Six Speakers of the House

Oral History

Washington State Legislature
Oral History Program

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An Oral History

Interviews by Vince Schleitwiler

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Legislative Oral History Program
Washington State Legislature
Bernard Dean, Chief Clerk of the House
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Preface

The oral histories in this volume are comprised of the memories and experiences captured through interviews with six living speakers of the Washington State House of Representatives, all of whom have since retired: Robert Schaefer (Speaker, 1965-1967); William Polk (Speaker, 1981-1983); Wayne Ehlers (Speaker, 1983-1987); Joe King (Speaker, 1987-1993); Brian Ebersole (Speaker, 1993-1995); and Clyde Ballard (Speaker, 1995-1999, Co-Speaker, 1999-2001). Providing context for their terms of office is Allen "Dog Bite" Hayward, who served as legal counsel for the House Republicans for over thirty years, and who knew many of these individuals personally. These interviews were conducted on behalf of the Washington State Legislature and the Washington State Historical Society by Vincent Schleitwiler in 2019-2020.

The position of Speaker of the House holds significant impact in the history of Washington State. It is the speaker who serves as the chief leader of the House of Representatives and ensures the passage of legislation supported by the majority party through the House. The men who have held this office are both Democrats and Republicans and possessed a variety of backgrounds and occupations prior to ascending to speaker. Between them, they possess well over seventy years of experience in service to the people of Washington State.

During the decades chronicled in these interviews, several momentous events occurred that impacted Washingtonians. From recession-era budgetary measures to concerns of gender and racial equity, these speakers provide knowledge and perspective unique to their position and to the times in which they governed. Each speaker comments on some of the events specific to their own terms, while also recalling broader trends and movements in the legislative history of our state.

Allen Hayward noted in his interview: "They [the Speakers of the House] do the very best they can, knowing that whatever happens is not going to be, necessarily, the right thing. And even if it is the right thing for them, it isn't necessarily going to be the right thing for the next year, or the next decade. You just do the best you can and do what you can do." As Washingtonians, we are indebted to these individuals not only for their service and integrity, but for their forethought in leaving behind this record of their past challenges and accomplishments to aid and inform their successors in the days ahead.

Gwen Whiting
Lead Curator, Washington State Historical Society

Robert Schaefer

Robert McMaster Schaefer was born in Seattle on April 19, 1930, and grew up in Clark County, Washington. He passed away on February 27, 2022. He and his sister were adopted by Louis Schaefer, a Vancouver attorney active in Democratic Party politics, and his wife, Mildred, the daughter of a prominent family. Her father, Judge Donald McMaster, was born in Glasgow, Scotland, and moved as a child to Canada and then to Camas, Washington, where his family opened a mercantile store and helped found the local Presbyterian church.

While Schaefer was in high school, his father died suddenly. He attended Clark College, where he met his wife of sixty-five years, Sally, and went on to Willamette University, eventually taking a degree in law and working in the Clark County prosecutor's office. Schaefer also entered the Army Reserve, went on active duty as a legal officer for the Arctic Test Center in Alaska, where Sally taught school. He ultimately retired as a captain in the Army's Judge Advocate General division.

After an election campaign whose expenses totaled a now-unthinkable $560, Schaefer entered the Legislature in 1959, as a representative from the 49th District. In 1963, Representative William Scott "Big Daddy" Day had ousted Speaker John L. O'Brien, leading a small group of dissident Democrats in a coalition with the Republican minority. After the Democrats expanded their majority in the 1964 elections, Schaefer was chosen to succeed Speaker Day, and was hailed as the leader of a new generation of talented young Democrats.

The 1965 legislative term was unusually long and contentious, due to an epic forty-seven-day deadlock over redistricting that drew in both chambers of the Legislature, along with newly elected Republican Governor Dan Evans. On April 29th, near the session's close, the Capitol and the wider region were shaken by a powerful earthquake. Subsequently, Schaefer decided that the demands of his position left him unable to spend time with his young family, and he retired from the Legislature prior to the 1966 elections.

For Schaefer, the speakership was just an early chapter in a remarkably long and productive career. After leaving the Legislature, he remained an influential and sought-after figure in the state Democratic Party and went on to shape the development of Clark County through his involvement with the Vancouver branch campus of Washington State University, Battle Ground State Park, the growth of

high-tech industry in the area, and countless other issues.

Long past the age when most of his peers have retired, Schaefer's profound interest in policy details is unabated. Throughout his life he remained as passionate about transportation planning as he must have been when his mentor Julia Butler Hansen brought him onto the House's Highways Committee as a freshman legislator, over fifty years ago.

Vince Schleitwiler: Speaker Schaefer, I'd like to begin by talking about what in your personal background and prior experience prepared you to become speaker. I understand you were adopted and grew up in Clark County. You met your wife at Clark College. Do you want to talk a little bit about your early life and early career, and how that prepared you to become speaker?

Robert Schaefer: Well, my father was very active in the Democratic Party, as I was growing up. So I came, when I was old enough, involved with the Young Democrats, in politics. So basically, I was interested in all forms of government, at that time. Basically, my family lived here, and my grandparents actually started the first mercantile store in Camas, Washington and were the first settlers there, and started the Presbyterian church. So there is some background, of history, that my family has been involved with. My grandfather also was a judge here, and practiced law in Vancouver [Washington], and so was my father.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Your grandfather was named Donald McMaster, is that correct?

Mr. Schaefer: Yes. Right.

Mr. Schleitwiler: And your father's name?

Mr. Schaefer: Louis Schaefer.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Thank you.

Mr. Schaefer: So basically, my mother's family was very active in Camas and in Vancouver as she was growing up, and she became very active. My father did, too, in community affairs.

My father died of a heart attack when I was a senior in high school, so I decided to stay in Vancouver, and went to Clark College for two years and graduated from there. I decided to go to Willamette University, where I finished my undergraduate work. And I went to law school there. And the reason I went to law school, basically, was that the prosecuting attorney here, [R.] DeWitt Jones, said, "If you are going to decide to become a lawyer, I'd have a spot for you as the deputy prosecutor here in Vancouver, at Clark County Courthouse. And so basically, I did take the practice of law seriously and went to Willamette Law School, graduated, and then came out and went to work in the prosecutor's office.

And I joined the Army Reserve also at that time. Later, I went into the Army on active duty, and was stationed, during my time, as the acting legal officer for the Arctic Test Center, in Alaska, where it got down to about sixty below zero. My wife and I lived up there, and she taught school while we were there. And I was there for a little over a year and a half, and then came home and was discharged, and then took a commission in the Reserve and ended up retiring as a captain in the Judge Advocate General section of the Army.

But, basically, my interest in politics was, I think, being so active in the Clark County prosecutor's office, where you represent, actually, all of the different departments. And I helped to write the regional planning act while I was working there. So I became very active in planning and development for our county, which actually, also, made me very interested in politics, which affected the different ways that we adopt rules and regulations, and laws, that affect our community and the state.

So basically, after I had been in the prosecutor's office for about another year, then I went into private practice, but before I did that, I had filed for the Legislature, in 1958, and was elected, in 1959, to the Legislature, as one of the youngest members of the Legislature.

Mr. Schleitwiler: And I hear you spent five hundred and sixty dollars on the campaign. Is that right?

Mr. Schaefer: That's right. Actually, it's a lot different than it is today. Here, in Vancouver, in Clark County, our district was the only three-man district, or three-representative district, in the state. We ran, basically, in the Grange Halls. That's where you'd go for most of your political meetings and debates, when you're running for election. And that was kind of interesting, because I think not too many areas have the Grange Halls as their basic place for campaigning.

So basically, after I was elected, I went to Olympia, and because of my relationship with Julia Butler Hansen, I was fortunate enough to be put on the Highway Committee in the House. And she was a great teacher and helped me develop different leadership positions in the House of Representatives. I became chairman of the Fish and Game Committee, and with most men who loved fishing and hunting, I was very popular—with the different legislators. And you gain special friendships in the Legislature, just like you do in any type of organization you belong to, and that built my base up when I ran for speaker.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Is there anyone in particular that you want to mention, in terms of those friendships within the Legislature?

Mr. Schaefer: Basically, you gain certain friendships and interests. Julia Butler Hansen was one. And when John O'Brien was speaker, I was a floor leader for John. John, had been speaker for such a long time, and a lot of different legislators—and that's the reason the coalition was formed, became locked in. They did not have a relationship with him, and therefore they wanted to make sure that they got somebody other than John to be elected as speaker. And that's the reason the coalition was formed, with Daddy Day, as we called him, or Bill Day [William Scott "Big Daddy" Day led a coalition of dissident Democrats who joined with the Republican minority to oust O'Brien and elect Day as speaker for the 1963 legislative session]. And basically, they supported me also, when I decided to run for speaker, and was elected [after the Democrats won a larger majority in the 1964 elections].

Mr. Schleitwiler: And you were chosen in 1964.

Mr. Schaefer: 1964. That's correct.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Do you have any special recollections of your first day, or the beginning of your speakership?

Mr. Schaefer: I think if you preside over any group, and a large group like the ninety-nine members of the Legislature, you are a little bit unsure of yourself. Basically, it went very well, because of the chief clerk [Representative "Si" Holcomb], and people, I think, recognized it. One of the difficulties was, at the time that I first started, the press corps was sitting in front of the speaker's podium. And they were a distraction, not only, I think, to myself, but also to the members of the Legislature. So I decided to move the press corps out of that position, because they were having influence on legislation that was being passed.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You already mentioned a few names, but can we talk about some of the key people, personalities, you encountered during your time?

Mr. Schaefer: You had a lot of young legislators. You had a lot of power, with Julia Butler Hansen and the highways. Most districts had highway concerns, and wanted improvements, and so we had been involved in the tolls and transportation package. It was very important at the time that I was in the Legislature. And Julia really did a good job of making sure the commission and the Legislature were working together on projects that improved the transportation system and ferry system of the state of Washington.

I basically got to know many of the senators. I was fortunate enough to have, as my senator from my district, Frank Foley, who was the chairman, when I was speaker, of the Budget Committee in the Senate. That helped me work out agreements with the Senate that I might not have been able to do without his help.

Mr. Schleitwiler: I can go through names of some of the folks who were in your leadership team, but I don't know how important those roles were. If any of these names suggest things you recollect and want to talk about, please do. You mentioned John L. O'Brien, I'm sure there may be a few things to say about him, and Avery Garrett—

Mr. Schaefer: John had a lot of experience, and I think he did a lot of very good things while he was speaker. I think the problem is that you can only hold those offices for a reasonable period of time, and I think that he had been in that position so long that a lot of people that wanted to move up weren't able to do it, because everything was based on the older members, who had been with John from the beginning. And that's understandable.

Mr. Schleitwiler: And you were seen as a leader, or a prominent figure, in this younger group?

Mr. Schaefer: I really didn't—I worked with all groups, and even had a good working relationship with Slade Gorton and Dan Evans [later, Governor Daniel J. Evans] when they were in the House and I was in a leadership position. And we got along and worked together. I think it's a working relationship you have with people that really makes a difference.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Did you want to talk more about Dan Evans, or Slade Gorton?

Mr. Schaefer: Dan was governor when I was speaker. That year we had the earthquake. And we had a very long session, trying to pass transportation and highway bills. And I can remember, the day after the earthquake hit, I was in the Capitol at that time, and the chandelier in the middle of the Capitol was bouncing, and you could hear this big thud, going "Bang, bang, bang." We were all wanting to get out of the building, the capitol, because we didn't know what was going to happen. So it was an exciting time. After that earthquake, I went down to see Dan, and I said, "I think the guy upstairs is telling us maybe we'd better get out of this legislative session and go home!"

He agreed, and we did, very shortly after the earthquake, finish up the session, which was an extra session, that went on for a period of time. We were trying to pass a transportation package at that time—it dealt with the state patrol, and ferries—with a one-cent tax. That failed in the House, on the last night. We were trying to put that package together in the special session, and it didn't make it. That was one of my disappointments.

I was very strong on public power and wanted to make sure that we maintained a strong public-power state. And most of the legislators from—Tacoma City Light, and Seattle, those areas on the western part of the state of Washington are almost all public power. So I had a strong nucleus to protect that area of our state.

Mr. Schleitwiler: I want to talk more about some of the things that you worked on, but let me run a few more names by you, to see who you want to talk about. You mentioned Slade Gorton. You mentioned William Day. There were other people, like Leonard Sawyer, who were in leadership then. You also worked with a number of US senators, as well.

Mr. Schaefer: I had a very good relationship with Senator [Henry "Scoop"] Jackson and Senator [Warren] Magnuson. In fact, they basically convinced me that I should preside over the state convention for the Democratic Party. They wanted me to do it, and so I did that, in Tacoma, and in Spokane, in later years—after I'd left the Legislature. Because they wanted me to do it. And presiding over a convention is not a lot of fun, believe me.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Why don't we move on to the issues you dealt with as speaker. You were working really hard on the transportation bill, and on public power. Are there other major issues or controversies that come to mind?

Mr. Schaefer: We passed the [uniform] commercial code, at that time, and we passed a lot of highway legislation. But basically, we couldn't come into agreement with the Senate on those bills. I think I was disappointed that we weren't able to do it. It would have included an increase in the gas tax, but basically, the tolls, and situations that we have today, were lots of the things that we were advocating at that time. We had ethics bills, and different things. And the reorganization of the community colleges was very important to me, having gone to Clark College.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You went to Clark College, and you continued to be involved in education issues afterwards. Was that something—being interested in those

issues—that you really got started in at that time?

Mr. Schaefer: You could see the importance of community colleges, and being able to—like we do today, we have "Running Start" here in Vancouver—where you can go to college at Clark when you're still in high school, get those credits, and finish up your high school [diploma]. And now, we've developed a new package of intern programs for kids, when they are in their junior or senior year, to be able to go into plants and take an intern program and get some credits with Clark College and some classes to help to train technicians, which there's a great shortage of, in the high-tech industries.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You mentioned that the [1965] session went very long, and there were a lot of struggles to get things decided. I know that the Legislature's Oral History Project has covered some of the issues around redistricting, in other oral history interviews and documents [see the website *Shifting Boundaries: Redistricting in Washington State*]. Is there anything you want to say about that?

Mr. Schaefer: Well, I think it's always a great conflict, because different counties have different makeups. Redistricting was always a thorn, I think, in the side of almost all legislators. They were concerned about it, and about what their district might look like. When I was running for the first time, and we included the entire county, it was a different type of makeup. And I think that's the reason that the Grange Halls were so important. Because, out in those rural areas, that was the only way you were going to be able to meet with a lot of people. So they could get to know you, and know what were the things that you would like to see happen, that affect the county.

Mr. Schleitwiler: It seemed like there was, at the end of your time, still a lot of frustration about redistricting. Are you happy with the way the system has been reformed and improved?

Mr. Schaefer: Well, I think basically they came down to a realization that you have to have it bipartisan. When Dan was elected governor and I was speaker, we had about two days where, before he was sworn in, basically, we could have passed a redistricting bill that would favor the Democrats throughout the state. That one didn't happen. Most people felt that a compromise had to be worked out. And it eventually was.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You talked earlier about moving the press corps. Did you have good relations with the press?

Mr. Schaefer: No, I think we had good relationships. But basically, they had, when they were sitting before the speaker and in front of the Legislature, I think that some legislators were always looking to the press corps member from the paper that was affecting them, for how they felt about the situation. I think they had a little more influence on the Legislature when they were in front of them. And I think it was shown that that was true, once they changed that policy.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Were there any journalists that you worked with that made a strong impression?

Mr. Schaefer: No, I think. I think we had a very good press corps, and I thought they

had a very objective way of dealing with us. It is an important thing, that the public be able to understand what we're doing. I think all legislators want to make sure that they're able to have a relationship, so that the press is able to tell their constituents what they are wanting to do, and what they're doing. So most legislators had a pretty good relationship, while I was in the Legislature, with the press corps. I think you got some help on certain issues that you didn't know enough about from the press corps. They were an information source that was very helpful in many ways.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You started in the Legislature when you were very young—you said you were one of the youngest members—and you left that position pretty early. In a minute, I want to talk more about your career afterwards, and what you accomplished. But before we get to that, I wanted to know a bit more about your decision to leave and move on.

Mr. Schaefer: Basically, being an adopted child—my wife and I adopted a boy when I was in the Legislature. And then, during the time we were in the Legislature, we had two more children. So we had three children. And I was traveling an awful lot, and not home. And I came to the conclusion, when I was speaker, that I've got to make up my mind. If I'm going to do this, I'm going to have to make up my mind, and be gone a lot. And that's going to be my profession.

I decided that my family was more important, and that I should be able to spend time with them, and I hadn't been able to spend that time because of my position and the responsibilities that I had in the Legislature. So I decided, the choice I made was, I'd rather go home and practice law, and be able to come home at night. I think that value was from my parents, after all the fine things that they did to help me when I was growing up. And I wanted to be able to be involved in helping my wife with our children.

Mr. Schleitwiler: And you've been married for a very long time.

Mr. Schaefer: Yeah, we've been married now sixty-five years.

Mr. Schleitwiler: And three kids, and grandkids as well?

Mr. Schaefer: We have grandkids now, and great-grandkids. Many of them live here, so that's kind of neat. So we get to enjoy them very much.

Mr. Schleitwiler: After you retired, I know that you were immediately being discussed for various positions. Can you talk about the transition in your career after your speakership?

Mr. Schaefer: Basically, I got involved in land-use planning for the biggest development here in Clark County. They had a development by two people from California and I represented, who developed all of the Cascade Park, and that was about thirty-five hundred acres. So the high-tech industries that came to Clark County then, most of them located in that area. I think one of the reasons was because of our tax system here, but the other reason was that the Portland International Airport is really closer to Vancouver than it is to Portland. That makes a big difference to a lot of these industries. And so basically, my practice of

law turned out to be where I was involved with the Red Lion Hotel, for example, and Tod McClaskey. I'm on the board of SEH America, which is a silicon wafer company, and one of our largest employers. And I represent the cannery here, which is Northwest Packing, which has now changed to the Neil Jones Food Company. It's the largest pear packer in the whole Northwest, so you can figure out that they must be pretty good operators.

Mr. Schleitwiler: And you are involved in education as well?

Mr. Schaefer: Yes, I have been. I served on different committees, to try to improve our educational basis here. And serving on the high-tech council, and was very involved with Clark College, and the expansion of it. And my wife also served on the board of Clark.

Mr. Schleitwiler: One thing I was really struck by, in looking at your career, was that your speakership was so early in it, and that you went on to do so much afterwards. How do you think that being speaker either inspired you to other work, or maybe you think about how you wanted to serve differently?

Mr. Schaefer: I think I've always enjoyed being involved in trying to improve the system, whatever the system is, like our highway programs, and our community college programs, our four-year colleges situation. I was very active in trying to bring the WSU branch campus here in Vancouver. These things have always been important to me, and I think we have a responsibility as citizens in a community to spend time to try to improve the system. Having a four-year college here now makes a huge difference to many people. And I think, with Running Start, it helps to bring kids in from high schools into colleges and give credits early. Because most of us, when we were juniors and seniors, we weren't really preparing ourselves the way we should be for the future life that we're going to live, and the education we're going to need.

Mr. Schleitwiler: When you look back on your career, and everything you accomplished over it, do you look back on your time in this Legislature, and think about things you might have done differently?

Mr. Schaefer: I think I was able, when I've been on any committee, to make differences that improved the status of that area—for example, highways. I could bring out the important areas that needed to be taken care of, and work to improve those, and was able to pass legislation, or be involved in legislation, that included those issues. I did this in a lot of committees.

I can tell you one story. My mother, when I was speaker, was very, very influential to me, in that she wanted to see the Billboard Control Act passed. Because she didn't like all the billboards, and that was a very strong thing. That was one thing that I helped to make sure did pass while I was in the Legislature, because it was important to her, and it was important to me that we did keep all these billboards off the highways. That's just a small area, but I tried to listen to people's concerns, and then follow up on those, and I'm still trying to do that in my practice of law.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Can I ask your mother's name?

Mr. Schaefer: It was Mildred.

Mr. Schleitwiler: So I found a report of a speech you gave shortly after you were speaker, where you were talking to the Northwest American Assembly on State Legislatures. And you were talking about a few things that concerned you then—the legislatures losing power to state agencies; the power of the governor's line-item veto and needing to turn voter initiatives to check that; and the need for sufficient pay for legislators. I know that some of those issues have been addressed, and some have not, and I know that was a long time ago, but do you have thoughts about what you wanted to see changed.

Mr. Schaefer: I still think they are all problems that need to be improved. I think the line-item veto is. Basically, it changes the intent of the Legislature that passed the bill. The rules and regulations—the regulators tend to Legislate instead of letting the Legislature handle it—and it may be that the Legislature is not handling it properly. But I do feel that the rules and regulations by certain departments are really still a problem and a concern that we don't really deal with very well.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You talked more about how you tried to approach government, and public service. Are there other lessons that you take away more generally, about politics and government?

Mr. Schaefer: Well, I think any time that you can serve your fellow citizens in any capacity, whether it's with the hospitals, or in the city councils, or the county commissioners—and be involved, to make sure that people are taken care of in a proper matter. The question is, we're all a little bit different, but we all have a responsibility to each other. I really believe that and try to practice it. If I can make something a little better in my community, then I'm willing to be involved. And I think more people need to do that. That's my philosophy, I guess.

Mr. Schleitwiler: When you were talking about John L. O'Brien, you said that he accomplished a lot, but he perhaps stayed on too long as a speaker. Do you have any other thoughts about what you think are the characteristics of a good Speaker of the House, or a good legislative process?

Mr. Schaefer: I think in any leadership—if you're a chairman of a committee in the Legislature, having a working relationship, not only with your committee and with the other fellow legislators, but with the Senate—and the Senate with the House. I had a very good relationship with Senator [Tom] Foley, who was our state senator, and Senator [William] Gissberg. Those relationships—because the legislation that you're trying to pass has to pass both houses. So you need to make sure you have some support in the other house of the things you want to do when you're in the Legislature. I think that's true in local government. You have to work with the city, and the staff, and the regulators, to make sure we're all going in the same direction. We sometimes don't do that, and I think it's because we don't get involved and try to help the system.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You've seen a lot of changes over the course of your career. What are some important changes you've seen, either in the operation of state government, or in politics generally, for the better or for the worse?

