in my wedding pictures by the way. I got married on Jekyll Island under the giant Oak at the Jekyll Island club and the bridge is framed in the pictures behind.

SHORT: That's neat.

FENNEL: Yes

SHORT: What was your biggest disappointment?

FENNEL: Well I think I just shared it with the Zell Miller story about my congressional run as my biggest disappointment while I was in the legislature. But as a legislative disappointment, probably how the ethics process unfolded and what it did to an awful lot of people that I had a great deal of respect for and how they treated those of us who were up starts and energetic, ambitious, and maybe too aggressive young Democrats.

SHORT: How would you like to be remembered?

FENNEL: Well, you know, everybody wants to know that they made a difference while they were here. I like to think that those of us who get involved in public service feel like we can help an awful lot of people and not get the credit. And there are an awful lot of people who demand the credit for doing nothing. And for those of us who truly believe in public service and I've worked for non- profits, and have worked as a public servant, both in staff positions and elected positions and appointed positions and in all of those, I felt like I was able to be a part of helping somebody or some group or some larger thing. I just like for people to say "he was a good guy and he tried to help folks".

SHORT: But you certainly had a wonderful political career and you are doing well in your after political life, I'm sure there is something we've left out.

FENNEL: Well I am blessed to have a wonderful wife and a pair of young sons that I hope one day will find it interesting to look back on dad's career and projects like this so they can see and hear stories about the times that I was involved with and excited about; and how I tried to make a difference. It's interesting that my wife and I probably ought to get this story on the record. I related to you earlier about my business partnership with a Republican; the Republican Party executive director. John Teasley hated me for the first few years he had heard my name because I defeated an incumbent while he was executive director. When we finally met, we realized each of us that we seemed to be alright guys and we had lot in common and we had come from similar humble backgrounds; he from Columbus and me from Odum and ultimately Brunswick. And it made for conversations that you don't normally have with folks that you are considered enemies with. But once we formed our business partnership and we started growing the business and his diagnoses with cancer evidence then went into MD Anderson and getting the cancer treatment, I really lost a brand new friend very quickly. And it was kind of a tragic thing. Those of us who cared about him--once he learned he was ill, he married his girlfriend of four years. And those eighteen months, the last eighteen months of his life, he was married. And those of us who cared about him checked on his widow after his passing.

I got a call one day and his widow says “hey there’s a little gathering at my house this afternoon for cocktails you need to come by”. True I went by, I had cocktails, met a lot of folks; very nice folks, stayed about forty-five minutes and I had a date that night and so off I went. And about two weeks later, I get another call; “there’s cocktails again, two nights from now can you come?” “Sure I’ll come”. And I went by there and no more than five minutes after I got in there and said hello to some of the same people, it was just the two of us left; everybody bolted. I said “well its early, I’m hungry, are you hungry?” And we went out to dinner. Bottom line, three years later we were married and we’ve been together for almost eight years. It was very odd that that relationship would grow out of that partnership and that odd thing.

Well before John passed away, he was very close to Paul Coverdell. He helped Paul get elected; he was such a big fan of Paul Coverdell. I had known Paul from days in the state senate. A lot of interesting characters in the state senate whenever I worked for Zell. There was a guy named Roy Barnes, I don’t know whatever happened to him, guy named Nathan Deal came along there, different interesting people at the time. But Paul Coverdell was one of those guys and he was kind of a leader of the Senate; very few Republicans at the time in the Senate. But John was proud to help Paul get elected to the US Senate and then when he passed away so suddenly, the irony upon irony, his political hero Paul Coverdell getting elected and then my political mentor Zell Miller replacing him. And here’s what is even more ironic. Take three months, step back from when Paul Coverdell died, that’s when John died. Paul gave the eulogy at John’s funeral. So in a four month period of time, I lost one of my good friends, his political mentor died and my political mentor took his place. It was very strange and it was during that period of time when I met and ultimately grew to fall in love with the woman that would be my wife. It is one of those moments in time that kind of chokes you up when you look back at it and it’s rather interesting.

SHORT: Very interesting.

FENNEL: Yeah. A lot of fun being involved in politics and Georgia and if people have an interest in it, they always have an opportunity. I hired two young men whenever I ran for Congress that I had in my office in Brunswick and one young man that I had that worked in my office in Statesboro. The two young men that worked in my Brunswick office, Peter Kennedy who went on to be Pierre Howard’s press secretary when he was lieutenant governor, Phil Smith hired off of the University of Georgia campus president Young Democrats. He had worked for Doug Bernard and couple of others but he worked for me for three years and managed my congressional campaign later. He is the south-east director for the concord coalition, the debt reduction crown now. And the third young man that I hired to run my Statesboro north district office was a guy named Chris Clark. And he came on as an aide, a driver, he asked me how I did it with Zell Miller and how I can get close to somebody and I recommended if the guy is running for something or if he is going to meetings, volunteer to be a driver. Be with the guy; be in the room, volunteer, do whatever you can. And he did so for a guy named George Sonny Perdue and he rode through that and he worked his way up. He served three posts in the governor’s-- Governor Perdue’s administration, GEFA, DNR, and he served in other posts. He now is the president and CEO of the Georgia Chamber of Commerce.

These were young people who had an interesting serving, looking for an avenue to serve, I needed talent at the time, just like Zell Miller hired me. I was cheap talent at the time; raw talent. But, these young men, they are out there, they were juniors and seniors at colleges and

universities all over the state right now. They are looking for an opportunity to get involved. And I just encourage everyone of them to just tap into the resources of the existing establishment, attach like a tick and move and stay with it and go learn because there is a wealth of knowledge and a ton, a ton of fun being involved and helping other people. And politics is a great way to do it and it has been an avocation, it's been a vocation for me, part of the time. And now in addition to my real estate and my nonprofit work, you know I help advocate for companies and for associations and folks to make sure that government and business don't run afoul of one another and they understand each other's rules and they try to help each other. I don't spend money like some of these big shot lobbyists who entertain an awful lot, I just articulate the views and the importance of rational positions and I'm a source of information. And that's fine for me; I'm enjoying it.

SHORT: Thanks very much Ron Fennel.

FENNEL: Thank you Bob.