Mr. Schaefer: I think it improves all the time. We find different ways of working, in regions that we expand, because they are playing a different part. It's just like our transportation system. Now you're seeing mass transit; people are not buying cars. We need to have, like here in Vancouver, we need a new bridge to replace the old interstate bridge. We basically need to go back to what Eisenhower tried to do. We had a federal defense highway program, when he was President, and we still don't recognize those roads and areas that need to be improved to keep our transportation system going. And as mass transit is—my greatest story of how we don't follow through is that [Senator] Magnuson passed enough money [from the federal government] for a mass transit system in Seattle, after the World's Fair [in 1962, which spurred a series of plans for transit and other ambitious capital projects]. And the people in Seattle basically didn't take advantage of it [rejecting the "Forward Thrust" ballot propositions in 1968 and 1970], and so that money went someplace else, and now they're paying for it themselves. And they're finding out that really, they've missed the opportunity of having mass transit there for all those years. I mean, we certainly make a lot of mistakes. We're returning to mass transit, and there are strong feelings about it both ways, but it basically, it's going to happen. Because people are not buying cars anymore, and there's more apartment living, and a different style of living for the young people.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Based on your experience, earlier in your career, working with some of the other politicians you were able to work with, are there lessons that you think people should take to heart? Now, I know you spoke earlier about how a lot of politicians have lost the ability to compromise. Are lessons people could take away from those folks operated?

Mr. Schaefer: I think it's getting involved and being able to listen to the other side. And the saying, you know, "what is within the art of the possible?" That used to be my favorite saying—what is the art of the possible, of getting this passed, and what steps do I have to take to modify it, to make sure that I get as much of it that I want to see happen. And is it for the best interest of people, or is it for special interests? Just getting involved, whether it's in your church, or wherever it is. I've been the senior warden of two different churches—our main church, and then we had a branch church, and I became a senior warden for that. It's just getting involved, and trying to help something be improved, in the way that you think will help everybody.

Mr. Schleitwiler: In speaking to a number of different former speakers for this project, I've been struck by the different approaches folks have. One thing that I've noticed from our conversation is how deeply focused you were, and still are, on issues, on very specific issues, like transportation, and power, and things like that. But before we finish, I want to know, if there any other stories that you want to share, about your speakership? You mentioned a number of people that you worked with, that I imagine you might have other reflections of. Any other memories?

Mr. Schaefer: Basically, if it hadn't been for the two senators who helped me when I was speaker—that was Senator Gissberg, and especially Senator Foley, who was my state senator—those individuals. Bob [R. R.]

Greive was in control in the Senate, except that Greive and Foley and Gissberg didn't always agree with each other. So they helped me considerably, during the time that I was speaker, to work on compromises with the state Senate. I think this is one lesson I learned, is that you really have to be able work with others and understand where they're coming from. The House and Senate, basically, have to work together, because that's the only way we're going to get the legislation passed. So that was a great lesson to me. And I've tried to follow that lesson locally—that you have to work with all these different departments, to make sure that we're all going in the same direction.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Anyone else that you can think of? You spoke about Julia Butler Hansen. Is there anything else you want to say about her?

Mr. Schaefer: Julia, I think, was a very strong congresswoman. She had a great influence, and she was listening. And she basically built up the Highway Commission, so that it was following really not only what the commission wanted, but—they were listening to her, and to areas she thought should be improved. She had a very good insight of how our highway system and ferry system should be developed and realized certain needs that were there. I think she was one of the strongest legislators that I knew during my lifetime in the Legislature. She had certain standards that she followed, and I was really glad to have had the experience to work with her.

And Magnuson and Jackson, I don't think the public, in the state of Washington really appreciate all that they did, not only for our country, but for our state of Washington. They had so much influence. We see having the seniority of our two United States senators today [Maria Cantwell and Patty Murray], that makes a big difference for us, especially with Patty on the Budget Committee.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Anything else that you want to add?

Mr. Schaefer: No, I don't think so. I might comment on—Dan Brink was my assistant, who had served in the Legislature before I was speaker. And then he became my chief counsel when I was speaker. He was a great help to me, in preparing legislation and working with the Rules Committee. And those things are really important. The staff people that you have really make a difference. I felt I was very blessed to have the different people who worked with me, who helped me during my career in the Legislature.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Any other staffers that you'd mention?

Mr. Schaefer: I think Dan probably was the biggest help to me. You had a lot of good people there. Sid Snyder was there, and Sid was assistant chief clerk then, and did a fantastic job. He was a very fine legislator when he became a legislator, before he died.

NEW SPEAKER — Newly elected Speaker of the House, Robert Schaefer of Vancouver, is congratulated by Democratic Majority Floor Leader John L. O'Brien, back to camera, as the new speaker is escorted to the rostrum by fellow Democratic representatives from Vancouver, Dan Marsh, left and William Kline in Olympia Monday.—AP Wirephoto.

House Follows Script, Names Schaefer To Speaker's Post

OLYMPIA (AP) — The script went as expected after the House finally adopted its rules Monday afternoon.

Elected speaker was Rep. Robert M. Schaefer, Vancouver Democrat, over Rep. Tom Copeland, Walla Walla Republican, by a 58-40 vote.

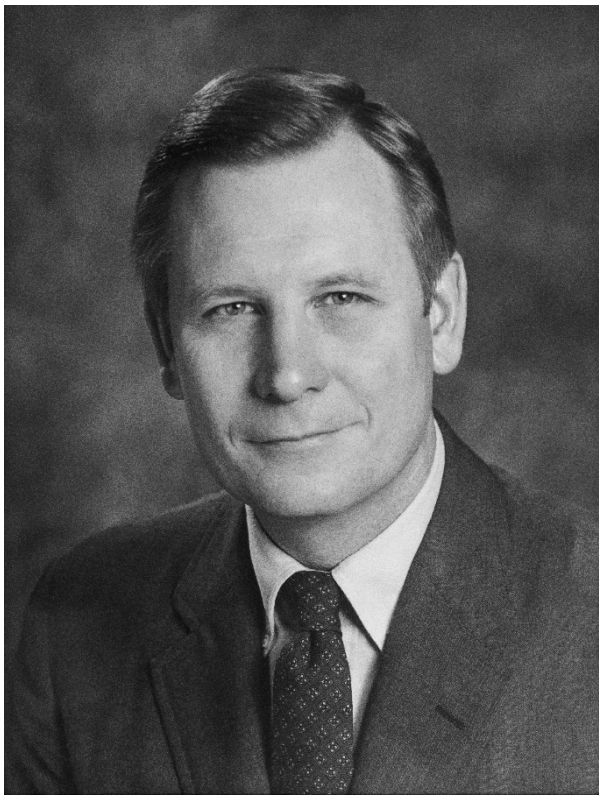
Later the Republican minority floor leader congratulated Schaefer as a man "who can disagree without being disagreeable. He then moved that the record show that Schaefer was unanimously elected.

Other House officers elected: Rep. Avery Garrett, D-Renton, speaker pro tem; S. R. Holcomb, Seattle, chief clerk; Sidney Snyder, Long Beach, assistant chief clerk; Elmer Hyppa, Puyallup, sergeant at arms.

In the Senate, which adopted no rules except majority rule, Lt. Gov. John A. Cherberg presided under provisions of law.

Sen. William A. Gissberg, D-Lake Stevens was elected president pro tem; Sen. David C. Cowen, D-Spokane, temporary president; Ward Bowden, Sultan, secretary of Senate, and Charlie Johnson, Olympia, sergeant at arms.

William Polk



William Merrill Polk was born July 26, 1935 in Cleburne, Texas, and grew up in New Jersey. He graduated from Cornell University in 1958 with a degree in architecture, and, after two years in the U.S. Army, he settled in Seattle with his wife, Karla. Together, they raised three children, Lucy, Elizabeth, and Andrew.

While working as an architect, Polk became active in the local Republican Party. Following the 1970 election, a House seat became vacant, and he was appointed to represent the 41st District. In 1977, he became his party's caucus chair. After a two-party tie in the 1979-80 House was broken by sweeping Republican victories in the 1980 election, Polk became speaker in 1981-82. He served a single term before retiring from the Legislature.

During his time in office, Polk maintained his career as an architect, while his wife worked as a nurse. Polk has been an executive and partner in several firms and was named a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects in 1983. He went on to serve on the Washington State Redistricting Commission, and numerous boards, and was active locally and nationally in conservative policy circles, helping to found the Washington Policy Center and the American Legislative Exchange Council.

Polk's term as speaker was a challenging one, with the nation facing a steep recession, and emboldened conservative majorities in the Legislature often at odds with the more moderate Republican governor, John Spellman. Nonetheless, he managed to pass three major bond projects—the I-90 extension, Washington State Convention Center, and the Smith Cove Marina.

A handsome, refined figure, Polk impressed his colleagues with his style, reserve, and firm hand as a leader, but his quiet humor is evident from the enlarged newspaper cartoons he displays to guests in his elegant Mercer Island home, caricaturing him as the domineering engineer of "Polk's Railroad."

Vince Schleitwiler: I want to start by asking you a few questions about your life leading up to becoming speaker, and what in your background and prior experience prepared you for the position. You were born in Texas, and raised in New Jersey, and then you were in the army, and then you came out here, and worked as an architect. What would you like to share about that?

William Polk: Well, then I got involved in a lot of local political stuff, being precinct

committeeman, and that sort of thing. And I started a young Republican club and was quite involved in my young days with that kind of thing.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Was that in Washington?

Mr. Polk: Yeah. Here. I got to know one young couple, by the name of Dunn. Jennifer Dunn and Dennis Dunn. Dennis became the county chairman. Right after the election, I think it was 1970, our state senator, here, decided to resign—after the election. So it was left, then, to the county chairman to make recommendations to the county council, for somebody to appoint. And Dennis asked me to be on the list. And I told him, no. I'd just become a partner in my architectural firm. And I didn't have time for that kind of thing. And he begged me just to be on the list.

He said, "They always take the first recommendation. So if you'd be number three on the list, you'll be safe. You won't be selected."

And then on the Sunday night before the Legislature convened, and before the county council was to make the selection, a guy that I had gotten to know pretty well, by the name of Vito Chiechi, called me, and started to tell me all this stuff that was going on in Olympia.

And I said, "Vito, why are you telling me all this stuff? I'm number three, remember?"

He said, "Not anymore, you're not!"

So suddenly, the next morning, I was appointed to the Legislature. And my—what would be my seatmate, Axel Julin, waited for me to be selected. And they couldn't elect the new speaker until we got there. We'd have a fifty-one to forty-nine majority once I got there. So you know, I sort of walked in, and everybody was gawking at me like, "Who is this guy?" And that's how I got started. I didn't intend to be there, and intend to run for office, but suddenly I was pushed into that position.

So in time, over the years, I became the chairman of the caucus.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You were the caucus chair beginning in '77?

Mr. Polk: Could be. That's about right. And then we wound up in a tie. So Duane Berentson and I negotiated with [John "Baggie"] Bagnariol and Dick King and wound up with the co-speakership with Baggie and Duane. So I was the Republican floor leader one day, and then Dick King was the [Democratic] floor leader the next day. And that's the way it went for that time. So if that got me ready to be speaker—I don't know. But that was my experience with it.

Mr. Schleitwiler: During that time, 1979-80, when there was a tie, did you learn a lot about how things went, or were you kind of frustrated, and thinking, "If we can have a clear majority, I'd like to see things done differently"?

Mr. Polk: It was a very—what would you say?—compatible time, when both sides worked together. And unusual for today, but there was camaraderie of sorts, because of the situation. Baggie was a guy that I had done a lot with. He had been on the Appropriations Committee and I had been on Appropriations. And he was also from Renton and part of my district was

Renton. So we had done a lot of things together, and we knew each other pretty well. So you know, it was a pretty good time to get along with people. And there were things that I observed, obviously, during that time, that I would do differently. And so the next election came along, and it seemed that, for some reason, everybody just sort of knew we were going to win at that time. And I had people helping me. This guy I mentioned, Vito Chiechi. We got Vito and his buddy to help us with the election. And we won overwhelmingly and got a good majority out of it. And so, anyway, that's how I got into the position.

Mr. Schleitwiler: So that election, and leading to the '81 session, was a big shift, both nationally and in Washington State.

Mr. Polk: Yeah, it was. Yeah.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Do you remember your first day? What it was like, what you thought about becoming speaker? Or were you just too busy working to worry about that?

Mr. Polk: Sure, I remember. Because there were some Democrats, new members, that jumped on their feet and started harassing me, right after I was sworn in. And they were just a pain in the neck, and I just sort of dealt with it at the time. There was nothing special that happened, then. I did change some of the rules, and some of the organization of the Legislature, at that time. Which upset them.

One of the things I had noticed, all the time I was in the Legislature, was how certain committees, particularly Appropriations, were used to bring up test votes—to use voting patterns against people running in the next election. And the budget always got out of hand in the Appropriations Committee. And so, I created a Ways and Means Committee, and made the Appropriations and the Revenue Committee be subcommittees of the Ways and Means. I carefully stacked the Ways and Means Committee so I had a clear majority. Once they passed the budget out of Appropriations and Ways and Means Committee, which were only five guys, three of them Republicans, could straighten it out again, to get rid of stuff that we didn't want in it. And the Democrats hated that. That's what I did. So some of that earned me the title "Polk's Railroad."

One of the other things that was important I think that we did, and Vito was a main cog in this, was, before the session, we had a meeting of all the new members, and asked them a simple question: "What would you like your grandchildren to know about you? What would you like to accomplish?" And I came up with a list of legislation that all these members liked and wanted. And basically, they all signed off on them. And so when legislation came forward on those issues, everybody remembered, "OK, I had agreed to this kind of thing"—which gave me a pretty good handle on getting things pushed through. Again, it became "Polk's Railroad." But that's how it worked, we got everybody's agreement ahead of time. That these are the issues you want to push, and don't be afraid of the political consequences that will come from it.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Do you feel that your time as caucus chair allowed you to have a sense of how you wanted the caucus to work?

Mr. Polk: Well, the caucus chair, yeah. But I think more when I was the floor leader—

that gave me more of that kind of a feeling about it.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Did the initial resistance from the Democrats have more to do with their adjusting to the end of the co-speakership, or do you think there's some other reason?

Mr. Polk: Oh, I think it was just an effort to get people to take votes that they can use against them in the next election. So it was just a certain negativism. There were some guys that I got along with tremendously. They'd say all these things on the floor, and then they'd laugh about it in my office later. And so, you know, it was not terrible that way.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Let's talk about some of the people and personalities you dealt with, and your ways of working with them. I thought I'd start by talking about what you would consider your leadership team—other legislators, as well as any important staff, or other people that helped you get things done?

Mr. Polk: Well, sure. Vito was very important. During the tie, Vito was co-clerk. He was very important in leading through the election. He put a team together, and it went into all the districts to work on the election. So Vito was a very important character in my political life—going back before I was in the Legislature, obviously. Gary Nelson, who was my floor leader. Gary went on to—I don't know, is he still in office up in Snohomish County or not? [Nelson retired from the Snohomish County Council in 2007 after forty years in public office.] He was involved, and then Doc Hastings, who then became a congressman, having beaten Jay Inslee [laughs]. And Bob Eberle.

Mr. Schleitwiler: So Vito Chiechi, you've spoken about him a number of times. Would you like to say a little bit more about him?

Mr. Polk: Yeah. Vito had been with Boeing, I think, when I first met him. He was with their public affairs office. So he was sort of involved with the political life of the company. He went on to be a consultant. He had actually been a consultant for Lenny [Leonard] Sawyer, a Democrat. And then, when Lenny didn't run again, he worked for us instead.

Then Vito asked me, he said, "I've got to get a secretary into this office that I can trust. Who should I hire?" And I told him there was a gal in the communications office that's the smartest one here, Karen Allen. And so, he got her to work there.

And when I became speaker, he said, "We've got to get you an administrative assistant."

I said, "Yeah, I want Karen."

He said, "You can't do that!"

I said, "I can, too. I'm speaker!"

He said, "Oh, Polk."

Anyway, Karen became very important to me. And she knew all the dirt going on in Olympia, that I didn't pay any attention to, and kept me out of trouble with people. So she was good.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Do you want to talk about some of that opposition, some of the Democrats?

Mr. Polk: When I was speaker? I guess they had a tough time dealing with me, because, as I say, I had this control of the caucus, and they couldn't seem to break through, and that gave them some fits. But some guys, like Denny Heck, you always got along well with them. They could rise up on the floor and complain and so on.

Oh, and another guy I should mention is Allen Hayward. He was our attorney. We called him "Dog Bite." And Allen would research a bunch of issues, when John O'Brien was sitting in the front row—because [O'Brien] had been speaker, years and years ago, for a long time. And he would come up with a point of order, and put the House at ease, and Dog Bite would come up with something that John O'Brien had ruled on—just the opposite of what he was claiming now. And so, we could always do that, and just leave him just grinning. That was always fun.

Mr. Schleitwiler: I think I heard this story from Clyde Ballard. Do you remember why he was called "Dog Bite"?

Mr. Polk: I don't remember where the name came from. I think Vito was probably the one who came up with it. Because he was always able to go in and nail somebody with his research.

Mr. Schleitwiler: What about your relationships with other public officials, in the Senate, or the governor?

Mr. Polk: Well, the Senate was in Democrat hands when I first started [as speaker], and then Peter von Reichbauer decided to switch and become a Republican. And so, we hid him, all day long, in my office, the speaker's office, because we didn't want the Democrat senators to get a hold of him. We let him out of there just in time to go over and cast a vote to turn the Senate over to Republican control—Jeannette Hayner took control [as Senate majority leader]. Jeannette and I were good friends, starting from her time in the House. That was a very good, good relationship for us, to work together on things.

At that period of time, we were in a deep recession, and the budget was always in trouble. I think [Governor] John Spellman called us back into session around three or four times, because they would keep coming up with a new estimate of revenue. And we were, again, short of money to cover the budget. So that was the hardest part, the entire time I was speaker, was trying to get the budget covered, with a caucus that was bound to have no new taxes. And so that was a struggle always. Well, John Spellman just played it, straight, I guess. So he wouldn't do anything that we wanted him to do that—to help us on things. Like, we asked him to have a hiring freeze, because that's where most of the money goes, in paying people to work for different things. But he wouldn't do a hiring freeze. At that time, we had about sixty thousand state employees—I think it's over double that now. But at any rate, that was one of the biggest issues that we were facing.

And Jeannette and I would look for projects that would put people back to work, that we could get votes on. And we finally figured that the best we could do would be things that would take a bond issue, so that people weren't voting for a new tax, but they were voting to sell bonds to do something. And there were three major things that we did, that I've always counted

as the most important things that came out of my time. One was that [Interstate 90] I-90, at that time, stopped at the East Channel Bridge—the comment was that it was the "Boston-to-Bellevue Freeway." And so, we got the bonds passed to extend I-90 across Mercer Island, and across the floating bridge, and new tunnels. So we got I-90 completed. And we also passed bonds to build the state Convention Center. Which was a pretty big deal—to get Eastern Washington legislators to want to do something for Seattle. Then the other thing, for Seattle, was Smith Cove Marina. We passed bonds to build that too. So those were the three big accomplishments, I would say.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Could you say a little bit more about Jeannette Hayner and Governor Spellman? I know that not every speaker has had the best relationship with the folks in the Senate, even if they are from the same party. But you said you had a strong relationship. Why do you think that was?

Mr. Polk: With Governor Spellman, I think we got along fine. We just disagreed on the political consequences of some of the things we were trying to do. And some of it may have been with his staff. [Laughs] One of the things that I think they coaxed him to mention was that the Republican House caucus was a bunch of troglodytes. And so, we had one member that immediately went out and had a bunch of badges made that said, "I'm a troglodyte." And so, there were things like that, that were little dust-ups with the governor's office. That was OK, you know. We got along.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Did you get close to him personally?

Mr. Polk: He came to the reception of our daughter's wedding. So, you know, we knew each other pretty well, by the time it was all over.

Mr. Schleitwiler: And Jeannette Hayner. It seems like you had a particularly good working relationship with her.

Mr. Polk: Yeah. Very good.

Mr. Schleitwiler: What do you think made that possible? Was it personal, or was it that you approached that relationship differently?

Mr. Polk: I think it was largely personal, because we knew each other well from our time in the House. We had pretty much the same ideas about most everything. So it worked really well. And she was a very smart lady! I think she was a lawyer, besides, and her husband's a lawyer, in Walla Walla. And he was a law partner with my partner's brother—or something like that. They were law partners over there in Walla Walla. And we actually designed their office! None of us knew that at the time. Anyway, Jeannette was pretty special.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Were there meaningful relationships with other government leaders, the congressional delegation or anything like that, that you'd like to discuss?

Mr. Polk: The congressional delegation, not so much. We had good relationships with Slade Gorton, when he was in the [US] Senate. Governor [Daniel] Evans, maybe not so much a great relationship, but it was OK. There was one time that we were invited to a meeting at the White House, and I took, with me Vito [Chiechi] and Gary Nelson,

[Richard] Doc Hastings, Bob Eberle—maybe there was somebody else. We went to see Norm Dicks.

When we got to his office, the secretary asked, "Who should I tell him is here?"

And Vito said, "Tell him there's a delegation from the Washington Legislature that includes the redistricting chairman!" Which Bob Eberle was. Norm came out of his office, and stepped on a chair, and up on a desk, and walked across the desk. [Laughs] It was a very funny situation. So you have things like that. But there was nothing, legislative-wise, that we had any relationship.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You did get quite a bit of national attention, for some of the things that were going on. Did get to know other national leaders?

Mr. Polk: As I said, we were invited to the White House. We met with the President.

Stepping back a bit, when we were still in the tie, Vito came in and said, "Governor Reagan is at SeaTac [Airport], and he would like to meet with you two." He said, "I've got a state patrol car to take you up there."

And so, Duane [Berentson] and I went up to SeaTac, and walked down this hallway, and see this guy standing at a door with a thing in his ear. We said, that must be the room. And he asked who we were, and he checked us off, and we went in, and this guy's lying there on the couch with his shoes off and his tie down.

He got up and said, "Hi, I'm Ron Reagan. I'm gonna run for president and I want your help."

"Yes, sir." So it was our first meeting with him, and then we had a couple more chances back at the White House to meet with him.

Mr. Schleitwiler: And that was when he ran in 1980, or earlier?

Mr. Polk: I think that would have been in '76. Anyway, so there was some national contact. It was fun.

Mr. Schleitwiler: What about your relations with the press?

Mr. Polk: Well, that first day I was in the Legislature, Dick Larsen interviewed me. And I always thought that Dick was the most honest and straightforward person I've ever met in the media. And I enjoyed him very much. I had always had good relations, it seemed like, with the press—until I became speaker. And then it all went to—I asked one of them, "Why, all the sudden now, are you beating up on me?" She said, "Don't you understand, Polk? They have to build you up before they can tear you down." OK.

So we had a tumultuous relationship with the media. Particularly KING-TV, I think, was a real pain in the neck. But some of the people, that were certainly not fans of mine, became pretty fair. S, I guess it was hit-and-miss. There were some that were just really bad, and some that had been around so long that they didn't do things like that.

Mr. Schleitwiler: I want to talk, again, about major events and controversies, and accomplishments. Some of these things are going to extend back to your time before you were speaker. Do you want to talk a

little bit about some things that were important before you became speaker?

Mr. Polk: Well, first of all, we were in the majority my first two years [1971-72], and we were in the minority for the next six [1973-78]. And so, I was on the Appropriations Committee, and that's the committee I enjoyed the most.

There was a Democrat leader there, [Albert] Bud Shinpoch, who was sort of an analyst of some sort for Boeing, and I remember him, one time, saying to me, "I know what I believe, but the facts keep getting in my way." Which I thought was classic understatement.

I don't remember any great legislation that was accomplished through those years. Some things we went over every session. It seemed like every session, we'd be fighting the same issues. Like workers' compensation. It seemed like every session we were fighting about workers' compensation. I don't know why that sticks in my memory so much, except it just annoyed the heck out of me, that that's what we were spending our time doing.

Mr. Schleitwiler: In the years prior to your speakership, did you have a sense of the things you'd really like to be able to do better, if you got a chance to lead?

Mr. Polk: Well, as I mentioned, the—the way the votes were used, just as political things. I sort of gathered that, over a number of years of watching that situation progress. And I felt that, if I'm ever in a position to do something about that, I'm going to change it. So that was one of the biggest issues on my mind—how good legislation would get all bollixed up because of political votes.

Mr. Schleitwiler: So you made some institutional changes and procedural changes, to take out some of the political complications, and get things done?

Mr. Polk: Well, yeah, took it out as far as the minority was concerned, but it was what my majority wanted to happen. So I guess you can't say it took it out of politics completely.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You mentioned the phrase "Polk's Railroad." So there was a lot of frustration on the other side?

Mr. Polk: But—it worked.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Based on the stories that you tell, compared to other folks, that you were pretty much all business, in terms of the things you wanted to accomplish. Do you think that was distinctive about your approach to the speakership?

Mr. Polk: I don't know what to say about that. You know, I don't. I'm sure everybody feels that they had certain things that they wanted to get done. As I said, the hardest thing, for my time, was trying to get budgets balanced—and re-balanced and re-balanced, and so on.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You came in, and your caucus came in, on a pledge of not raising taxes, and then faced a lot of challenges with the budget in recession. And so, there was a lot of struggles, even in your relationship to the governor. Can you say a little bit more about the challenges you faced, and how you addressed them?

Mr. Polk: Well, one name I have overlooked, until you mentioned this, is Rod Chandler. Rod was the chairman of my Ways and Means Committee. He had the tough nut of trying to come up with ways to cut different things out, and see how we could shift money around, and that kind of thing. So he was very important to all that effort as well.

You know, before I became speaker, Baggie had been the co-speaker, and had been the speaker before that, and he was always one that could get things moved along with, sort of a—humor, I guess you'd call it. One time, I had given a speech on the floor opposing something in Baggie's budget. And he wasn't even on the floor. He came down, and he walked over to my desk, and told me a joke as to what he had been doing, and just left me laughing there. Nobody else but Baggie could have gotten away with that kind of thing. So he was an interesting role model in that respect.

Duane had been really good, because he knew all the ins and outs—he'd been there quite a while, and he knew all the ins and outs, of how people were voting and what they're thinking about things. And that made him a pretty effective speaker, too.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Some of the challenges around the budget must have been kind of frustrating. Did you come out of that experience feeling happy about what you were able to accomplish? Did you come out of it feeling like you learned important lessons?

Mr. Polk: I wouldn't call it happy, because it was, just plain, a struggle. It was not fun. It was just plain tough times. Trying to wring votes out of people, sometimes, over difficult situations. They call it arm twisting, I guess. There were some tough times.

Mr. Schleitwiler: So you had to keep people together.

Mr. Polk: Yeah. You know, people would forget some of their promises, and you'd have to back them into a corner.

Mr. Schleitwiler: But you actually accomplished quite a bit, right? You mentioned the three big accomplishments, the bond issues.

Mr. Polk: Those were the three big lasting things that we accomplished. There were a number of things that I thought we'd accomplished, that, within the next few years, the Democrats had overturned, going back to where it was. But those three big things, nobody could stop at that point.

Mr. Schleitwiler: So how did you pull that off, under those circumstances? That seems like quite a bit to do.

Mr. Polk: They were awfully hard to oppose. You know, nobody had sworn that they would oppose a bond issue. So that was one thing. So the only difficulties, really, were getting Eastern Washington guys on board for things that were happening in Seattle. But beyond that, things that were going to produce jobs—we were in, just, deep trouble with the recession that was going on, and something that was going to get things pumped up again had to be appealing to people. I guess that's basically it. We had some things that could get a lot of favorable support from all sorts of people.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Looking back, knowing what you learned afterwards, are there things you would have done differently?

Mr. Polk: No.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Are there lessons that you drew from that experience that you think people should know?

Mr. Polk: You know, one observation about the Legislature, and the role of government today. There was a big move for—they call it various things—transparency, or open government, or whatever. And they clamp down on lobbyists, to the point that they had to file many reports, on how they're spending money, and so on. And when I was there, the lobbyists happened to be good intermediaries between different sides. They could take several guys out for dinner, Democrats and Republicans together, and you got to know each other pretty well, through those small social activities.

Then the, quote, "good government" types, start saying, "Well, look at all the lobbyists spending this money, wining and dining legislators. This is bad." Well, it really isn't bad.

And, you know, I've never tried to argue this in public, but it seemed to me that one of the basic ways that people had of getting to know each other, and having confidence in being able to talk to each other, was sort of stripped away. And there were a lot of good people that, whether they represented a bank, or they represented Boeing, or whoever they represented, they were good people and they had reasonable things to impart. Just to get up and say it at a committee hearing, in testimony, doesn't do anything. And so, I think the camaraderie, and the feeling of knowing each other and dealing with each other well, was dealt a blow.

Anyway, that's in terms of lessons learned. For me, I think, that's one of the biggest disappointments that I've seen out of the whole situation. It didn't happen during my time, but it happened after my time. And I've talked to people down there, and they've said, no, they don't ever get together anymore.

Mr. Schleitwiler: All the stories about that time that I've heard really stress that camaraderie between folks. Is that something you particularly enjoyed? Are there relationships that you built through that?

Mr. Polk: There were no lasting relationships with any of the lobbyists. Some of them were really nice guys that stayed there long after I was gone.

Mr. Schleitwiler: During your career, are there any other ways you saw the work of the Legislature changing? The role of the Legislature, or the speaker, changing? What were the kinds of changes that you saw in your time?

Mr. Polk: I wouldn't say there were any real changes in the way that the speaker functions. Although what's gone on for the past number of years, I really don't know. From people I've talked to, like Dog Bite—I don't know how the speaker functions any more. It's certainly not the way I did. I don't know what to say.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You said that you asked your caucus to think about how they

wanted to be remembered by their grandchildren. What would you say about that period for you?

Mr. Polk: Well, I think that, before all the fire gets going is the time to ask that question, rather than in the middle of it. So I thought that was a good way to concentrate, beyond what they thought the issues were when they were running for office, and so on. I think it was a useful exercise, and that people stepped back and thought, what they would really like to have happen. And if others are of the same opinion, let's go.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You announced the end of your speakership in advance, and then stepped down. Do you want to talk about what your thinking was at the time?

Mr. Polk: Sure. I mentioned Bob Eberle, who was the redistricting chairman.

He came in and asked me, "You want me to carve out a district for you to run for Congress?"

And I said, "No." I said, "Bob, first of all, you know, I grew up in New Jersey, South Jersey, which is the same climate as you get around the Potomac. And why would I want to go back to that?" I said, "No, I'm not going to do something like that." And that had got me thinking that, oh, my parents had spent a lot of money sending me to an elite architecture school. And here I am wasting my time doing this.

I had carried on with the architectural practice, obviously. And so, I'd leave Olympia, and go to a school board meeting—we were designing a lot of schools. And it was a struggle, all that time. There were a number of struggles like that. So I thought, I've argued about some of this inane stuff long enough. It's time for me just to get out and get back to architecture. It actually brought me up short when he asked me that question.

And then, you know, it was time for me to get out. People said I shouldn't have announced it before the session, but I did, and it didn't make any difference. I still got everything done that I had to get done. You know, when I said that the economy was so bad, it rattled all the way through the culture here. We had people sending threats to me. We had welfare-rights people picketing our church. We were down at the ocean, so we missed it, but they were standing out there with signs—"Don't go into a church that allows Bill Polk to be a member"—and stuff like that.

And the state patrol came, and talked to the kids, who were pretty small at that time, about how to deal with packages and stuff left at our door.

I mentioned that to my son recently and his reaction was, "That scared the heck out of me." So Vito finally got a, basically, a bodyguard, from the state patrol, to take me back and forth, and be at my side everywhere I went. And that was sort of spooky in its way, too.

So you know, it was pretty darn hard on the family during those years. One of the teachers at the junior high school even said something to the class about how the Legislature's convening, so they're going to be all chasing women, and that kind of thing. You know, here's my daughter sitting there in the class, and hearing this kind of stuff. A certain nastiness that got going, and

you see more of it today than you saw at that time. And in fact, I hadn't ever experienced any of that kind of nastiness or pressure before I was speaker. But whether it was because I was finally at the top of the Legislature, or whether it's because times were so bad, I don't know.

I was invited by the AFL-CIO to speak to their yearly convention in Olympia one night. So I went in there, and told them exactly what I was going to try to do, and they were booing me and everything.

But one guy came out to the car, as I was getting in, and he said, "I really do not support anything you want to do, but I certainly admire you for telling us." OK, that's fair enough.

The Legislature always provides a car for the speaker, and Baggie had a Lincoln Continental, and so on. My car, that I had at the time, was an RX7, and the lease was coming due. And I didn't know that they provided a car for me.

I mentioned that to Vito—that I've got to do something about that, and he said, "Oh, you get a car. So I'll get you another RX7." It came. It was red. You talk about optics, that became a big deal in the press. He's driving this red sports car! That was a pain in the neck. One of the television stations, I think it was KING again, told me they weren't going to talk about that. And then, the minute I got on the air with them, they started talking about it.

And he said, "Is there anything you'd do different?"

And I said, "Yeah, I'd get a brown one." That stunned him.

Anyway, there was so much nastiness. That's a problem that I have, is that one of the things that I remember the most about, in my time as speaker, is that it was so rough on the family, and not just me. That was a tough time.

Mr. Schleitwiler: So you had experienced a lot of people challenging each other pretty strongly, but able to respect each other—like this person at the AFL-CIO. But you were a little bit unprepared for how nasty it turned, both in terms of press and some of the public?

Mr. Polk: Yeah, that was a real shock to me. It got so nasty.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Your wife was saying, before we started, you've been married for 60-some years. So your family went through some challenges, but obviously was very strong. Do you want to talk about your family, and how your family supported you through your career?

Mr. Polk: Well, my wife, of course, never wanted me to be in there to begin with.

The night that Vito called and said, "You're number one now"—she was just miserable that night. But—well, she's a nurse. And she was also working, part-time for an eye surgeon. And she would be expected to be in Olympia for something, and would have to call, and say that they scheduled another surgery, and she was stuck here. When she's supposed to be down there, giving a party for people, or something like that. And so, it was very stressful for her in that way.

I remember one night she arrived down there, and a truck had sideswiped her and

bashed in the side of her car, on the way down. So she was pretty shook up at that point. There were lots of things that she was suddenly called upon to do that we weren't expecting that the speaker's wife would have to do. Giving an afternoon tea for all of the wives of the court, this kind of thing. So she got enough stress out of the whole thing, too.

My kids, they didn't talk much about it. As I said, Andy thought at one time that, you know, it scared him with the opening of the packages, being shown that kind of thing. I have two girls and a boy. They all served as a page at some point, down there, so they got to see it all firsthand. Maybe not understanding everything that is going on, because of their young age, but they all got a taste of what it was like.

Lucy was the oldest, and the fellow she eventually married, that she met at the U [University of Washington], he tells a tale that when he mentioned that he was dating this Lucy Polk, people said, "Oh, do you know who her father is? Good heavens, Greg!"

Mr. Schleitwiler: So it sounds like you were kind of a reluctant politician, right? Both when you got in, and when you heard about the opportunity to go to Congress, and thought, "Oh, this is how I know I need to get out." That architecture—you'd trained at Cornell—was really the more important work for you.

Mr. Polk: Yeah.

Mr. Schleitwiler: That's an ideal, for some people, right! That being a politician in this way, should only be—

Mr. Polk: Yeah, I had a hard time thinking of myself as a politician. You know, you do what you have to do, when things present themselves. But, no, I didn't want to be a politician.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Like I said, there's a certain ideal, right? That a state legislator should also be doing other things and be a regular citizen first. Do you think that made you do things differently than other folks?

Mr. Polk: Probably. Because if you're relying on the Legislature, or you're relying on any political office, part of the problem is looking over your shoulder—who's coming after your job? And all that kind of thing. And I didn't really care. So you know, you fight back at election time and so on, but, I think it's a good idea for people not to spend their life just with the Legislature. I'm sure there are some that have done it successfully, but—

Mr. Schleitwiler: Was it a relief, then, when you left?

Mr. Polk: [Laughs] I think, it wasn't really a relief. It was just, OK.

Mr. Schleitwiler: But you did remain politically engaged afterwards?

Mr. Polk: To some extent. I helped start the Washington Policy Center, a think tank. John Carlson came to me and said that's what he wanted to do, start this think tank.

And I said, "What's a think tank?" And I said, "John, I've just opened my own office. I don't have any money to give you. I don't have time to give you."

He said, “That’s all right. I just want your name.”

So anyway, I became the first president of what became the Washington Policy Center. And I had done the same thing with another organization on a national basis, called ALEC, American Legislative Exchange Council. And I was one of the founders of that, nationally. And it’s grown into a very major force. Ken Eikenberry, who I hadn’t mentioned before, was a good friend of mine through all this stuff. I had lunch with him a couple weeks ago. He just had surgery to put his shoulder back together.

And then Karla and I were down in Cancun, and I got a call—this was about 1990, I guess it was—I got a call from our [Washington State] senator here, down there. And he said, “Would you represent the Senate on the Redistricting Commission?” So that was an experience of going through redistricting from the outside. Once the commission had been established. I guess we passed legislation, too, to establish that. So that was sort of an interesting bit of staying involved.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Do you think that going back to your career as architect, and staying involved in your profession for a long time afterwards, gave you a different perspective on your years as a legislator?

Mr. Polk: Oh, I don’t know that it did. No. You recognize that knowing a little bit more about government, maybe, and then realizing what you’re getting into with government regulations of various sorts, that impact architecture, maybe that made a little difference in understanding, I don’t know. You mentioned that you are teaching a class that has a lot of Hawaiians in it.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Yeah.

Mr. Polk: This is sort of an aside, but when I had an office over there.

Mr. Schleitwiler: In Honolulu?

Mr. Polk: Yeah. We were doing work on the shopping centers, all through the islands, for a developer over in Honolulu. And we were doing some out buildings at a shopping center on Kauai. And the tenant came in and wanted to put up a huge sign on the fascia. And I said, they’re never gonna accept that. The sign code certainly won’t allow that. So I went to the building department on Kauai, and asked them for their sign code.

And the woman said, “We don’t have a sign code.” Come on. I ask it every way I could think of, for about ten minutes.

And finally, I just said, “Okay. Thank you very much.” And I started out the door.

And she said, “You might go down the street to the planning commission. They have a sign code.”

Anyway, what I’ve said to you on the phone, the other day, is that it’s a tough place to do business. That’s what always goes through my head. That’s what dealing with government agencies can do to you.

Mr. Schleitwiler: From your experience, what do you think are some characteristics of a good speaker, an effective speaker, or of a good law, or legislative process?

Mr. Polk: I think the basic thing, for the speaker, is how to herd cats. You’re trying to get all these people together, to go in the

same direction, for anything. You're not just expected to be in a position to just let things go whatever way they want to. You're trying to drive things in the direction that the people that elected you want you to go. And so, it's trying to be flexible enough to accommodate different things. That's probably the biggest challenge for a speaker.

Mr. Schleitwiler: So politics has changed a lot since then, and I think in ways, mostly, that people often regret. Are there other things that, based on your experience, you'd like to communicate to folks today, to get them to understand?

Mr. Polk: You know, things have obviously changed, and so much hateful stuff is being said. Which—it just wasn't the case when I was there. I say that, and yet, I did experience it, because I was being threatened, and all this kind of stuff.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You experienced some of the harder parts of it, but it seems like there was still a strong sense, with a lot of folks in politics and in government, of maintaining some integrity, and some good relationships with each other. Is that right?

Mr. Polk: Yeah. As I said, I think that one of the sad things is what's happened with the relations with—lump them all under the name lobbyists, but—people representing all kinds of things in our community that you need to know about. One of the legislators that made a big impact on me originally was a guy named Jim Kuehnle. I think he was from Spokane. And he would get up, and he would argue over a piece of legislation, things that I'd never heard brought up in committee, or anything. And I asked him, "How did you do that?"

And he sent out a questionnaire, or a newsletter, to his district, and gave them an offer: "I will send you a copy of any bill that covers a subject that particularly interests you, if, in turn, you will promise me that you will tell me what you think of it." And so, he would get back all this feedback from people, about legislation that no one else knew anything about how it was going to affect this little business somewhere, or how it was going to affect people's housing. All this stuff. So he got feedback from all kinds of places. It was, I thought, a brilliant move. I tried it, and I was pretty pleased with the response I would get, too. You know, it's hard for the secretary to keep up with sending out pieces of legislation to all these people. But it was well worth it. And it was a clever idea, I thought.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Looking back, are there particularly fond memories—as some of the fights fall away, because they're so long ago—that you still hold onto, or that you really appreciate?

Mr. Polk: I think that probably deals more with, just, people that you came in contact with or knew. As I mentioned, Ken Eikenberry, I see him for lunch every now and then. And Doc Hastings. People who became longtime friends through it all. That's probably the biggest thing. I mentioned Karen Allen. I talked with her just yesterday, as a matter of fact. Good relationships with people.

The Daily News, Longview, Wash., Wednesday, November 19, 1980 B7

Promises

House speaker-designate vows no tax hike, 105-day session

OLYMPIA (AP) — Tax increases? No. A strict 105-day limit on the upcoming state legislative session? Definitely.

Those were the flat predictions made by House Speaker-designate Bill Polk Tuesday at his first news conference since Republicans stormed to a 56-seat majority in the House.

Polk, 45, a Mercer Island architect, also pledged that redistricting will not tie up the Legislature this session. The politically thorny issue may, in fact, not be resolved until the 1982 session, he said.

He announced committee shakeups and new chairmen, and outlined new legislative procedures, particularly those aimed at ending the "veritable circus" surrounding budget deliberations.

Under the state's new annual sessions law, the regular session which convenes Jan. 12 is limited to 105 days. By a two-thirds vote, lawmakers can call themselves into a special session and the governor also is empowered to call a 30-day special session.

But Polk said the House considers 105 days enough time to complete its work. Senate Majority Leader-designate R. Ted Bottiger, D-Graham, has pledged a similar effort in the upper house, the speaker said.

"Both houses are structuring themselves as if there were no tomorrow after the 105th day," Polk said.

The new House speaker pro tem, Otto Amen, R-Ritzville, will be assigned to watchdog committees and draw up "flow schedules" to make sure the necessary work is done — and within time constraints, the speaker said.

College tuition increases and gasoline tax boosts are possible, but House majority Republicans are "dedicated to living within the constraints of available revenue" — meaning no general tax boosts, he Polks said.

The "climate of the Legislature," in fact, is so austere that the "potential of a supplemental budget is not good. . .. I wouldn't count on it. I wouldn't count on it if I were an agency head," he said.

The supplemental budget request, which could surpass $150 million, is aimed at tiding agencies over until the new biennium starts next July. The biggest single request is from schools.

Polk said the House will handle the politically sensitive issue of redistricting — redrawing congressional and legislative boundaries to fit population shifts — by a select committee.

"We won't allow redistricting to bog down the Legislature . . . or extend the session," he said. "We might want to go to a commission. But there is no good substitute for the Legislature stepping up and doing its responsibility."

In past years, lawmakers have considered appointing a special citizen group to handle redistricting. Polk also said the whole matter could be put off until 1982, if that appears necessary.

The new speaker also said:

- The House will try to cut its costs by 10 percent, probably meaning a 10 percent cut in staff.
- More than half of the House's 98 members will be involved in the budget-writing process. They will belong to one of three Appropriations subcommittees or the Revenue subcommittee — all coming under the umbrella of a new Ways and Means Committee.

Budget work will be done in committee, rather than on the floor of the House — a move which could cut down on political posturing and delays, he said.

The budget should include a yearly allotment for each agency as part of a two-year budget, Polk said. It also should limit the number of people a department may have on its payroll, he said.

- House members will be limited to introducing 10 bills during 1981 and 1982. They may sign on other bills and committees may write an unlimited number, he said.
- The House and Senate may move to joint hearings, particularly on budget matters, Polk said. Such hearings are rare in Olympia.
- Committee make-up will follow the ratio of Democrats to Republicans in the House, with two big exceptions: Rules, where Republicans will have 12 members and Democrats only 6, and Ways and Means.

Polk said he is following the lead of the Senate, where Democrats have only a one-vote margin, but will assign more than their proportionate share to those two committees.

Spokane, Wash., Tues., Jan. 6, 1981. THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW 7

Public's confidence needed

OLYMPIA (AP) — William Polk, speaker of the state House, says issues may have to take a back seat to the problem of rebuilding people's confidence in the state Legislature.

"One of the biggest challenges for the next two years is trying to instill some confidence in leaders," said Polk, a Mercer Island Republican. "It's perhaps a bigger challenge than trying to get the issues done."

He spoke in reference to recent scandals that have left skeletons in legislative halls, including the "Gamscam" convictions in October of former Senate Majority Leader Gordon Walgren and former House Speaker John Bagnariol.

In the Senate, Ted Bottiger, Democrat, will be the new majority leader. Both Bottiger and Polk foresee political tangles in the legislative session which begins next Monday. But they add that they expect to be friendly rivals.

Bottiger, 48, a Tacoma attorney, finds his power to lead compromised by the narrowness of his party's control of the Senate. Democrats hold 25 seats to 24 for Republicans.

Polk, 45, an architect, is in unquestioned command of the House, where the GOP enjoys a 56-42 majority over the Democrats.

Though his hold appears less than solid, Bottiger said the Senate "is going to have a program. It's going to be coming out of the Senate Democratic caucus. It will be what we think is good for the people of the state."

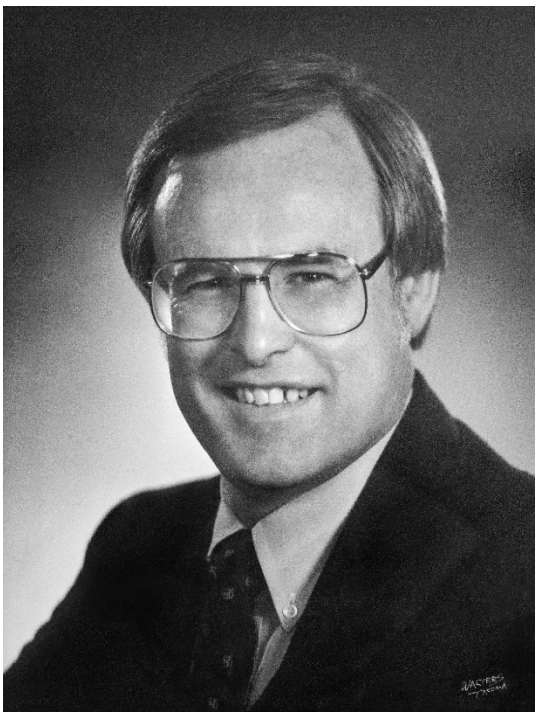
He said that if House Republicans get in the way of that program, people of the state will hear about it. "Polk is going to have to put his troops on the line and vote against it," he said.

Countered Polk: "It would be fascinating to see a Democratic plan for the state. I've never seen one."

Polk said he expected conservatives to make gains in the session, including cutting off money for abortions for mothers on welfare.

Sen. Jeannette Hayner, R-Walla Walla, is the Senate minority leader — and the first woman in state history to hold a top post in the Legislature.

Wayne Ehlers



Wayne Henry Ehlers was born on November 25, 1938, in Bellingham, Washington. His father, Dick Ehlers, was an electrician, whose family were pioneers in rural Whatcom County as early as the 1860s. One great-grandfather, the German-born Henry Ehlers, was a gold miner, farmer, deputy sheriff, poet, and author of a book on physics; his wife, the Tennessee-born Nancy Arminda Dobbs Paget, came to the area from Texas. Maxine, Wayne's mother, grew up in Point Roberts, where her German ancestors had lived since the 1890s, and Wayne drew his values and sense of humor from her and her father, Bill Teller, a fisherman.

Along with his younger brother, Richard, Wayne grew up in Bellingham, and he attended Franklin Elementary and Whatcom Junior High. After the family moved to Blaine in 1951, he graduated from Blaine High School in 1956, where he became involved in journalism, student government, and other extracurriculars, and was a bit of a prankster. He went on to Western Washington College of Education (now Western Washington University), graduating in 1960.

Next, he began a career as a schoolteacher, first in Tacoma, then in Sedro-Woolley and Lake Stevens, and then back to Pierce County—following a stint at the University of Denver, where he took a master's degree. Ehlers had met his first wife, Frances, back at Western, and they had two sons, Jeff and Marcus, during their twenty-three years of marriage. In 1984, Ehlers was remarried, and he and his wife, Patricia, currently live at Aljoya Thornton Place in Seattle.

Ehlers began his career in the Legislature in 1973, chaired the State Government Committee from 1977-80, and was minority leader in 1981-82, before serving as Speaker of the House from 1983 to 1987. He also taught graduate courses at Pacific Lutheran University and worked as a field representative for the Public School Employees of Washington and as secretary's representative for the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services. From 1990-92, he was director of legislative and federal relations for Governor Booth Gardner.

As a speaker, Ehlers worked with a narrow Democratic majority, and, in his first term, a Republican governor, John Spellman. Under these conditions, he focused pragmatically on procedural efficiency and institutional reform, and took pleasure in the details of the legislative process and political tactics. An avid storyteller with a playful sense of humor, Ehlers is also a thoughtful student of

the past, and has done extensive research on his family history and written a detailed memoir of his personal and political career.

Mr. Vince Schleitwiler: I thought we'd begin by talking about what led up to your term as speaker. What in your personal background and prior experience prepared you for the job?

Mr. Wayne Ehlers: I guess there's a lot. In high school and college, I was active in journalism and student government—senior class president at a small school, that type of thing. At Western Washington, John F. Kennedy's presidential race in 1960 was my first campaign. I did a lot of grunt work when I was a senior, and that fall when I was teaching in Tacoma.

That was my first election, and I volunteered to stuff envelopes, and all that type of thing. Later, I helped with some congressional and legislative races, and got a taste of it, including campaign manager for Ted Bottiger. In 1970, he was running for re-election [in the House of Representatives]. And then, when they did redistricting in 1972 [which was court-ordered], they created a brand new district. So Ted Bottiger then decided to run for the Senate. There are two House seats [per district], and I ran successfully.

I think the turning point, in how I really got involved—I remember it very distinctly—I was at grad school at the University of Denver, and I remember walking down a flight of stairs thinking to myself, how can I effect change? This is '66, '67, in the middle of the Vietnam War, which I opposed. How can I do that? "Well," I thought, "One, I could be a multibillionaire," and that wasn't going to happen. Another would be to be a moral leader, and Gandhi and Martin Luther King had already taken that, and that wasn't open. So politics. And I decided—I was like twenty-seven years of age—by the time I'm thirty-five, I want to be either in elected office, or have a PhD in some area where I could influence policy.

Actually, it was 1972 when I was elected, and I was 33 years old.

There was just a lot of motivation, why I got involved, but it wasn't a plan. It just happened over time.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You've mentioned in the past that your experience as a teacher helped prepare you to be speaker.

Mr. Ehlers: That's interesting. Particularly when I was teaching junior high in Sedro-Woolley, in the three years that I was there, students ran for offices for the next year. And so most of the students that came to run student government were former students of mine. I wasn't pushing it that way. I didn't have any agenda, but they got interested in that type of thing. And I was very proud of them.

But I do remember, as somewhat of a facetious remark, when I was selected as speaker, the press asked me why I thought I was qualified to be speaker. I said I used to teach junior high. Some of my colleagues didn't like that, but there were parallels sometimes between junior high students and legislators, at least at that period of time—in terms of their concerns about their own view of themselves, and the people around them, and all the other kind of, sometimes, petty personal things.

And so as speaker I spent a lot of time, as did the chief clerk, sitting down with members, trying to work through their personal problems, or problems on the job, or marital problems, or you name it. And I almost became a social worker or something. And that kind of wears on you because, if you are having your own problems, you're not really allowed to have those. You have to be on the beck and call of everybody else. And after being minority leader for one term, and two terms as speaker, that wore on me more than anything else, more than policy. Frankly, in politics, I liked it best when there was action under stress. I felt I did my best job under stress. So I had to focus my attention on that. And I got distracted sometimes by working with members on their personal problems.

Mr. Schleitwiler: So you were elected at thirty-three years old to the House. At what point did you start thinking, "Maybe I should be running this. Maybe I could do a better job as speaker"?

Mr. Ehlers: This is kind of ironic, because I still hear it in politics. You just get elected, and the first thing somebody asks you, it could be a reporter or constituent, is, "What are you going to do next?"

I said, "I haven't even found where the bathrooms are!"

It's good to find out how the system works. Understand the rules. Observe what makes the system work. I found that what I had observed, not as a member but as observer, was that there were some people I was really impressed with, who were standing up on the floor and giving speeches, that type of thing. But I found those who are the most effective were sometimes the people who were helpful to each other, who understood the issues—these were the workhorses. The show horses were the people who gave the big speeches and got their names in the paper. So I didn't really have ambitions along that that line at all.

In April of 1981, the caucus, and I wasn't part of it, had dumped Dick King as minority leader, right after the session in '81. All the members were discouraged by what was going on. They thought they were being run over by [Republican speaker] Bill Polk. And I tried to get other people to run for minority leader, and it didn't happen that way. Rick Bender, whose father was the head of the King County Labor Council, was a House member—we'd come in together. He and I ran against each other. At first ballot I was ahead by four or five votes, and we needed twenty-one votes to win it.

After the first vote, he said, "I need to talk to you."

We went down the hall and talked, and he said, "I'm going to pull out and throw in my support to you." And I ended up getting exactly twenty-one votes on the second ballot. And I became minority leader.

As is customary, the workers were there when the election results came back, ready to move me out of my office in the House office building, over to the minority leader's office in the Capitol building.

And I said, "No, I'm not moving until I can move into the corner office—the speaker's office." I said, "Most of my members are in this building. I don't want to make the mistake of past leaders, who went over to the Leg building and were separated from

the members. I want to be there, because if there are problems, I want to be able to walk around and talk to people, not just to members but to staff." So I was selected in May of 1981 as minority leader, despite the fact that I was trying to get other people to do it.

And there were ups and downs during that period of time because the Republicans, Polk particularly, told me early on, "I don't need any of your votes, so I'm not going to really take your members into consideration in any of these important things." Over a period of time that eroded, but at that time it was clear that our members were discouraged. Particularly, you know, at three o'clock in the morning or something, and we'd been through day after day of that type of thing, being run over. And members who were frustrated sometimes thought that we weren't doing enough to fight back.

We were. And I think most of the members knew that. We'd have our little tricks where we would get everybody riled up. I had one, when Rick Bender was angry in caucus. He had a bill, in Rules, that the Republicans had been sitting on, which was a child restraint seating requirement, for children in cars, and it was very important to him. So I told him, after the caucus when he'd been ripping us, I said, "This is what we're going to do." I made a motion that the Rules Committee be relieved of that bill. Which meant that in order to do that, some Republicans had to vote with us to override the speaker. The speaker was sitting on the bill.

And they did. And the bill passed overwhelmingly. Well now, with Rick and some of those people, we were okay again. Just a little thing. Gene Lux—who was an old-time, people's kind of legislator—came from the labor movement, really a nice guy, always taking on the banks and the insurance companies, and anybody else he could take on. And we all knew that.

But one night, again we'd been under attack, and I looked down and I said, "Gene, come up front. Gene, step up on the table." Big showman—this is a showman trick. I pulled up his pants leg, and he had Dior socks on! Man of the working people, right?

And everybody roared, and then they started to chant, "Gene! Gene! Gene!" And the walls were shaking—this is like three o'clock in the morning!—and we came out of there we were all revved up. The Republicans who were tired and exhausted, wondered, "What the hell happened in there?"

You know, it's sort of a trick. It's a psychological thing. You've got to get your members riled up when you're being beaten up. So I knew we had a chance in the 1982 election. Very few people thought we would, but I thought we had to build that.

Mr. Schleitwiler: So you had folks really rallied for the election. Can you talk about the 1982 election, and how it went?

Mr. Ehlers: Yeah. We had excellent candidates. What I believe is, you can spend a lot of money on a candidate and try to make them look better than they are. It's better to find a good candidate who will do a great job and will more easily be re-elected. Because if they're incompetent, every election you've got to spend a lot of money and effort to get somebody

re-elected who's not talented, or a good worker. Our advantage was Denny Heck, who is now in Congress, and who became my majority leader and then my chief clerk.

He had the skills to go around the state to areas that traditionally might be mainly Republican, or thought they were. He'd ask local businesspeople, teachers, union people, Democratic-type people into a room. He'd have his flip charts, and say, "OK, what are the most important things in this district? What issues? Write them down. And related information about that."

And then, "Who are some people in the community—disregard the fact that you don't know if they are Democrats, Republican or Independent—who are some people that you think, in this community, are the real leaders?" And they list them.

Now some were even in that room and had no thoughts of ever running. And they ended up running. And we won, throughout the state. We knocked off more incumbent Republicans since the election in 1932, during the Depression. There was a big turnover, and Denny was the big leader of that. He had set up a series of campaign schools that brought in not only the candidates, but campaign managers and so forth. It was a very thorough process.

We had excellent candidates. We found ways to have some of our staff members go out, during that election, and spend some time in each district. Each candidate had to prepare a plan, a detailed plan, of when they were going to do doorbelling and have fundraisers and so forth. These people from the staff went out to detect whether or not this was actually happening or if they were just BS-ing us. Because if they were BS-ing us, we weren't going to put any more effort in. And in order to pay for that, we couldn't have these staff people doing this at public expense.

So my job was to go out and try to raise some money. For example, I talked to Henry Jackson, a United States senator at the time, and told him what we were trying to do. And Henry Jackson went to a lot of the bigger national unions. And they ended up sending us twenty-five, thirty thousand dollars, which we used exclusively to free up our staff to go out and monitor campaigns.

It turns out, we won. It was a big surprise to a lot of folks. But over that period of time we could see that the Republicans were losing control—the speaker was—and we got so that we were forcing them to actually negotiate with us. They needed us to pass the budget or the taxes and so forth. And it worked out very well.

The other thing that I think was helpful was that I went around the state in my little Pinto. I went to every small little radio station in Whatcom and Skagit County, down in Vancouver or Grays Harbor or Yakima or wherever. I went out as minority leader to be interviewed, by weeklies as well.

The tendency had always been for Democrats to go to the big cities. I thought it was important for us to have an image out there. And since it wasn't customary to have anybody like a minority leader, these radio stations, since I used to do some radio reporting and worked for some weeklies, I knew they had to fill the space. And so, I would go in for an interview. They just loved having somebody to fill the time. And

I'd go in for an hour. And then they would take that and play it live. Then on a Sunday, on the weekends, they would air it again. They would take excerpts out of it all during the week, to have their news broadcast.

And so, I would hit a number of these in one day, and I'd be all over the state. And Republicans kept calling their leadership saying, "What is going on? He can't be everywhere!" Well, this is what we did. I got the names of people in each radio station, and said, "During the session, if we send some radio clips of speeches on the floor, and so forth, directly to your station, will you be interested?" And we did—this was when we were in the minority. And we didn't have much staff, because the Republicans had cut our staff in half. We put alligator clips on the speakers, and they dubbed in, you know, "This is so-and-so from Olympia, to station KKKK." And they would tape it, and they would play it. And so, we were out there getting our message out, and that's important. And it helped me as well, because members said, "Oh, you're out there fighting for us." So it was helpful.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Can you talk about your first day as speaker?

Mr. Ehlers: It's customary, you know, for both sides to have a candidate for speaker. You always know whoever is in the majority is going to win. It's a fixed deal. Gary Nelson was the minority leader and a friend of mine—we had come in together. They nominated Gary, and Dan Grimm and Denny Heck nominated me. They have an extra seat that they put in the back just for the first day, before you're sworn in. It's a temporary desk in the back. And I was sitting back there, and I was looking at my family up in the gallery and thinking to myself, you know, how in the heck did I get this far? And listening to the speeches. Then we did a roll call, and it's customary that I voted for Gary and then Gary voted for me. This is the custom. I don't know if they still do it that way. But that's the way they used to do it. And then I came up, and was sworn in, and gave a brief speech, and then spent time with the family.

The real work began the next day. I had to change the culture in the Legislature. The Republicans couldn't govern. They called session after session without tackling the revenue issue. I had been there in Olympia on most holidays, including Thanksgiving, on my birthday, and most of the summer. As the economy got worse, they did nothing.

Mr. Schleitwiler: So the session went on and on—

Mr. Ehlers: It went on and on. I did not want that to happen to us. And so, we had a plan, and we followed it, and we were successful.

Mr. Schleitwiler: So before we get to your days as speaker, is there anything else in your career up to that point that you think is necessary to know, to understand your speakership?

Mr. Ehlers: When I was committee chair of the State Government Committee, I tried to involve Democrats and Republicans on the committee. We passed Republican bills out if they were good bills. I even appointed Gary Nelson to be chair of one of the subcommittees during the interim. Because he was Republican, that usually didn't happen. I met regularly with Joe Taller, who became the ranking Republican. We would

meet each week with the staff and he and I, whenever there were bills coming from the various agencies. The agencies needed to get signatures for bills that were going to come to the committee. We would alternate. He would sign first, I would sign second; the next one, we'd flip. And when bills came on to the floor, even if our leadership didn't like it, he and I would take on the amendments or the bill. And we tried to do it in a bipartisan fashion. And when the tie occurred in 1979—there was a tie, with an equal number of Democrats Republicans [in the House]—ours was one of the few committees that actually was able to produce and pass bills, because we worked together.

But again, a lot of it, as I say, had to go back to trying to work together to try to make the sessions go in a smooth fashion, because people were getting awfully tired of [the long] sessions. Not just the public. Later, when I became speaker, I kept emphasizing we want to get things done on time. And yes, there were bills that probably we needed to deal with, but if it wasn't going to be done I would always say, "OK, I'm willing to go into extra session, but can you tell me that in one week, or ten days, or a month, we're going to resolve that particular issue?" If you can't, then we're going to go, and save it for next time.

Another kind of funny story I remember is, when I was minority leader—as I say, they were in session all the time. My birthday's on the 25th of November, right around Thanksgiving, and we were on the floor of the House. And we had just won a seat in Seattle to replace a Republican. It was a special election. And that gave us forty-three members. Well, on that day, a number of us were wearing buttons that said, "43 and counting." Well, Speaker Polk was outraged from the rostrum, saying we were politicizing, and that was not allowed. And I let him go on and on, and then I stood up and I said, "Mr. Speaker, I absolutely agree with you. We cannot politicize issues like this. I just want you to know that this is my forty-third birthday and counting! And of course, everybody laughed, and he didn't know what to say to that. But yeah, it was a double-edged sword. Here we were proud to have forty-three members, and then the fact that I was forty-three years of age.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Next, we can talk about some of the key people that you dealt with during your time as speaker. Maybe we can begin by talking about your leadership team?

Mr. Ehlers: I'd like to first say, before that, I tried to deal as Speaker Polk did. I'd come in almost every morning to see the speaker and talk about what was going to go on. I told Gary Nelson the same rules and the same conditions that Speaker Polk had said. They would never question any travel that you did as leadership. We needed to have some honesty in what was going on. And we would meet almost daily. And I hope that the new speaker, [Laurie Jinkins], does that. I don't know in the last few years if that's continued to be the custom or not.

But as far as my own leadership, it was customary for speakers to have leadership meetings. I don't know how often they occurred, because I hadn't been in leadership with the speaker before that. But, you know, what is a leadership team? In the past, what they used to do was essentially there was the speaker, the speaker pro tem, the majority leader, the assistant majority leader, the whip, the

assistant whips, and so forth. Well, one, that's too many people, and two, not all those people really had much to contribute to what I thought needed to be done. So my group that I considered my leadership were people who were, one, very bright very and very articulate; knew what was going on, weren't afraid to give their opinions—and we trusted each other, and that was extremely important. We used to be in almost every morning. We tried to anticipate issues that probably, or might be, coming down the pike, maybe in a couple of weeks or something. How are we going to deal with them? And it was not just plan A, but, OK, what about plan B, if plan A doesn't work?

So what I would normally do is, I would call on Dan Grimm, who was my Ways and Means chair. Dan had been, at one point, head of the staff before he was elected to the Legislature. And Dan has an excellent ability to analyze the pros and cons of a particular issue. He would be able to describe it so we could understand it. And I'd have him go first. Now, Dan wasn't always willing to give his opinion, and that was alright, but I could always count on him to start with giving a good analysis.

Then Jim Kneeland, who was our communications guy, and later worked for Booth Gardner. Jim's job was to indicate how he thought the press would perceive this, whatever the issue was and what our position might be. And that was fine, I'd say, "Well thanks, Jim." It's important to know that. We're not going to set policy on what the press wants, but it's good to know what you think, from your experience, the reaction is going to be. And that's good. So that was his contribution.

And then Dean Foster, who is one of the brightest guys. He was our chief clerk, and he was [chief of staff] for Booth Gardner for a while. Dean's view was—not always, but quite often—let's go cautiously. If we wait long enough, it'll probably go away. So let's not rush and spend a lot of time and resources on something that isn't probably going to ever appear. "And why is that, Dean?" And he always had a good reason for it.

Then Denny Heck. Back in those days—Denny is now a congressman—he's, tempered himself, let's say. But back in those days, I could count on him, particularly if it involved some lobbying group he didn't like, or maybe some Republicans he didn't like, his advice was to go for the jugular. And that's maybe unfair, but, generally, he would say, "We are going to have a fight here, and here's why. And here's how we need to deal with it." And I think that was a useful kind of analysis. And then Joe King, a couple of years later, became my majority leader, and Denny Heck became my chief clerk. But he essentially had the same role in that group as Denny had previously, as majority leader.

Now, I would save Lorraine Hine for last. She was older than most. She had been in local government. She was the caucus chair. She had the respect of everybody. I won't say she was like a den mother, but she is very bright and very articulate. And so, she would say, "OK, here's what I think." And it was generally kind of a good overview. So then it came to me, well then, I would sum up and I'd say, "OK, this is what we're going to do." So-and-so is going to do this research. You've got to have staff work on this. Somebody's got to look into this. Somebody's got to do some outreach to

outside groups, to see their viewpoint and so forth, and gather information. We may never use it in this session, but we need to know, so we aren't scrambling to try to have a position when the press and the caucus say, and the public are saying, "What are you going to do about it?" We want to be prepared.

I don't know if they still do it that way. I have no idea. But I think that is the way, to find a leadership team who trust each other and work together.

Subsequently, later, when I was out of the Legislature, I went to work for Booth Gardner, the governor. Denny was chief of staff, Dean Foster was one of the lead people, and instead of Dan Grimm, we had another guy, Len McComb, who had been a former staff guy on Budget. And we all trusted each other, because we had worked together before. And that's the kind of people I like to work with. Bright, articulate, who aren't afraid to give their point of view, and will speak up for it. And then pull together when the time comes.

Beyond this group, in the case of some particular issues that had to do with taxes and so forth, Helen Sommers was then part of it. What we used to do, as a strategy—because I had fifty-three members, and about six or seven of them didn't like to vote for taxes or budget, but I explained that we're in the majority and we have to deal with it. Dan Grimm would come into the caucus, and he would take each kind of tax, for example, like the sales tax, and describe how it works, how much income comes in from each incremental increase in it. He would do that, then maybe next time it's the B and O tax, the business and occupation tax, and next time it was property tax. We allowed questions of substance—we didn't allow debate. This was for informational purposes only. Then, after we'd go through all this, the five of us would go and divide up the caucus members to talk to. "Which of these alternatives do you favor, if you have to?" Then we'd come back together and see what we had.

So then we'd go to the caucus and say, "OK, this was our process, and here's the bill. Now we're going to go out, and we're going to vote on it." What people didn't know, including most of the caucus, is that we never had more than forty-six votes. We needed fifty! We never had more than forty-six votes on any tax bill or budget bill when it went onto the floor. The Republicans fell into the trap. They so upset some of even our more conservative members, after hours and hours of amendments that were frivolous. They got so mad that they would vote with us!

But the process was, they all thought, "Well, they must have the votes. They wouldn't bring it out unless they did." But no, we never had the votes.

Mr. Schleitwiler: But you had the confidence that this is going to work?

Mr. Ehlers Yeah. And in one case, we went all night long. And we had thirty-five votes. We actually had thirty-six. But Denny Heck switched to "no" so that he could ask for reconsideration, which he did. So we were obviously fourteen votes short.

And the press came up—and there's a picture in the other room with all the press around, with all the cameras and so forth—they said, "What are you going to do?"

And I said, “We’re going to vote again.”

They said, “What are you going to give up?”

I said, “We’re not going to give anything up. We’re going to go talk to people so they understand, this is the beginning. It’s then going to go to the Senate, they’re going to do their thing, and it’s going to come back, and they’re going to have another vote. And then we’re going to come back, this afternoon or tomorrow morning, and we’re going to vote on it and pass it.”

Which is exactly what happened. We didn’t trade anything to somebody for their vote. We didn’t do any of that. We just tried to talk to them and explain what the process was.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Can we talk more about other government leaders that you had to deal with? You already mentioned working with Gary Nelson, the Republican leader. Do you want to talk about him?

Mr. Ehlers Gary and I came in together in the 1972 election, along with Helen Sommers and some of the other people I mentioned. Gary was from the Edmonds area, which has now become more Democratic. It was gradually moving that way. Gary, when he first came on, was a moderate Republican. But then at some point in that caucus, he ran for some caucus position which he should have won. But he wasn’t conservative enough for the caucus, and he got defeated. Well I saw, unfortunately, Gary kind of backed away from his moderate points of view at times. He was still a good guy. He knew the rules. For the most part. Not as well as I did! And I told him, I had one advantage—I had the gavel and he didn’t.

But Gary was extremely clever. I remember one time, when I was presiding, there was a bill about not having pension fund investments go to apartheid in South Africa, to keep the money from going there and direct the pension fund not to invest and take any investments out. Well, Gary, at one point, offered an amendment to put fifty-one thousand dollars to fund and help the pension system carry out the mandate of this bill.

And some of my House members stood up and said that was a great idea. So I said, “We’ll have an immediate Democratic caucus.”

We went in there, and I said to the caucus, “OK, how many people in here think that Gary Nelson agrees with this bill?”

No hands.

“Why do you think Gary is offering this amendment to help this bill?”

And they all looked blankly.

I said, “Here’s the lesson. Read the rules. If you read the rules, which Gary has done, after we went through second reading, you get to final passage. There’s a rule that says that any revenue or tax bill or appropriation that is more than fifty thousand dollars must be approved by the Appropriations Committee, the Ways and Means Committee. They have had their last meeting. As soon as this amendment passes and we get to final passage, the vote, he’ll stand up and say, ‘Mr. Speaker, point of order.’ And he would ask me, ‘On rule so-and-so, this is what it says.’ I would have to agree with him, and the bill would be dead.

You know, the bill would be dead. Know the rules. Know the rules."

The time on rules with Gary, that I enjoyed besting him—in fact, I was talking to Allen Hayward just the other day. He was the Republican caucus attorney, very smart, and knew all the rules. Gary came to me because there the rules said that, on a conference or free conference committee, you had to have six members from the House and Senate. Three from the House and three from the Senate. And you had to get five signatures out of the six in order to have an agreement.

Well, the budget was all hung up. They couldn't get agreement. And so, Gary comes to me in my office and says, "Look, I'm willing to go back, take the bill back to second reading, and make some amendments. And if I agreed to do that, here are a list of things we want. Here's some things my caucus wants in the budget, and things we want to take out of the budget."

And I said, "OK, if we go through that process, then how many votes are you going to provide to pass it?" None. And I said, "Well, you realize, I'm going to lose three or four votes if I do that."

"Well."

I said, "You know, you're the master of the rules, Gary."

He said, "What are you going to do?"

And I said, "Wait till tomorrow morning, and this will give you time to go and read the rules."

So the next day, it comes up for a vote, and I make a ruling that it only needs four signatures, not five. Because under our rules, if there aren't legislative rules in place, then we revert back to Reed's Rules, which are different from Robert's Rules of Order. It's based on the congressional rules. There's a book called "Reed's Rules." And under Reed's Rules it only takes four signatures.

Well, he stands up and says, "Under our rules, it takes five."

And I said, "I'd like to point out, Representative Nelson, since you are the master of the rules, you have been fighting against us adopting the joint rules between the House and Senate. So we have no joint rules. Therefore, under the rules that I have, I can rule that we only need four. So that's why we went from five people to only having four, to sign. Four out of the six. So I finally mastered him—one time at least!

Mr. Schleitwiler: It sounds like you enjoyed your rivalry, but also prided yourselves on working well together.

Mr. Ehlers: Oh yes, playing poker together and so forth. And we still socialize. I saw him just a couple days ago.

Mr. Schleitwiler: How about Governor Spellman?

Mr. Ehlers: John Spellman. I think John Spellman was a very good governor. He was a decent man. Really a decent man. And he got beat up by Polk and the Republicans because he was a moderate. He referred to some of the Republicans as troglodytes because they weren't willing to step up. He had campaigned on no new taxes, but as

the economy went bad, he had to cut the budget. Every time, he had to cut the budget ten percent or eight percent, each time, as the economy got worse.

He said, "We can't—I can't keep doing this." Well, they weren't going to let him get away with that. And we were in the minority at the time—this was the first two years. And John took just a lot of abuse. A decent, decent man.

The only trouble I ever had with John Spellman was when I became speaker, and he and I had a meeting, and I said, "We have to have new taxes. We both agree on that." I said, "We have our proposal, and we were talking about a bunch of business tax increases and so forth, and you were talking about sales tax increases. We believe that sales tax increases disproportionately hurt lower income people."

And he said, "Yeah, but the business tax has hurt the economy when we're trying to recover."

We said, "OK, we've got to compromise. So let's do 50-50." And we shook hands. Well, we passed the tax bill early on in the session. And he got rolled by Boeing primarily, and he vetoed it.

And I went to him and I said, "John, we had an agreement. I kept my part of it. And I took a lot of abuse from my caucus and from the Democratic Party for increasing sales tax. You took abuse from the Republicans, and that was fine. We knew that going in. But then, I felt, you know, you got yours. You didn't veto the sales taxes; you just vetoed the business tax." But we still had a good relationship, and he was a good man. And he has said of me, on a number of occasions when other people have written, that I was fair to work with, and he is sort of in the tradition of Dan Evans, who is hopefully going to have a book out soon.

I saw Dan on Saturday; he's ninety-three, and he looks like he's in his sixties. Dan Evans, when I began as a member in his last term of four years, he was great to work with. He had a great staff. And I always felt when he was speaking to the Legislature, up front on the rostrum, he spent more time talking to the Democrats who were supportive than the Republicans. We supported most of his legislation. Spellman was much the same.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Can we talk about Booth Gardner?

Mr. Ehlers: Sure. I've known Booth Gardner since the 1960s and 1970s, when he ran for state Senate. I was Ted Bottiger's campaign manager. We did a lot of work, our people, after the primary, filling out brochures to send out, and so forth. We did a lot of work. We went out, did some doorbelling. Because we were friends. He was in Pierce County, the north part of Pierce County. Then he later left the Senate and was elected as the first county executive in Pierce County. There had been a lot of corruption in Pierce County, and he cleaned things up and did an excellent job. So in 1983 I endorsed Booth to run for governor. Bottiger and I endorsed early. We took a lot of abuse from Senator Jim McDermott, who wanted to run again. I had supported Senator McDermott in '72 and in 1980, but he'd lost badly both times and we thought Booth would be a good person to be governor.

I think the first two years, Booth—because he had served for a time in the state Senate, where the state Senate pretty much controlled the House—in my view, he believed that was still true. And it wasn't, because we had strong people, like the people I mentioned, Heck and Grimm and Helen Sommers and those people, who saw themselves as elected just as much as the senators were. And he didn't learn that the first two years. It was the House members, and the people that I mentioned, who helped him in his campaign to get elected. We were the key people in his election. He forgot about that. So, the first two years, he wasn't as successful as I think he should have been. But he learned, and so as he got around Foster and Heck and all those people, he soon learned he had to work with both the House and the Senate.

When I was speaker the first two years, and I'd get to Olympia, probably, six or seven in the morning, and bang on the outside door of the governor's office. He'd be in there, and we'd go in, and we'd talk about what was happening, and issues, and so forth.

He was one of the most incredible human beings I've ever known. When he was a student at the University of Washington, he was heir to a vast fortune in the Weyerhaeuser—actually, the Norton family, the Clapp family. Related by marriage. His mother had been married to Norton Clapp.

When he was a student, and this is typical, his whole life is this way, he coached a team down in the Central District. A baseball team. They didn't have gloves, they didn't have bats, they didn't have balls. Whatever they could pull together. No bases, no uniforms, nothing. Even Jimi Hendrix was on one of his teams.

All of a sudden one day, a truck pulled up, and unloaded uniforms, baseball gloves, and everything. Nobody ever knew where it came from. It was Booth. He had the money. He did that all the time. He did that through his whole life. We would go to someplace in eastern Washington, some little restaurant, and he'd go visit the people, you know, dining there. But he'd go back in the kitchen and visit people there. If he had been there before, he knew the names of the people. He had an incredible memory.

He was a very effective governor. During the first two years, I did notice, he could be pretty naive. He trusted people to the point that he thought, whenever they were talking to him, they were telling him straight out what was going on. One day he announces to the world, without talking to me as speaker or talking to Ways and Means, Dan Grimm, or any of us, that he had a proposal to put a sales tax on gasoline. And that money would then be used for the general fund. Well, that wasn't going to go anywhere.

But I went down to see him and he said, "Well, how many votes can you get?"

And I said, "Well, out of loyalty, you've got mine. I might get two or three Democrats. The Republicans aren't going to vote for it. I could get you two or three Democrats who aren't running for re-election, and I might get one more if I threaten to beat them to death." And I said, "It's dead." I said, "Why did you do that?" I said, "I noticed at the press conference, you were there and right behind you, not out front, was Jim McDermott. And so, where did you come up with this idea?"

"Well, Jim came and explained to me how this would raise the money, and so forth."

And I said, "So you just went ahead based on that, without talking to people about the possibility of this happening." I said, "Why do you think he did that?"

He said, "Well, probably it's good policy."

And I said, "It's because you ran against him and you beat him."

He said, "But I ran fair and square." And I said, "No offense"—and I'm not try[ing] to pick on the Irish!—I said, "He is an Irish politician from Chicago. And it was payback time."

"Really? I don't understand that."

Well, he got more sophisticated as time went on. He was a very courageous governor. Later, he stood up when there was a teacher strike. It was misunderstood by many people in the public, what that was all about. But he was really, really, a person who cared about everybody. He is responsible for lots of excellent legislation in the state, and a great human being, and I was very proud to know him.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You mentioned Jim McDermott and the Senate. Can you say anything about the major folks you dealt with in the Senate?

Mr. Ehlers: Yeah, of course [Majority Leader] Ted Bottiger and [Democratic Caucus Chair] George Fleming in the leadership, and Jim McDermott, and others. A good group of people, and I'd served with some of them in the House. Ted Bottiger, certainly—I'd been his campaign manager, and he was my senator. But the Senate always thought that they should control everything. Including McDermott. He was just one. He was a typical senator.

I remember, once, the budget was in conflict between the House and Senate, and I was speaker. We had passed ours and it was over in the Senate. We're at loggerheads. And so, the senators wanted to talk to me. I said, OK. I set a time for them to come over. And I was presiding, and when I came into my office, they were sitting there like this, on the chairs, with their arms folded.

And they said, "You're late."

I looked up and said, "Yeah, I'm five minutes late. I was out presiding on a Senate bill that was in trouble, and I'm trying to save one of your priority bills. So I'm sorry I'm late." A little sarcasm in my voice.

And they said, "Well, you should have been here." OK.

So I said, "Let's find out what the differences are between us."

So I would go down each of the items in dispute in the budget, and they said, "Oh, it's got to be the Senate position." And so, we went through each one of them—there must have been thirty. It's always, "It's going to be the Senate version. It's our way or the highway."

So I said, "OK." And I started to head for the door of my own office.

They said, "Where are you going?"

And I said, "I knew we were going to have this meeting. So I asked the press to come in. And they're all out here, with their cameras and their pens and pencils. And I'm going to go out and explain why it's no compromise, no discussion. It's the Senate way or the highway. And because of that we will probably go into special session, like the Republicans used to do, and I'm going to explain all that. And then you're going to have your opportunity to go and explain why we're going to have a special session."

I started to open the doors and they said, "Wait a minute, wait a minute."

They were very poor poker players, very poor. I had played poker with them before, and I knew they were poor poker players! So problem resolved. We agreed on some compromises and agreed to talk about the rest of them, and within a week, we had an agreement. The Senate, oftentimes, was more the enemy than the governor, whether Democrat or Republican, or even the Republicans in the House. It was oftentimes the Senate that was more of a problem. I don't know if it's still true, but at times we felt that way.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Are there other allies, or rivals, or folks in other parts of government that it's important to mention?

Mr. Ehlers: Yeah. I think we had a good relationship with our congressional delegation, Democrats and Republicans. I had served in the House with some of the Republicans and Democrats who were now in Congress. And Tom Foley, who later became speaker, was the whip. I would go to D.C. with someone like Sim Wilson, who was later the minority leader for the Republicans in the [Washington State] House, and we would go and talk to the delegation about what was going on back home. They needed to understand what they were doing was going to impact us.

For example, in order for them to balance their budget, particularly in the Reagan era, what would be the result here. We had, for example, the matching money that came from the federal government, under Medicaid, to pay for seniors who were destitute, for nursing homes. The federal government put up sixty percent. We put up forty percent. All of a sudden, they decided that they would put up forty percent. Therefore, we'd put up sixty percent. They would balance their budget, but they shifted it all onto us.

I said, "You need to know what you're doing—what the impact of what you're doing is having on us." And sometimes we were able to actually make changes and get their cooperation.

We also were able to get their attention when we had redistricting. I told the press that I thought that it was an opportunity, for the first time, for some congresspeople to learn that the state capital was in Olympia, Washington. And that—a little bit of political science!—that the Legislature did redistricting, and that they had to learn that, so they had to come and talk to us.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Geography and political science.

Mr. Ehlers: Yes, it was a basic lesson for them! But generally, we had really good people, Democrats and Republicans. And they tended to work together, and they worked to help us. And so, we would go back and, as I say, explain what was going

on and if we needed to get help. I remember going back with Joel Pritchard—who became lieutenant governor later, when I worked for Booth [Gardner]—a Republican congressman, who was very good. He was the Dan Evans, John Spellman type of Republican. And he'd go back with us, and he had all these buddies who were working for Bush in the White House. The first George Bush. And he would get us in to talk to these people, who were top staff people, who could get some exemptions for policies that we wanted to try out here. And he took the lead for us. So we were able to cooperate with Democrats and Republicans. I'm not so sure that's true today.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You mentioned earlier, when you came into the House, seeing who were the workhorses and who were the show horses. Is there anybody else that you want to mention, either other House members or staff members, who were the real workhorses?

Mr. Ehlers: Well, I think there's so many. For example, my staff guy, Fred Hellberg, who later went and worked for a Republican administration, then came back and worked for Booth. The workload of state government—we passed more legislation, our committee and the Judiciary Committee, than anybody else—and we didn't have much staff, and he was absolutely terrific. Back in those days, the members could trust that they could go to Fred in private and get amendments drawn, without me being involved in it. And it didn't make a difference if they were Republicans or Democrats. Fred was told, and his staff was told, it was confidential, and he kept that.

And he would tell me, on certain bills that I was interested in, "Here's the problem with it, and here's the opposition that you're going to have to it, and this is why." Not because he would necessarily want to take it out, but he wanted us to understand the downside and the upside of what we were trying to do. Being very objective. When the Republicans got in control, they didn't pay any attention. The Republican attorneys would introduce bills, send them to the committee, and then they would come out and they would be ripped to pieces. And Fred, and other staff members on other committees, were underutilized. Republicans kept shooting themselves in the foot, and they didn't really have to do that.

There were a lot of other people. I mentioned Dean Foster. When I first came into the Legislature, Alan Thompson—who died recently, one of the finest public servants we've ever had—was particularly helpful. He was one of my legislative mentors. He was one of those I tried to get to run as minority leader, and prior to that to run for speaker. And he never pushed to do it, but he was outstanding.

There were just so many, Democrats and Republicans, that I think were very fine legislators. I'd say most of the legislators, in either party, were there to serve the public. You can always tell the ambitious ones. There's nothing wrong with ambition, but for a few handful of people, if every vote was agonizing because they were trying to figure out what that vote meant to their re-election or the next thing that they wanted to run for—you know, they don't fit. They're not really show horses, or they're not workhorses. They're just there. But

there weren't very many of those, at least in the days that I served.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Next, do you want to talk about your relationship to the press?

Mr. Ehlers: Yeah. I had a background, as I think I mentioned, in high school and college, as editor of the newspapers. I worked for couple weeklies and did some radio reporting. I have a real respect for most of the press. There are some that, of course, probably never should have gone into the business, just like some should have never got into politics, but most were really very good, and I just felt, they had a job and I had a job. I never, ever lied to them. We used to meet, usually, once a week, after the workday, in my office, to have some drinks and nibble on some stuff, off the record. But if they asked me a question, I would never lie to them. I would say, justifiably so, "Look, I have a position on it. I'd be normally happy to tell you what that is, but I have not gone to the caucus to talk about it and I don't want them reading about it in the newspaper before I have a chance to talk to them. That's not the way I operate. But as soon as I have that conversation, I'd be happy to answer any questions about it."

And we had excellent relationships, I think. They were more than fair to me. I never kept clippings of my press. Later, I found my mom did. So, when I wrote my memoir, I had to thank my mom, because about ninety-five percent of my memoir was totally from memory. But I didn't really remember, or ever see sometimes, some of these columns. So, when I was writing my memoir, my mother had those. I did say in my memoir, I think my mom only kept the good ones. And if somebody wants to go find the negative ones, they're going to have to do it on their own, because Mom didn't keep those, apparently. But yeah, the press was good. And I still have friends in the press.

Mr. Schleitwiler: When you came into office, there were some issues with the budget. Can you talk about that?

Mr. Ehlers: We had a situation where the Republicans had balanced their budget by overestimating how much revenues were going to be gained in the pension system so they didn't have to contribute as much to the pension system. They took money out of the common school construction fund, they took money from various sources in order to, apparently, balance the budget. They gave a seven percent salary increase to all public employees and to higher education, but it didn't take effect until the last day of the biennium, which was June 30th, 1983. So it appeared that their budget was balanced. We then had to go back and replace all of those monies, including paying back the so-called twenty-fifty month, which was two hundred fifty million dollars.

So we were at a meeting, Gary Nelson and I, at the Rainier Club, filled with people who were businesspeople, who said, "Well, if there's such a tough situation, why don't you just do as I do? I just closed down a line in my business, a conveyor belt or something."

And I said, "Our problem is that we can't do that, constitutionally. We have to protect the poor, and we have to educate the kids. And in fact, whenever there's a recession, as it is now, there are more problems. We have more spousal abuse. Suicide lines get overwhelmed. So we're going to have to

raise some taxes and revenue." Which we did. That was very contentious, but we got it done.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Can you talk about some of your legislative accomplishments? You've said to me before that, because you were working with a slim majority, there was only so much you were ever able to do.

Mr. Ehlers: I determined that I would spend—unlike the liberal things that I'd like to have done—I decided to let the members know that their first responsibility is passing the budget, and the taxes, and procedural motions. But on most issues, they were on their own to vote.

But there were some institutional issues that I thought needed to be taken care of. I had served in the minority, on a redistricting committee under the Republicans, which meant if you're in the minority, that didn't mean anything at all. In the past, the Legislature had spent all kinds of time on redistricting. Members on both sides were trading votes in order to get a better district. They were trading votes on budgets and everything else. They'd been caught up, in the past. Back in '72, actually, a geographer from the University of Washington was called in by the courts and drew the lines. And we were facing that again. After Republicans had passed redistricting in 1981-82, the courts threw out the redistricting for the congressional districts. So I decided that was the time to strike.

We created an independent redistricting commission, which took about one week, and they came up with a compromise. One public citizen selection from each of the four caucuses, two Democrats and two Republicans, and a fifth person that they selected—someone from the University of Washington, a professor. And within a short time, they resolved the issue. We then passed a constitutional amendment that went to the people, to take the Legislature out of redistricting, and it was successful. We've had numerous redistricting plans since that time. They have never been challenged by the public. And now other states have finally started to join us, and this has become a national issue, because redistricting is one of the biggest scourges.

The reason Congress can't get along is, because if Democrats are in charge or Republicans are in charge, in some states, they draw lines that are so bad that they lock in people forever and ever. And it's just not fair, and democratic with a small D. And so now, more and more states are realizing that the only thing that some congress people fear is not winning in a general election. In their district, they're afraid that somebody further to the left or further to the right, depending on the district, is going to run against them in the primaries. So other states are, thankfully, moving in that direction. But I think we were one of the first states to have non-legislative redistricting, and I was speaker, and I'm proud of my role in that.

Another one was the Salary Commission. One of my jobs as chair of the State Government Committee, and everything else, was to try to get the votes to have salary increases. A lot of statewide officials had not gotten increases for a number of years. Judges, as well, and legislators, as well. And so, my job was to try to get votes. Sometimes people would say, "Oh, I hate Judge so-and-so, so I don't want judges to be in it," or, "I don't like this Democrat or

this Republican statewide official." So it got to be pretty petty. Very petty. And I spent too much of my time, over the years, trying to collect votes to get it. And generally, with the exception of a handful of Republicans, I could never get Republicans to vote for anything like that. So it had been on the ballot in the '70s, and the people had turned down having an independent salary commission.

So I looked at the weaknesses of it. I drew up a constitutional amendment. I was the only sponsor because I didn't want somebody to get caught in the crossfire. I met with the Republicans in the House leadership, and they agreed to give me the votes to send it to the people and let them decide. I did a couple of wrinkles with it. The previous commission proposal only had people from labor unions, and businesses, and AWB [the Association of Washington Business], and presidents of universities, and people of that sort, who may have had a conflict of interest. And every time they made a proposal, it had never gone anywhere. So what I did—some people thought it was a gimmick, but it worked out fine—one registered voter from each congressional district would be drawn at random, and if they chose to serve, they would serve and be on the Salary Commission. And they would have hearings. They would have experts who could compare salaries in other states for these positions. They brought in people who could give job descriptions and make it an understandable process.

And it passed. The constitutional amendment passed. It did have a provision that people could get a referendum if they didn't like what the Salary Commission did. We've had numerous Salary Commissions over the years. Sometimes they raise salaries, sometimes they leave them the way they are. The Legislature cannot get involved in it and try to do hero votes. There never has been an initiative, to my knowledge, ever filed, and certainly never one that's been voted on. And that used to take a lot of time in the Legislature, and a lot of game playing, and that's off the books too.

The last thing was the Office of Program Research. The Republicans had politicized it and created all kinds of partisan positions. My job, when I became speaker, was to try to resurrect and build the independent Office of Program Research staff up. And I didn't want anybody to ask any staff member, "What are your politics? Democrat or Republican?" I never asked. Never did. And I hope most of my colleagues didn't either, because that is the bulwark of the Legislature. You need to have that independent body. It helps Democrats and Republicans draw up legislation and amendments. It is fair to both sides and protects confidentiality, and that's the way it needs to be. And so that's what I did.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You also spoke about your commitment to running things efficiently and getting done on time. That was something that mattered a lot to you and meant a lot to voters. Is that right?

Mr. Ehlers: Yeah, I think it did. After we had so many, frankly. The two long sessions, one [1983] was supposed to go one hundred and five days and ended up one hundred and thirty-six days, because, as I mentioned earlier, Spellman had vetoed [the revenue bill], and that caused the session to go longer. But the second long

session [1985] went one hundred and six days—one over. The shorter session [1984], the 60-day session, for the first time since 1927, it finished on time. And the 1986 session finished one day early, which was the first time ever. And one of the freshmen went back—he thought I was putting too much emphasis on that. He got back early, to his local Kiwanis or Rotary, walked in, said the Legislature is over, and he was back early, and they gave him a standing ovation. He said he finally understood that the public wants to see that work. So my goal was to have a plan to move from the very first day, and work through the process, and not waste any time. And sometimes I had to do long, long sessions, sometimes [run] overnight. But it was necessary to do that.

Mr. Schleitwiler: When you talked about Gary Nelson, you talked about how important it was to kind of know the rules, right? And so, you were working under some constraints, but you did get some important things done, and sometimes had to really be a good poker player and to know the rules and figure out how to do that. Do you want to talk about some of your legislative accomplishments?

Mr. Ehlers: Well, there were a lot of accomplishments that weren't necessarily mine. I had a role in them, but my view was to let committee chairs have a lot of responsibility, and take the lead, as well as individual sponsors of bills. But there were times in which, as speaker, you have to step up. There were a couple of those.

One was the Seafirst Bank, which was the major bank in Washington State. There was a bill, which nobody called attention to, that would allow an in-state bank to sell to an out-of-state bank, but it wasn't moving because there didn't seem to be any need for it. Well, then this lobbyist for Seafirst comes in, frantically, and says, "I need to have this bill." And explained that Seafirst was on the verge—this is 1983—on the verge of bankruptcy.

I listened to him, and then I called the state treasurer, and said, "How much money do we have in the bank?" Because Seafirst was the bank for the state government. And it was something like a hundred million, or a hundred and fifty million. And then I called some people back in New York, who looked at bond ratings, and so forth. We were already getting into some financial trouble with our WPPSS [Washington Public Power Supply System, pronounced "whoops"], which I'll talk about later. But we also had two hundred and fifty million dollars to pay back, for the so-called twenty-fifth month, which the Republicans had created in the early '70s—which said we don't have twenty-four months, the two-year biennium is twenty-five months. I used to say, if any of us tried to claim that, we'd be in jail. But the Legislature did it. Republicans had taken that money and used it to balance the budget.

The people who were looking at our bond rating were saying, "Look, if you don't pass taxes, if you don't pay back that two hundred and fifty million dollars, if you don't have a plan, we're going to lower your bond rating. And every time any jurisdiction, local government, or school district, or the state goes out for a bond, you're going to have to pay more." And we would have paid hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars more. So we were on the verge of a big, big problem here. And if Seafirst went down, that would be a signal,

back to New York—they would go ahead and cut our rating.

I called in John White, who was an Associated Press reporter who knew this stuff. John had done his research, and we talked about it. I said, "John, how reliable is this?" And he gave me the information, and I would go back subsequently and talk to him about it. I called in the new CEO of Seafirst, [Richard] Cooley, and the lobbyist. And I brought in two members of my caucus, two freshmen, one [Ken Jacobsen] who used to work for Seafirst but tried to unionize them, and he got fired. And the other one [Janice Neimi], who was a lawyer in Seattle, brought up redlining, because she had been fighting the redlining that the bank had been doing—you know, meaning that they were discriminating against people in the poorer parts of an area.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Housing segregation.

Mr. Ehlers: Yes, [discrimination in] getting loans. And I told her about how I thought, for years, that Seafirst automatically supported Republicans and never bothered to talk to Democrats, although on some issues people did. And I had to tell them, I hate banks, insurance companies, just so you know that. But I want you to listen to these people, because we've got a lot of problems here. So we went through that.

My caucus was fifty-four members at the time, we went back to fifty-three later, but fifty-four. It was twenty-seven for the bill to save Seafirst, and twenty-seven against it. My leadership, Dan Grimm and Denny Heck, were against doing anything because they didn't believe Seafirst. I did. I believed the people I was talking to. So I went to caucus, and I said, "Well, you may not like it. I don't care which way you vote. I mean, I care, but you vote the way you want. It's going to come up for a vote." And it did, and it passed. And most of the Republicans voted for it, and half of our caucus voted for it. And so, Seafirst was saved. It was bought out by Bank of America, who I don't like either, but it was the right thing to do, and I would do it again.

Another issue was the Public Works Trust Fund. The Republicans had taken the money out of the common school construction fund, and other funds. When they should have been creating jobs, the Republicans were taking jobs away. These were projects, all over the state, small projects, that were hiring people. And when you cut them off, you cut off a lot of employment. So the Public Works Trust Fund was a proposal that taxed what people paid on water and sewers. The money would go into this Public Works Trust Fund, which would then loan out money, at a very, very low rate, to local governments, and so forth, to do projects all over the state—to try to create more jobs. They then had to pay it back into the fund. And it would grow.

Well, it failed in the Senate. The Senate sent over a bill having to do with giving tax exemptions, and I'd been trying to do away with tax exemptions, but there was a tax exemption to help the meatpacking industry and gold bullion. Some people called it the bullion tax, or the bullion exemption, or whatever it was. Anyway, it came over from the Senate. I sent it to Ways and Means. We stripped all those things out. We tried to do away with some more exemptions. I knew we were going to lose on the floor, because I had some Democrats who would go along [with it].

And so, they put the meatpacking bill back on the floor.

I had anticipated this would happen. So I had Denny Heck, who was my chief clerk, and my assistant, Pam Kocha, prepare a little amendment, which was about an inch thick, which created the Public Works Trust Fund as an amendment to the bill. And I had it stacked up in my office. So the day that it was coming up for a vote, I knew we were going to lose—what I'd wanted to do is do away with the exemption. So I had this, and I called in Joe King, who by this time was my majority leader, and Lorraine Hine, and said, "This is what I want to do."

And they said, "We can't get the votes for that."

I said, "We're going to try. We're going to try. So you go out and start counting."

So then we went into caucus, and Joe King went through the agenda for the day, and any amendments, and was just about to adjourn, and I said, "Joe, you forgot one little amendment." And Joe said, yeah, and explained briefly, and then [claps] we adjourned. So no discussion!
We went out to the floor, and this amendment was on the desk. Everybody knew what it was. I went under, what's called "going under the call," which means all the doors were locked, and members can't leave. They're locked in. They have to vote. There's no escape. And any members who aren't there, I can send the State Patrol or somebody, the sergeant at arms, to get them to vote. They had to vote.

I called the two lobbyists from upstairs who had an interest in meatpacking and brought them in my office. I left John O'Brien, the speaker pro tem, presiding, because I knew there was an amendment that a Republican was going to offer.

The lobbyist had told the Republicans and Democrats, "Don't offer any amendments. We want this to go clean back to the Senate. And if you put amendments on, it means it has to go to conference. We may lose it." So I called these two lobbyists down. In my office was a big screen, which indicated what the issue was and what the vote was. And I positioned myself so I could see, but I didn't have the sound on. But I knew what was going on and I told these two lobbyists what I was going to do. Well, one lobbyist turned about as white as this wall that we're looking at.

He said, "You can't do that."

And I said, "You bet I can. I'm the speaker. And I'm going to offer this amendment, and we're going to try to hang it on there." So then I looked up, and I noticed that the amendment—there had been an amendment by the Republicans, which gave a tax exemption to museums, which John O'Brien wanted in it. And John refused to recognize a call for an electronic vote. And he went on to something else.

So I came out and took over the gavel.

Mr. Schleitwiler: So now there was an amendment.

Mr. Ehlers: There was an amendment, so it had to go back to the Senate. So then I had this Public Works Trust Fund, which I trotted out. We spent probably the next two hours, Booth Gardner calling and getting people together, you know, twisting arms. I was twisting arms. And luckily some

of the Republicans weren't there. And in order to pass an amendment, you only needed a majority. You didn't need fifty votes.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Just a majority of who was there.

Mr. Ehlers: Yes, yes. So all I needed was forty-nine votes. I know there were a lot of Democrats who liked the Public Works Trust Fund, but didn't like the exemptions. So I worked, and I got real close. I called John L. O'Brien up to the rostrum, and I said, "John, I need your vote."

"I'm against this," he said.

I said, "I need your vote."

He said, "OK, I will vote for the amendment."

Well, anyway, it got just enough votes. I let the machine run for a long time. I got so in my peripheral vision, I could see people on the screen that I used in front of me before I locked the vote. One side thing is that there were two ways of locking [the vote]. One was up above, and one was down flat, next to the screen.

Mr. Schleitwiler: To lock the vote, so people can't change their votes anymore.

Mr. Ehlers: Right. I had disconnected the one sitting next to me months before, because I kept bumping my elbow on it. So about three days before, I had the sergeant at arms [Ross Young], connect it back up again. So I was looking at the screen while Republicans were bouncing back and forth. And I had my timing down, and I said, "The speaker is about to lock the electric roll call."

My finger was about a foot away, and everybody could see. Votes were bouncing back and forth, and I waited, and I pressed. I said, "The speaker has locked the electric roll call."

And people started pointing at me, and I took my finger and put it in my ear, shook my finger in my ear, and laughed at them. Anyway, I got my forty-nine votes.

Mr. Schleitwiler: They were hoping to change their vote at the last minute.

Mr. Ehlers: Yeah, and I caught them. Yeah. I caught a couple of the Republicans actually voting for it. So I had my forty-nine votes. So then I brought John O'Brien up, because I didn't have fifty votes.

John said, "You told me that I didn't have to vote for the final bill."

I said, "I lied. John, you['re] going to vote for it."

He did, and it passed. Bottom line, the Public Works Trust Fund won one of the national awards by the National Conference of State Legislators, as one of the top legislative bills in the whole United States. But like sausages, they say, "You don't want to see how they get made." I didn't tell them it was part of this piece of crap that passed. But that's how the process sometimes works, for good or bad. In this case, it's for good. It's been a very successful program.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Did you want to talk about consumer protection issues?

Mr. Ehlers: No. I think I'll pass on that. There were lots of things we did. One of the things that I'd like to talk about, though, is AIDS. In the early '80s, of course, it was very controversial. In the first two budgets, '83 and '85, we put, I can't remember if it was four hundred thousand or six hundred thousand, that we gave to the Department of Health for health education. Well, Helen Sommers, Dan Grimm, Denny Heck and I knew what that was. It was actually for AIDS. But if told the caucus that—I probably should have been more honest—but I knew there'd be somebody who would do a hero amendment on the floor and cut it, because, you know, it was all the evil of gays and so forth, supposedly. It would've gone down. They would have taken it out. So I got that into the budget, and it passed.

One other thing I did—DSHS [the Department of Social and Health Services] had started to see more and more people with AIDS. Two years later, gay people who were dying of AIDS, who had been making their insurance premium payments for years but had lost their jobs—they couldn't afford to have rent and pay for insurance, so they dropped their insurance. And so, the state was picking up all their health costs, and it was getting to be millions of dollars.

So what I decided to do—and I had help from Denny and others—I brought in DSHS first, and then I brought in, later, the insurance companies. And I said, "Tell you what we're going to do. I've directed the DSHS to pay the premiums of anybody who had been paying premiums but looked as if they were going to have to give it up and go on welfare. We, the state, the DSHS, would pay your insurance premiums. You'll get your premiums every month, but you're going to have to cover [the patients]."

They went crazy. But it happened, and never got any publicity in the newspapers, that I've ever seen. I think that was really an accomplishment. Those are the kinds of things a speaker can do, and sometimes has to be done, not necessarily with legislation. But it was the right thing to do. It saved the taxpayers millions and millions of dollars. And these insurance companies who had been getting benefits for twenty, thirty years, [from] some of these people, who were more than happy to cancel them when they couldn't pay anymore—we would pay for them.

Mr. Schleitwiler: I want to talk more about the role of the speaker. But first, I think you wanted to talk a bit about WPPSS? Can you explain what that stands for?

Mr. Ehlers: Well, it's the Washington Public Power Supply System. There's always been a big fight, in this state, between public and private power. But in this case, both the PUDs—the public utility districts—and several of the big privately-owned ones were funding the construction of nuclear plants. Many in Eastern Washington, but also down in the Grays Harbor area. We, as a state, did not have any responsibility for it. But the people who sold the bonds chose to put "Washington State" in the name, so they could imply that we somehow were guaranteeing the bonds.

And I said to people, "Excuse me, you're giving fifteen percent tax-free, guaranteed, to bond holders?" That, you know, I mean, that's unreal. But that's what they sold.

Then when they got to the point of selling these bonds, to older folks, and then WPPSS started closing down, I wanted to make sure that we were totally insulated—that we had nothing to do with the funding or responsibility to pay for it. I got thousands, literally thousands, of letters from retired people who had put their own fortunes, their investments into it. It was a sad situation. But they had to be somewhat naive to think they were going to get fifteen percent tax-free, guaranteed.

I wrote to them, "I'm sorry, but that's the way it has to be." And of course, WPPSS went bankrupt. Bottiger, Spellman, and I were sued, for eight billion, two hundred and fifty million dollars plus interest—which at the time seemed like a lot of money!

Just a quick story. My wife and I were trying to get a small loan, fifteen thousand dollars to put a dormer in on our house. So I had put in for a loan application.

And I got a call from this young woman who said, "You didn't report all of your credit cards, your Penney's and Sears."

I said, "We cut those up years ago. We don't owe anybody there."

"Yeah, but you still should report it"—she's very officious. So she says, "Are you involved in any lawsuits?"

I started to say no. And then I said, "Oh, yes, one."

And she said, "Are you a plaintiff or defendant?"

I said, "Defendant."

She said, "Are they asking for an amount of money?" I said, yes.

"Well, how much?" she said.

I said, "Eight billion, two hundred and fifty million dollars plus interest."

And she said, "I'm sorry, what did you say?"

And I repeated it. And I said, "Does this mean we don't get the loan?"

Anyway, we got the loan. But how many times can you use a line like that? But the WPPSS thing was an unfortunate thing, and I guess the ratepayers in these PUDs are still paying for it.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Do you want to talk about the 1984 election and how things changed, or do you think we already covered that enough?

Mr. Ehlers We obviously got a new governor. Governor [Booth] Gardner. It was one of the few, if not the only, state legislatures in the United States where Democrats were able to hold the majority. We didn't lose any seats. We didn't gain any, we didn't lose any. But almost every other [state legislature did], because of the Reagan landslide [in the presidential election]. And a lot of it was because we stressed constituent relations, we had excellent candidates again, and we finished on time—in 1984—before the election. We passed taxes, but people understood why we had to. We had to reestablish the credit of this state, and we stressed that. And I think if you go back and look, like I did in my memoir, there were a number of editorials, and so forth, that said that was the right thing to do. And you don't get that very

often—they say thanks for passing taxes. But they knew it had to be done.

Mr. Schleitwiler: So can you talk about how, in your time as speaker, the role of the speaker changed, and the operation of government in general, and what you did to affect that?

Mr. Ehlers: Yeah. I'd gone through a period of time, back in the day, when freshmen would sit in the back. It was generally seated by seniority. When I became speaker, I made sure that didn't happen. I mixed people together, because I didn't want the freshmen in the back to be in rebellion! I wanted them to be able to sit with the senior members, who could explain what was going on. In the day, it used to be, the majority leader would stand up front, turn around and go like that [gestures]. In my day, they would probably get a different hand signal back, usually a middle finger, back to the majority leader. Because people thought, "I'm just as much elected as you are."

And there was a real change, actually, just before I came in, in the 1970 election. They started, Democrats and Republicans—there were a lot of more moderate liberals, people coming in who cared about issues. Fewer and fewer old timers who had been there for years.

So in 1976, I was part of a group that dumped a speaker [Leonard Sawyer] halfway through his term. This was January of '76, because we thought that the speaker was not being open. Sometimes [later, as speaker] I had to pass bills and vote in the middle of the night, but these were budgets and taxes that we had to pass, to meet these deadlines. What they were passing [then], often, were bills of special interest—helping some copper mine somewhere, or something. A bill would come over from the Senate, with Senator [August] Mardesich's name on it—the Senate majority leader. It wouldn't even go to committee in the House. It would go right on to the calendar, and would be up for a vote, with no hearings. And if there were amendments on House bills in the Senate, we weren't getting a list of what they were. We didn't know. We were expected to vote on amendments that the Senate put on where we didn't have any idea what they were. So there was a rebellion. And the speaker was dumped in '76. I was part of that.

Mr. Schleitwiler: That was Speaker Sawyer?

Mr. Ehlers: Speaker Sawyer. He did a lot of great things. He was a good speaker in terms of modernizing the legislative process, and establishing year-round committees and hearings, and so forth. To balance the power, which had gone too much to the executive—to the governor—who, during the interim, if any monies came in from the federal government, he was free to spend it any way he wanted. There was no accountability. And that changed. So yeah, that was an important thing.

Other speakers, Speaker [John] Bagnariol, you know, he ended up going into prison, but I consider him to be, really, one of the great speakers. There are some things I didn't agree with him on, but I thought he accomplished a lot. Particularly in 1977, with pension reform, and defining basic education, and doing some funding of that. But everybody had a different style. Polk, as I mentioned, Speaker Polk told me he didn't need our votes, until finally he did.

I just learned that you have to involve your committee chairs. You give them authority. You don't do end runs around them. You set up a system, so that you try to finish on time. You do all of these kinds of things that the speaker can do, and you try to build up the morale of the caucus. And you plan ahead, because there's always something that's going to go wrong at some point. But you checked off a whole bunch of stuff early. If you push it all to the end, a lot of things are going to go bad. And I just felt that you had to operate in a timely fashion.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You announced your decision to step down in advance. Do you want to talk about that, and about how your speakership came to an end?

Mr. Ehlers Yeah, actually it was 1983, after my first year as speaker, at the end of the session, which I thought had been pretty successful. I ran into my friend Dave Ammons, who was a reporter for the Associated Press. We were walking back from the Washington State Library that used to be there. And I told him that I was going to finish that term and do one more term. By the time I got back to my office, it was already over the wire, and I kept getting these calls. Some people were afraid that I was going to be a lame duck. And I always say, you know, in my view, that was exaggerated.

I told the caucus at the time, "Look, I'm going to be here the rest of this term. And then one more. I'm going to work for the caucus. I expect all members to be working for the caucus. If I see any member working on their own behalf, to try to get votes for a future speakership, I'm going to stay independent. A lot of these people who are going to run are my friends. I will not take a position on it, except if I see people playing games. Then I will denounce you publicly, and in the caucus as well. And so, you're going to have the wrath of God come upon you. So we're going to spend the next three years doing our business. What happens after that? Fine. Go ahead and do it." And I believe that that worked.

Mr. Schleitwiler: And so how did you feel about how things played out, when you came to the end of that role?

Mr. Ehlers: I was really happy. I remember when I announced that I wasn't going to be coming back. It was, in fact, like in '86. I was at a conference with a fellow from Alaska who had lost reelection. He'd been in the Senate for years, and the Legislature was his whole life.

And he said to me, "How are you going to handle this?" And I knew he had lost. And I knew I could handle it much better than he could. I had some friends in the Legislature, but most of my friends and interests were outside of the legislative process. My wife and I enjoyed antiquing. We enjoyed theater. We enjoyed the arts. We enjoy travel. We enjoy lots of different people who have different points of view, Democrats and Republicans. And so, I was going to go back to that.

Not one person who ever worked on my campaign ever asked for a job, because they wanted to be able to tell me I'm full of crap. You know, if I didn't do what they thought I should be doing, they felt free to do that. If you were somehow constrained, because you've got a job depending on it, [you can't do that]. So I didn't mind at all. I did miss a number of the people there. I enjoyed when the times got tough, because

I always felt that I handle stress very well. Some of my colleagues didn't. But I did. I thought I could look ahead. I always knew what I wanted to accomplish. And I knew that I had to have seeds [plans] in early. But it was going to take a while before certain caucus members got to where I wanted them to be. They had to run out of options. They had to know that at some point they were actually going to have to vote, up or down. Early in the session there are all these other options going on and other things going on. They could play games. But as we moved up towards a final solution, they eventually had to vote.

I would come in and say, "OK, this is cut bait time, and we're going to vote. And you need to pass this, because there aren't any other options, folks. Unless you want to come back for another thirty days, and you don't want to do that." And so, anyway, I felt good about the people.

Alan Thompson told me—you know, I was at his memorial this last Saturday. But the first thing he told me, he gave me two words of advice. One, early on, he said, "You know, when you really think you are important stuff, because you got elected to the Washington State Legislature, and people are opening doors for you, and they're telling you how smart you are, and everything else. The day that you don't run for re-election, or you lose, most of your invitations are going to go away. And people who are quote, your 'friends,' you don't hear from them again."

The other words of advice he gave is, he said, "You know, there's a time when you feel, no matter what your job is"—in my case this was as speaker, but I've applied it to other jobs as well—"You leave when you feel you are at the top of your game, that you love what you're doing. You love most of the people that you're working with. You're happy with what you're doing. That's the time to leave, on top, because it can only go downhill after that. At some point you feel worn out. You don't know why you're doing what you're doing. People don't know why you're doing what you're doing. And you begin to hate what you're doing. You always leave when you feel like you're at the top." And that's why it didn't bother me leaving when I left, because I thought I left the Legislature in good position. I had my friends; I had my other interests. And so, I felt good about it.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Are there other lessons you learned, about what makes an effective speaker, and an effective process? You're very concerned, I know, about the efficiency of the process, knowing the rules, and keeping things on time. And also, about having a sense of humor, as well.

Mr. Ehlers: Oh yeah, a sense of humor is always important. I don't think they do it anymore, but some of the most conservative House and Senate members, Democrats and Republicans, used to play penny-ante, quarter-limit poker. A lot of noon hours, and sometimes in the evenings, once a week or once every other week, we'd just play. And these were, again, the most liberal and most conservative, sitting down together. It didn't mean we would change our positions or anything. We could go and talk to them about an issue or whatever, and we were well received. And to this day, I can still do it with certain people.

And to me, when you're playing poker with some people, there are what's called, in

poker, tells. And you can tell, sometimes, people—by the way they hold their cards or their facial expressions or body—what they really have in their hand. Some of the best poker players were people like FDR, [Franklin D.] Roosevelt and even [Richard] Nixon, and LBJ [Lyndon Baines Johnson] and some of those people. And I was a very good poker player, and that worked when you got into negotiations. As I think I mentioned earlier, when I talked about the senators being in my office, and me heading for the door to go out and talk to the press, when they weren't going to compromise. I could tell immediately they were very poor poker players.

And so, you got to know people, as people. You might not be on the same committee. One might be in the Senate and the other in the House. You might not be in the same caucus. But you could carry on civil conversations. And I don't think they do that much anymore. I talked to a Republican friend of mine, Allen Hayward, who has written a book on the Legislature [*My Ride*]. For thirty years he worked down there, up until 2009. He told me, the other day, that today, he said, friends of his who work there—if there is a Democrat staff person, a key staff person, coming down, a Republican or Democrat coming, one or the other will peel off. They don't even want to be seen talking to each other. And that's sad. That's really sad, if it's gotten to that point. You have to be able to talk to people.

One of the things I learned, and I would share with groups that I would go speak to, when they'd say, "How do you influence the legislative process?" I'd say, "Well, I'll tell you, what I used to do is—and I'm not from the National Enquirer—but what I used to do is that I wanted to know everything about every member I could. Somebody had a Native American background. Somebody had a family member who was alcoholic or was on welfare, or maybe they were, or a child who was gay, or whatever the issue, I wanted to know that, and I'd say to a group, "Why do you think I wanted to know that?"

And someone would say, "Because you're going to use it against them."

And I'd say, "You've been reading too many novels. No, what I want to do is, if I have an amendment or a bill, I want to go sit down and talk to them and say, 'I have this amendment, or bill, and this is what it does. What do you think? Can you make some suggestions? Are you willing to go on as a sponsor? Are you willing to vote for it?'" I didn't say, "I know you have a family member who did so-and-so." I didn't have to say that. I knew the person had some understanding. They might not agree to it. They might not want to sponsor it, or whatever, for whatever political reason. But I could say, "OK, you can't do that. Could I depend on you not to talk against it, in caucus or on the floor?"

They'd say, "Yeah, I can do that." Well, that's important, because that meant that they might not influence somebody else, who'd say, "Oh, so-and-so is against it, so therefore I should be against it." And the process, again, is knowing members, working with them, thinking of them as people, not as Democrats or Republicans.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Do you want to share any other lessons you've learned about what makes good legislative process or good law?

Mr. Ehlers: Well, too often, and this is—I'm a Democrat and that's particularly true of Democrats now—is there's no such thing as the perfect bill.

Legislators face unique state crisis

OLYMPIA (AP) — The 48th Washington Legislature convened Monday with the usual pomp and ceremony but also with what appeared on the part of members a grim determination to get on with the job at hand.

House members sat silently as they were told by new Speaker Wayne Ehlers of Parkland that they face a crisis "not confronted anytime in our state's history."

Gavels fell at high noon in both the House and Senate — actions that meant the end of the Republican dominated 47th Legislature and the birth of the Democratic-controlled 48th.

The 98 representatives — 43 of them new to the House — were sworn in by state Supreme Court Justice Carolyn Dimmick.

Chief Justice William Williams administered the oath to the 25 newly elected senators. There are 24 holdovers in the upper chamber where members serve for four years.

The galleries were packed with friends and relatives of members and by the curious who were able to find seats.

The transfer of power from Republicans to Democrats was manifested by the election of Ehlers as speaker.

Rep. Gary Nelson of Edmonds was nominated by Republicans. He lost on a 53-44 vote. Actually, there are 54 Democrats, but Rep. Gene Lux of Seattle didn't make it in time for the vote. He explained he was busy filling out his financial statement for the Public Disclosure Commission.

Sen. Paul Conner, D-Sequim, missed the opening of the Senate session. He reportedly was suffering from a bout with the flu.

In his nominating speech, Rep. Denny Heck, D-Vancouver, described Ehlers as a man who is "unafraid" and as a man who is "confident in himself and in each of us."

Rep. Dan Grimm of Puyallup called Ehlers "unpretentious, accessible, good natured and a man of unfettered enthusiasm and curiosity."

Pointing to the gallery, Grimm introduced Ehlers' mother, Maxine, and said "Ma, you did a good job." With Mrs. Ehlers were Ehlers' two sons, Jeff, 18, and Marcus, 12.

In his acceptance speech, Ehlers urged "legislative compromise rather than political partisanship" and added: "We must break down the philosophical polarization that has developed in this House."

Lawmakers must balance the budget and strengthen the state's credit rating, approve a redistricting commission, create jobs, place an income tax measure on the fall ballot, and address the problems of the Washington Public Power Supply System, said Ehlers.

The new speaker also said the Legislature must encourage business and labor to work together "and help them to recognize that both groups have more that should bind them than separates them."

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Ehlers forcefully backs overhaul

Wayne Ehlers
Adrenalin was up

Associated Press

OLYMPIA — Washington House Speaker Wayne Ehlers made a surprise appearance at a legislative hearing and delievered a fiery speech in support of state government reorganization.

Just before Ehlers spoke Wednesday, Gov. Booth Gardner made a personal pitch before the first legislative hearing on his reform package.

Then Ehlers, smarting from press accounts of his pessimism on the chances of the governor getting what he wants, gave probably the strongest speech of his political career.

Gardner had just given a calm, methodical pitch for his program before the House State Government Committee.

But Ehlers, the usually mild-mannered speaker, was steaming and at a near shout as he pledged to do everything in his power, even horsetrading, to push through the reorganization.

The plan would give governors authority to appoint the directors of the Transportation, Game and Parks departments and combine and abolish some agencies.

"I got my adrenaline up this morning," the Spanaway Democrat said. Legislators had better not turn government reorganization into a partisan squabble and they had better be willing to stand up to special interest groups that will oppose the plans, he stormed.

"The commissions (that run many state agencies) are in many cases more powerful than this Legislature" and represent special interests rather than the consumer, the speaker said.

The general public is ready for reform, and legislators resist at their own peril, Ehlers said.

"I pledge my energy and every bit of whatever power I have, and even trades to get this through," he said.

Gardner seemed stunned — and pleased — by Ehlers' fire. In the hallway afterwards, the speaker apologized for overshadowing the governor's appearance.

"I'm mad as hell," Ehlers said.

In a later interview with The Associated Press, Gardner insisted he doesn't feel undercut by the statements by Ehlers and Senate Majority Leader R. Ted Bottiger, D-Graham, that he can't expect wholesale reform in a 60-day session.

"Wayne and Ted ... want to hit a double, triple or a home run," Gardner said. "I'm going for a win. I'm not going to tell you I think I might get something (passed) or that I'm willing to compromise this early in the game. That's stupid."

In his pitch to the committee, Gardner said reorganization, including retrieval of power from independent commissions, is long overdue.

"In the old days, there was concern that someone could get in and steal the store," he said. "That's just not going to happen today."

The voters should be trusted to elect a governor to run the state, and to take the consequences, Gardner said. If they're unhappy, they can elect a new governor, as they have in the past two elections, but commissions answer to no one, he said.

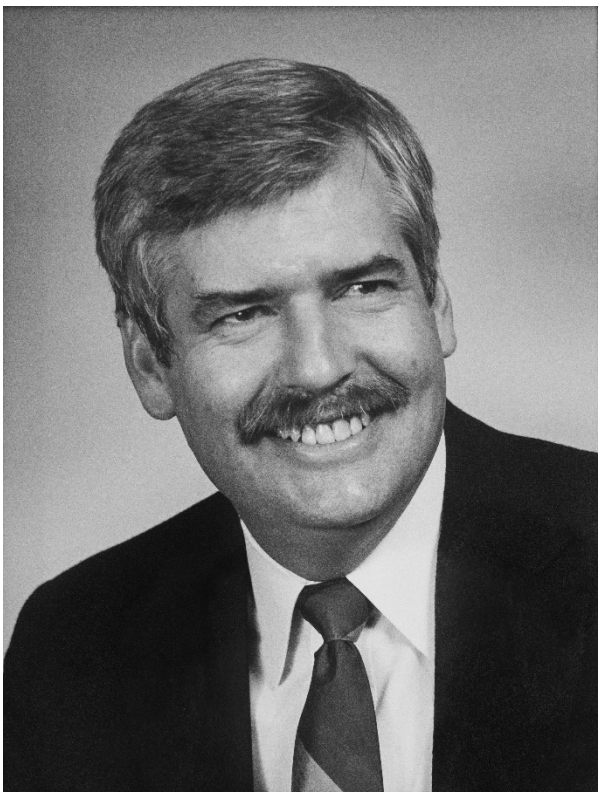
He said he has no intention of replacing the current directors of transportation, parks and game, but needs that direct authority.

In his State of the State Address, the governor outlined his plans to the 147-member Legislature and the public.

If he wanted to light a fire under the lawmakers, early reaction proved otherwise. His unusually low-key, 22-minute televised address wasn't punctuated by a single round of applause, not even from members of his own party.

"I didn't give them an opportunity to applaud," Gardner said in the interview Wednesday.

Joseph "Joe" King



Joseph E. King was born in Texas on September 2, 1945, and grew up in Portland, Oregon. His father, Lewis, was a union carpenter, and his mother, Emma, taught school when she wasn't home raising the children. As a young child, King trailed his father on job sites, and the working-class values he drew from his background helped him work his way through college driving a school bus, working in canneries and construction, and even debeaking chickens.

After graduating from Linfield College with a degree in English, King received a master's degree in education from Western Kentucky University, where he worked with the Teacher Corps as part of a federal antipoverty program. After a few years teaching back in Oregon, King moved to Vancouver, Washington, and went into the insurance business.

In 1980, King was elected to the Washington House of Representatives from the 49th Legislative District. He flourished in the job, recognizing politics as a suitable field for his particular talents. He was elected as majority leader in 1984, succeeding Denny Heck, and began his tenure as speaker in 1987, following Wayne Ehlers. In 1992, he left the House to run for governor, but was defeated in the Democratic primary by Mike Lowry. King went on to hold a number of appointed positions in public service, including serving on the Board of Regents of Washington State University. He also owned and operated a public affairs consulting business, Joe King & Associates.

By his own account, King's focus as speaker was less on dreaming up ideas than on energetically managing the details of counting votes and passing legislation. Nonetheless, his blue-collar ethic produced big, innovative results, with the Growth Management Acts, the state's Basic Health Plan, and the creation of new branch campuses for the University of Washington and Washington State University all passing during his tenure.

Tall, physically imposing, and disarmingly forthright, King was known for his ruthless pursuit of his legislative goals, but his charm and sense of humor was widely appreciated by friends and rivals on both sides of the aisle.

Mr. Vince Schleitwiler: This interview with Joe King is about his experiences as Speaker of the House of Representatives for the state of Washington. The date is October

16th, 2019, and the interview is taking place by telephone. My name is Vince Schleitwiler, and I'll be conducting this interview for the Legislature's Oral History Project on behalf of the Washington State Historical Society.

Speaker King, I want to begin by talking about the period leading up to your becoming speaker. I was wondering if you could tell me what, in your personal background or prior experience, prepared you to become speaker?

Mr. Joe King: Thanks, Vince. Becoming a politician was the furthest thing from my mind and my life experience before I decided to run for the Legislature. I grew up in southeast Portland, in a working-class part of Portland. My dad was a carpenter. My mom was a schoolteacher, after she stayed home long enough to get the kids pretty much raised. One of the things that I think prepared me to be a politician was that I went to four different high schools. My dad was a carpenter. We'd move around looking for work. Every fall was a new high school. That meant I had to figure out how to get along, fit in, and figure out the lay of the land. And I always thought that had something to do with giving me a skill set that was useful in politics.

The other thing that I think was helpful, in politics, was my parents. Work was an important thing in our family. I had lots and lots of jobs growing up. I started following my dad around job sites probably when I was six or seven years old, picking up sticks and cleaning up sites and stuff. I worked jobs from canneries, to debeaking chickens, to driving a school bus, to—just a whole variety of jobs. Out of all the jobs I had, teaching school was the hardest. I spent five years teaching school. I think people would think the teachers have it easy are just sadly mistaken. It is a very hard job.

Another formative experience for me was going to Kentucky in the teacher corps. It was a federal program, part of [President Lyndon] Johnson's war on poverty. I taught in a low-income school district. I was an intern teacher, and got my master's degree back there, from Western Kentucky University. Going to Kentucky was like going to a far different country. Their attitudes were so different. I used to joke that the reason that they had schools in Kentucky was so people could play basketball. If it wasn't for the schools, you wouldn't have any basketball teams. The conditions were dismal. The schools were pretty run-down. That showed me a whole different slice of life than I'd seen in my pretty sheltered life.

Mr. Schleitwiler: A number of speakers I've spoken with have teaching experience. That was really important to you?

Mr. King: Right.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You also had an insurance business.

Mr. King: I did. When I decided that teaching was really, really a hard job, and it was kind of confining, I got out of teaching and moved to Vancouver. I took a job selling insurance to schoolteachers. I think that may have prepared me. Teachers are notoriously thrifty and selling to teachers was great training. It was not unlike trying to motivate legislators sometimes. The other thing that I think my insurance and sales background gave me was the ability to know how to close. I guess I wasn't afraid to ask for people's votes. I did that and knew

how to do that. I think many, many legislators are afraid to talk to other legislators and ask for help. That always came pretty naturally to me.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You got into politics and you were in the Legislature for a couple of terms before you became speaker.

Mr. King: I was there for three terms. I was elected in '81, and became speaker in '87, so I was in for three terms. In the course of selling insurance, I met two or three politicians, all of whom became fast friends over time. Denny Heck, now Congressman Denny Heck. Al Bauer, the state senator. I looked at them—and none of them, I don't think, thought of me as running for the Legislature—but I looked at them and said, "It looks like they've got a great, fun job. I think I'd like to do that." So I just jumped in and said, "Oh my God, if they can do it, I guess I can too."

Most people, I think—legislators, politicians—if you ask them why they got into office, they'll tell you that it was because of passionate belief in education, or desire to create more jobs or whatever. For me, truthfully, I didn't have any burning issues. It was a way for me, you know—I grew up in a working-class family—to be somebody in my community. Who just jumped in and, wow. I don't think most people talk about that, but it motivated me. After I got to Olympia, I found out, well, yeah, I can do a lot of stuff. I can do stuff that can help people. It's like when I walked in to the Capitol as a freshman, and I don't think anybody had walked in any greener than I did, but I took to it. Like, "Oh, this is what I want to do when I grow up." Finally, for the first time in my life, I said, "Yeah, this is it. This is what I want to do."

Mr. Schleitwiler: What were the key events that led to you becoming speaker?

Mr. King: You know, as a freshman legislator, I sat in the back row. I looked at the speaker. When I came in Democrats were in the minority. I was elected in '80, first served in '81. So Bill Polk was the speaker. Bill was very conservative. He was a Republican from Mercer Island. He was also a very classy, very stylish guy. I looked at him up there and I thought, you know, that would be great. If I'm going to stick around here, that would be a great job to have.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Yeah. Then after Polk, was that Wayne Ehlers?

Mr. King: Yes. Wayne was the next speaker. I can remember an event, as a freshman, in which Vito Chiechi—the then-chief clerk for the House, a Republican, who I didn't know. I was sitting in the back row. My light came on at my desk, which means you're supposed to come down and talk to the chief clerk. Somebody wants you for something down there. Well, I thought that was a pretty big deal in itself, because I hadn't been down to the front of the House.

Vito—a terrific guy, who became a mentor of mine and dozens and dozens of other legislators, from both parties—said, "Well, what do you think? Do you like this place?" This is probably toward the end of the first session. He said, "Do you like it here?"

I said, "Yeah, I'm having a great time."

He said, "Well, do you ever want to do anything else in politics?"

I said, “Well, I don’t know. I like it a lot. Yeah, I might like to take on more responsibility here in the House.”

And he said—now remember, this is a Republican chief clerk, talking to a Democratic freshman—he said, “Well, I have a piece of advice for you. You need to stop voting with the Republicans so much. We don’t need your vote. You’re going to piss off all your Democratic friends.” [laughs] It was advice that I paid attention to. That was a formative piece of advice.

Mr. Schleitwiler: But you did manage to win over the other Democrats, and became speaker?

Mr. King: I did. I decided that I wanted to be speaker. I don’t think most speakers were as—what word can I use?—driven. Once I discovered what the job of speaker was, I just kind of laid out a plan. The plan wasn’t very basic. It was just to get to know as many of my Democratic colleagues as I could. After I made that plan, there were very few nights that I spent in Olympia that I wasn’t with—mostly socializing—with my Democratic colleagues, who would be the ones that would decide who the speaker was. That doesn’t mean I didn’t talk to Republicans or go out with Republicans. And I had great Republican allies, who I’ll talk about later. I just made a really earnest attempt to develop really personal relationships with all my Democratic colleagues.

I’ve often thought politics was about two things: it’s about ideas and it’s about people. So I worked hard on getting to know the people. I’ve worked hard on developing expertise in different program areas, where I could actually accomplish stuff, and in that process, hopefully, gain the respect of my colleagues.

Mr. Schleitwiler: As somebody who saw becoming a politician as a way of accomplishing a lot, and coming a long way from where you’d grown up, when you became speaker, that first day or at the beginning, how did that hit you? Did that feel like a big deal or were you just too busy working?

Mr. King: [laughs] Overwhelming. It was overwhelming. Before I tell you about the first day—don’t forget to ask me about it—as you know, you’re elected by your caucus. You’re designated to be the Democratic speaker. You’re speaker for the whole House, but it’s really your party that decides it. So there was a contest. Two or three of us wanted to be speaker, and that’s a process of sitting down and talking to people. I think, then, my insurance background served me well, because as I said earlier, I knew how to close. I was not afraid to ask people for their vote. I would say, “I really need your vote.” In fact, if my memory is right, I think I asked people to sign a sheet of paper. I said, “I need you to sign here on this sheet.” I think other people would have been embarrassed to do that. Counting votes for leadership races is hard. They are secret votes, and you’re never exactly sure how people are going to vote.

So I went through that process. We had a reorganization meeting. By the time the vote came, everybody else had dropped out. I was then the speaker-designate. So within a day or two of becoming the speaker-designate—this was before I was actually the speaker—I had an evening event with a trade group. I can’t remember

who it was. It could have been realtors. It could have been physicians. I don't know what it was. We finished dinner, and I was called on to make some after-dinner remarks. Among the skills that I had as speaker, being an accomplished public speaker was never really one of them. I did a lot of things pretty well but being a great [public] speaker wasn't one of them. So I got up, and I gave the same kind of after-dinner speech that most politicians carry around in their hip pocket. The same speech that I would have given two weeks before. And two weeks before, I would have received polite applause.

On this night, when I was now the speaker-designate, I gave the same speech, told the same wildly funny stories, and everybody fell off their chair laughing! All of a sudden, my jokes got funnier. And I thought, "Boy, I'm really going to like this job. People are going to laugh at my jokes, finally!" That was absolutely true. I was just shocked.

On my first day as speaker, I showed up at the office, feeling absolutely overwhelmed. My aide, Anne Kalich, said, "All right. Here's what we have scheduled. Here's what you're going to do." And the first thing on my calendar was that I was supposed to cross over to the Supreme Court building, because when the Legislature comes back into session, I think the Supreme Court comes back in session. My job as speaker was to go over there and welcome the Supreme Court justices. I had never—virtually, before I became a legislator—I'd never met an attorney. I certainly had never, [before] this day as speaker, I had never met a judge. I had certainly never met a Supreme Court justice. I was scared to death. I went over there. I had some—I don't even think I had prepared remarks. My memory completely fails me on what I said, but I managed to get through the day. They were very gracious. They were very nice, and I got to know many of them later on. That was my introduction as speaker. I thought, "Oh, my God. Now I'm really over my head." That wasn't as much fun as having people laugh at my jokes, to have to jump in the deep end of the pool there.

Mr. Schleitwiler: I'm curious. Here, in Washington State, people aren't necessarily known for their directness. But you have a very direct, and kind of a humble way of talking, that I imagine must have served you very well. Do you think that comes from your background? Do you think there were more personal values that came from your family background, that shaped you as a politician?

Mr. King: Yeah, I suspect. I think we're all a product of what we've been, what we've done. In our family, there was literally no expectation that any of us would go into politics. My dad dropped out of high school his freshman year. My mom graduated from college the same year I graduated from high school. She went back to night school and got her degree. We used [to] have vigorous debates around the dinner table. I assume we were talking about politics, and public affairs, among other things. The conversations were often direct and heated. Yes, I think that probably had something to do with making me a politician. Very plainspoken, I guess, pretty direct.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Can we talk more about some of the folks you worked with—some of the key players that you dealt with during your speakership?

Mr. King: Yeah, absolutely. I've got lots. Boy, that's a long list. First of all, one of the things that I'm proudest of as speaker is that we had a Republican Senate the entire time that we had a Democratic majority in the House. All but one year—and actually, that was only half a year—we had a small Republican majority, led by Senator Jeannette Hayner.

Which to me is a huge source of pride, because we did a lot of stuff. And when I talk about legislative accomplishments—I'll cover some of that—I was blessed to have just a terrific caucus to work with. When I was elected in '80 there were only four of us in our freshman class. In the election of '82, there were twenty-eight freshmen Democrats and there were just outstanding people in that group, many of whom went on to great careers—Gary Locke, Jennifer Belcher, Dennis Braddock, Marlin Applewick, Joe Tanner. Many of those people that I've known you've heard of—Gary Locke, obviously, Jennifer Belcher as lands commissioner—just enormously talented people. So, as it turned out, a lot of those people I just hung out with. And they helped me become speaker. I really believe that if I had come two years later, in the middle of that class of outstanding talent, I wouldn't have stood out. I think one of them would have much more likely risen to speaker. But I had a two-year head start on them, so that made a difference.

Among people I worked with, Lorraine Hine really stands out. Lorraine Hine had been mayor of Des Moines. She came into the Legislature with a lot more experience in government than I did. We were about the same age, and she went on to become Mike Lowry's chief of staff. She was our caucus chair. She was just one of the best and brightest and ablest legislators in there. Not only was she bright and strong, but she had a temperament that just kept everything calmed down. I just relied on her more than I could tell you.

A legislator, Pat McMullen, who served with me, when I was speaker, he was my first majority leader. He then went over to the Senate. Pat McMullen was one of the strongest senators. He was a guy that could just get along with everybody—Republicans, Democrats, dog catchers, princes, it didn't make any difference. Pat could work with them. Denny Heck, who I didn't work with as speaker, he'd been the chief clerk, then he left to go to work for the governor when I became speaker. He was a tremendous influence on me. He recruited me to run for the Legislature. He didn't actually recruit me, I told him I was going to run, but I never would have got elected without his help.

Dan Grimm, one of the most articulate guys that I knew, was our budget writer, Ways and Means chairman, an enormous help. Helen Sommers, who has become famous in the state. A very progressive Democrat, who was a strong fiscal conservative, smart, worked her head off. Dean Foster, the chief clerk, had been a constant source of wisdom to me. He had left. He was in the Senate when I became speaker. But he had guided me through. Alan Thompson became my chief clerk—who, rest his soul, just died—was a state senator, a real mentor to me. He was my chief clerk and offered just invaluable help. I'll talk about some other people as I talk about issues.

The other name, I guess, that I'd put in there would be Jeannette Hayner, the Senate majority leader. She was about as

conservative as I was liberal. I probably wasn't quite as liberal as people thought I was. She probably wasn't quite as conservative as people thought she was. I just made up my mind that I was going to learn how to get along with Jeannette. We had dinner, basically, once a week, during session. We became very fond of one another. She was a very strong leader. You could make a deal with Jeanette, and she could always produce the votes she needed to keep up her end of the deal. She was a strong influence as my time as speaker.

Mr. Schleitwiler: What about any Republicans in the House?

Mr. King: Clyde Ballard. Great guy. He made my life infinitely easier as speaker, through his grace and charm. We had vigorous disagreements. I can remember a picture of the two of us, with Clyde shaking his fist, and we are just nose-to-nose.

Mr. Schleitwiler: I think he showed me that picture in his house.

Mr. King: Is that right? You got to go to his house? You went to Wenatchee. That's terrific. Terrific guy. Always a problem solver. Clyde, for example, both from the district and personally, didn't like and couldn't have supported, wouldn't have supported, growth management. But when it came down to negotiating, toward the end, and I'll come back to this later, Clyde could have tried to screw it up. Not one bit. He was constructive, positive, helped all the way through that process.

Mr. Schleitwiler: What about other government leaders? Governor Gardner?

Mr. King: Let me see. Booth [Gardner] was governor the entire time that I was speaker.

Mr. Schleitwiler: And Governor Spellman before that? Is that right?

Mr. King: Governor Spellman. But he was gone in '84, when he got beat by Booth, and I became speaker in '87. Booth Gardner—one of the most, if not the most, decent human beings that ever served in Washington State government. He was a prince. I think being governor was difficult for Booth. He made it look pretty easy, but he really didn't like conflict very much.

I used to tell him, I'd say, "Governor, politics is a contact sport. And you really like tennis." Because he didn't like the confrontation, and it was just very difficult for him. Besides overseeing a lot of successful legislation, one of the best things that he did was he brought many enormously talented people in the state government, with never a hint of scandal. I don't think there was a single, anything that came close to scandal, during Booth's term. He elevated. He brought in talent and he had the ability to attract people. Which I always thought was one of his strongest legacies.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Some folks that he brought in on his staff came out of the Legislature?

Mr. King: Yeah. Well, Denny Heck, who'd been such a strong guide and friend to me, went to his staff. Len McComb, who started advising me when I was a freshman, went to work for Booth, and became director—budget director. An example of a guy that Booth brought in was Orin Smith, who later went on to become [CEO] at Starbucks and

made a medium-sized fortune. He was just an example of the caliber of people that Booth could attract. He really did get the best and brightest.

I had staff that were key to me. Len McComb was one. He still is doing lobbying in Olympia. If you walked up onto Capitol Hill now, and started visiting with people and said, "Who knows more about the budget and state policy than anybody else at the state?" Ten out of ten would say, "Oh, you're talking about Len McComb." So he was very stellar. Tom Campbell, out of Snohomish County, was the staffer who got me interested in growth management and looked at what different states where doing. Sue Crystal—who came out of D.C. and was married to Billy Frank, the famous [Nisqually] Indian leader—did all kinds of stuff on health care for me, and ended up negotiating the final versions of the state basic health plan. Ed Fleisher was with my attorney, what they call the speaker's attorney. Again, a guy so smart that his head hurt. He would pick up all kinds of details, Ed would actually read stuff, and it was always coming up with stuff that nobody else had thought of—one of the reasons was he took the time to read! Those were people that were really key to me.

Mr. Schleitwiler: What about your relations with the press?

Mr. King: I would say decent relationships with the press. I cultivated them. I worked hard to cultivate them. I had them into my office, when we were in session, one night a week, for drinks. But like every other politician, I would become irritated when they wrote stories that didn't show me in a positive light. It's kind of the nature of the beast. Access could be hard to get if they were critical of me every time they wrote a story. I wasn't beyond being slow to return their phone calls.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Were there any national political leaders that were important to you, or that made a big impact on you?

Mr. King: Not really. I suppose Tom Foley. I would take a trip back to D.C. once a year, and he was very kind. I actually love his wife, Heather, who ran his office. The whole national scene was kind of beyond me. I wasn't very involved in it.

The one person that I realized I'd skipped over, here, was Wayne Ehlers, who, out of all the speakers, I think, he was underrated, and he had major structural accomplishments. One of the huge accomplishments that Wayne got through is the Redistricting Commission. You just don't see the shenanigans that you see going on through a lot of the rest of the country. He set up the Salary Commission so that legislators, judges and public officials could end up being paid fairly, compared to what other people make. The changes that Wayne brought—he brought lots of policy ones, but a lot were the structural changes to state government that are still serving all of us well to this day.

Mr. Schleitwiler: So let's turn to your accomplishments, both legislative ones as well as institutional ones you may want to talk about. I know you had a lot of really challenging, really big legislation that you got through. Do you want to talk about that?

Mr. King: By the time I became speaker, I went from somebody that wanted to be

somebody, to somebody that wanted to do something. I was driving to a meeting one day, in Seattle, and I was stuck in traffic. I noticed a huge new apartment complex going up by the side of the freeway, somewhere around Federal Way. As I was sitting there, stuck—traffic wasn't moving—I thought, I wonder how people who live in that apartment house are going to get to work, because we're not moving right now. We're already stuck. And then I wondered, who is it that thinks about the impacts of growth? Because I never really have before. My background in the Legislature heretofore had been economic development, and that was all about more jobs and more growth, and never really thought about the impacts of those roads. So I started saying, "Who's in charge?"

Well, as it turns out, nobody was in charge. You had every different local government—and we have a lot of local governments in the state of Washington—every single local government was making their own decisions, and they weren't making them in concert, for the most part, with other local governments. We started checking out what other states were doing. There weren't a lot of states doing too much.

When I started raising this discussion among my friends and supporters, they said, "You're nuts, if you're talking about—get ready to be a short-term speaker, if you're talking about statewide land use planning. You're going to be in big trouble." Tom Campbell went down to Florida to check what they were doing. I went to Oregon and checked with a former state senator and retired pig farmer by the name of Stafford Hansell, the first statewide growth chairman in Oregon. He gave me invaluable instructions and lessons.

Then we decided, "OK, we're ready. Let's have a run at this." It took us two years to do it. One of the things that I realized was that growth had so many components—from traffic, to economic development, to land use planning. I involved half a dozen different committees. It just so happened—I think there were six committees—it just so happened that all six of those committees were chaired by women. Somebody—I don't think it was me, it may have been me—somebody dubbed them the Steel Magnolias. There was a movie at that point about that. It was Busse Nutley chairing the Housing Committee; Nancy Rust, co-chairing Environmental Affairs; Maria Cantwell, Economic Development; Jennifer Belcher on Natural Resources; and the other two names—

Mr. Schleitwiler: Ruth Fisher.

Mr. King: Ruth Fisher on Transportation. Thank you.

Mr. Schleitwiler: And Mary Margaret Haugen.

Mr. King: Mary Margaret Haugen from Local Government. Thanks for doing your homework.

So it took us two years. From a policy point of view, it made a ton of sense to have the different policy expertise. Each of those committee chairmen worked on their own approach to this. So it made sense from a policy point of view, and it also made sense from a procedural point of view, although it drove the opponents of growth management crazy, because they had a hard time tracking all the elements of this. It was in the second year that we pulled all those reports from those different

committees and combined that into one bill.

Now, remember, this was done with a Republican state Senate, which was not wild about any kind of state planning. But in the election before—this would have been the election in '90, I think—a Snohomish County councilman got beat by a growth management activist. By a slower, smart growth activist. That put the fear of God into the Republicans. They didn't want any part of growth management, but Jeannette Hayner had a key staff guy, John Rico, very smart, a Republican. He was their main advisor. He convinced her that, if they killed the growth management bill, that they could lose a legislative seat east of Lake Washington.

We failed to get that legislation through. We got it through the House. It didn't get out of the Senate, in the regular session. I thought it was done. Wayne Ehlers, bless his heart, who was working for the governor then, kind of cajoled all of us into going back to the table and negotiating the final outcome. The people at the table were current U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell, myself, Jeannette Hayner, and Clyde Ballard, I think. Jeannette wasn't wild about growth management. Clyde really didn't want it. But they were both very, very constructive.

There was a very funny scene. There was a group of business lobbyists who really didn't like growth management, but they thought they would put together their alternative. So they worked hard to put together an alternative bill—they thought—with Senator Hayner, since Republicans were closer to the business community than we were. A very, very good lobbyist named Dick Ducharme had lobbied a long time in Olympia. He was smart and well-respected, and represented different business groups.

So I can remember a scene at the governor's office, in which we had basically reached an agreement. And Ducharme and the business lobbyists were irate that Senator Hayner hadn't pushed their version of growth management. She looked at these business lobbyists, pulled herself up, and said, "Whatever made you think you were legislators?" And that was it. We agreed.

I walked back up to my office, where I could look out on the Capitol steps, and two or three of the business lobbyists that had been at that meeting were explaining this to a group of their supporters, people who didn't want growth management. I looked out at them and people were so upset. They were so angry. They were literally hopping up and down on the steps of the Capitol. There was this scene that was just kind of surreal. You're looking down, and they are so angry at this. We ended up passing that bill through a Republican Senate. We had bipartisan support. And we've celebrated the twentieth anniversary of it, the twenty-fifth anniversary, and it's still going strong.

Mr. Schleitwiler: So that was in '90? '91?

Mr. King: Both sessions. The final version passed in '91, the first one passed in '90.

Mr. Schleitwiler: That's really stood up and is looked at as a model by other states. Is that right?

Mr. King: I hope so. I think maybe. I think it's good, and maybe it's showing its age.

You need to continually update it, to make sure that it fits the times. But yeah, I think it's stood the test of time.

Mr. Schleitwiler: I believe there are some other oral history interviews and materials about the Growth Management Act specifically, available at the Legislature's Oral History Project website. The other major accomplishment that you spoke about was in healthcare—the health plan.

Mr. King: Right. There was a funny story I wanted to mention, first. Before I came to Olympia as a freshman, the Legislature had authorized murals to be painted by Michael Spafford, the famous UW Seattle artist. They were unveiled when I was a freshman. I fell in love with the murals. A lot of the rest of the Legislature fell in hate with them. They really didn't like them, so they didn't even last the whole legislative session, I think. People were scandalized. They thought they were sexual, and they didn't fit the chambers, and other people thought that they were sexist. So they were covered up. So that was in 1981-82.

When I became speaker, I thought that covered art was kind of a travesty. I didn't really convince anybody. I just kind of announced, I said, "You know, I think we ought to uncover those murals. And if we don't like them, then we'll take them down. But just leaving them covered is not good. It's a bad sign, to have covered art." So we did [in 1989]. And the results were still pretty predictable. Myself and maybe thirty legislators fell in love with them all over again. But there were a lot of legislators, another sixty, that really didn't like them.

Artist Michael Spafford sitting in front of his murals in the House Gallery. (Courtesy of the Washington State Archives)

I liked them, though. And I didn't really announce this, I just decided, we're going to keep those up. So they remained uncovered the rest of the time I was speaker. Once or twice every session, I would have to fight off efforts to have them removed. Well, I was successful at fighting off those efforts. Speakers have some influence on the process, so I was able to use what little influence I had to keep them from being covered up. Then they lasted about two months after I was gone as speaker. Under the next speaker they were removed and put in a very nice place—they now hang in Chehalis College. They have a dramatic arts theater, and the murals [were moved and unveiled in 2003].

Mr. Schleitwiler: And that was the *Labors of Hercules*, right?

Mr. King: *The Twelve Labors of Hercules*. Right.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Are there more stories you want to share from that period, or should we move on?

Mr. King: I'll go to the State's Basic Health Plan. In 1986, I was the majority leader, and Jim McDermott—Senator Jim McDermott, Ways and Means chairman, brilliant guy, psychologist out of Seattle who went on to

become a congressman for years and years—thought that the state needed to have, basically, their own insurance company to provide care to the working poor. He sent over a bill. This was in '86. I could not get it passed. I was on the floor.

Jim was over, saying, "You've got to bring it to a vote." I could not get the votes for it.

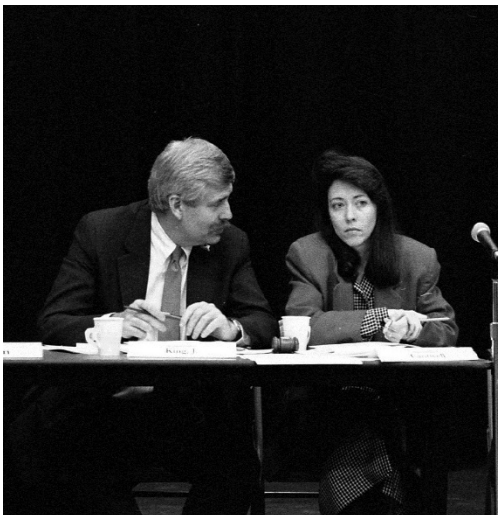
So I said, "Well, all I can do is set up a study commission during the interim." So we passed a resolution calling for a study commission, and we worked on it in the interim. It passed in '87.

So a guy named Bruce McPhaden, a businessman who worked for Kaiser Aluminum out in Spokane, chaired this citizen's commission. And we came up with the recommendation to have a state Basic Health Plan. We were the first state in the union to have, basically, our own insurance company. And the thing that we emphasized was that the insurance plan was for people that were working—what we called the working poor. People that were working, but their employer didn't provide coverage.

It was a very bitter battle. But I know one of the key things that helped us pass it—besides a whole lot of legwork, a whole lot of holding hands with my caucus, who were afraid the public would see it as communism or something. One of the key things was, I raised enough money before the interim, and did a poll with the public, and what the polling showed was the public loved the idea of a state Basic Health Plan for the poor people of this state. They didn't think it was communism. They just thought it was common sense. I think the polls showed there was like sixty-five percent support for this, or something.

So the year before, when I was trying to pass Senator McDermott's bill, I just couldn't. I could count up to about forty votes. The next year, after we had the study commission, and did this poll where we let people know the public liked it, I don't know what the final vote was, but we got sixty-eight or seventy votes on this. Bipartisan. We had Republicans—we had conservative Republicans, even, supporting it. So it's another bill that's been attacked at different times. And Senator Cantwell is still working on it, because she was involved in that, since her freshman year as a U.S. senator. She has passed a version of health care for the country based on the state's Basic Health Plan. And she is still working on getting it implemented.

Another event, that wasn't so funny, but that was formative for me as a brand-new speaker. This is the story of Lockheed locked-out workers. This was in February '87. Lockheed had locked the doors [in a



Speaker King and then Representative Maria Cantwell.
(Courtesy of the Washington State Archives)

labor dispute], locked out their shipyard workers. Lockheed workers came to Olympia, and they got a ton of press. There was a ton of public sympathy for these locked-out workers.

The Senate, at that point, for a couple of months, was still under Democratic control, before the majority changed in the middle of the session to Republican control. The Democrats wanted to provide for these workers and they sent legislation over. There was a large contingent of locked-out workers. You know, there might have been a couple hundred down there some of the time. There was a daily core of ten to twenty that were down there.
The Senate passed us a bill. And the workers expected, and the whole world expected, that with the House in strong Democratic control, we would jump in and pass it, because it extended unemployment benefits to these locked-out workers. The problem was, it was specific only to that particular incident and to those particular workers.

And Labor said, "Yeah, we want to take this deal."

I said, "It's a bad deal. We can do better. We can have this same provision for any workers who are locked out." The business community obviously didn't want that. So I held up the bill while we worked on it.

I could remember one day—this whole period took maybe three weeks—stepping out of my office, and it got so much press. Again, I was a brand-new speaker. And I opened up the door of my office, and there's a whole ocean of reporters out there, and behind them were the irate, angry, tearful Lockheed workers. And I explained my position, that we were going to do better, and we weren't going to sell the rest of organized labor down the river. Well, that's pretty tough news if you're out of work and I'm standing between you and getting money for your car payment, or you're worried you are going to lose your house, or whatever. So whatever I said did not mollify them a bit and they were angry.

So they vowed to stay in the Capitol. They weren't going to go home. They were going to camp out in the Capitol, and they were sleeping down in the rotunda. The sergeant at arms had made them comfortable. And so I said, "I'm going to go down and talk to those guys," that night. So about 9:00, I guess, it started to get quiet down there. A lot of the press had gone home. But my staff had alerted TV stations, I think. So I went down and talked to them. They were angry. They did not want me down there.

And I got up and said, "Lookit, I want you to know who I am, and why I've done what I've done." And I explained that I came out of a working family. My dad was a longtime union carpenter. And I said, "I understand how hard this is for you. I think I can get a better deal for labor in general. And I'm going to pass this. If I can't get a better deal, I'll take this one. But in the meantime, I'll meet with you every day." And I spent several hours down there with them. I let some of them go up to the speaker's office and use my shower, even. I got well acquainted with these workers, and so every day I would have a different member of the caucus come in and meet with them.

I had pretty good support from the caucus. There were some legislators that were mad at me and said I should substitute my judgment for the judgment of the labor

leaders and the state Labor Council. But we met every day. This went on for two weeks or so. And I can remember they had one woman that would come in—it was basically the same bunch of people every day that we talked to. But every day they'd come into my office about the same time, and she would break out crying, just sobbing. And they would report to me, "Well, so-and-so is losing his car today." And, you know, just on and on about how tough it was.

So we got the votes to pass our version of this back over to the Senate. The Senate took the bill up and failed to pass our version by one vote. I think they had forty-nine votes for our version, and we needed fifty. So I kept my word to the locked-out workers and passed the original Senate bill. But it was a powerful lesson to me. First of all, you know, I'd always insisted we had all these talented people in the House, and they were going to be listened to. So we didn't win the issue, but it helped establish parity between the House and Senate.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Are there any other major events or controversies that impacted your time as speaker?

Mr. King: I thought of another story, which has to do with the tax on soda. This was a period of time in which there was a lot of emphasis on drugs, and crime, and treatment, and longer prison sentences. And our caucus very much wanted us to be on record as dealing with the whole drug issue. So, I can't remember, legislation had probably passed one chamber, and a different version passed the other. So a group was set up, some kind of conference committee, and we had members of the Senate and House on this committee. Everybody wanted to do something. And I said, "I think it's fine if you do something. But I have one requirement. If you're going to set up longer sentences or treatment, you have to figure out how we're going to pay for it." Because the state budget was tight. They didn't know how they were going to pay for it.

But about the same time, literally, I think, while they were meeting—the conference committee on what we're going to do about the drug problem—I had a visitation, in my office, as I would have virtually every day, from an interest group. And this group happened to be the state wineries. It was a growing business in the state. Our wineries were getting their seat. They weren't the force they are now, but they were making good wine, and they were getting organized. They were in my office, and I can't remember exactly what they were lobbying for. But the lobbyist, a very smart young woman—the daughter of Vito Chiechi, who I talked about earlier—she was there with her clients, representing the wineries. As they filed out of the room, she ducked back into the room and said, "I have an idea." One of the proposals out of this drug task force was to tax beer and wine. And she said, "Joe, that's not fair. Why don't you put a tax on soda pop? It makes about as much sense." So passing taxes on beer and wine is pretty easy. Nobody is going to stand up and complain about tax on vices. But I thought we loaded enough taxes on them, plus we had the wineries, which were a growing business. So I said, "That's a great idea."

So I snuck into this conference room, and pulled our guy, Marlin Applewick, out. He's now a Court of Appeals judge. One of those

bright people that had come in with that class of 1982. And I said, "Marlin, I want you to put in a pop tax." And it raised a lot of money. And they did.

We knew that we couldn't let the bill stick around too long, or the soda pop distributors would have killed it. So the bottlers were madder than hell. They were having a convention in Hawai'i. They had to fly home to try to kill this. And they couldn't do it. They came in my office and said, "What can we do to get out it?" I said, "I think it's a done deal. We're going to do it." We had great support from this terrific caucus. So that's how we ended up with a pop tax. Which pop bottlers spent years trying to get repealed. And they did get it changed, to a tax on syrup rather than a tax on the bottle of pop.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Can we talk about changes in the role of the speaker, or changes in the operation of the Legislature, during your time? I know you mentioned smoking.

Mr. King: Yeah, there's a couple of things. The smoking was funny. Actually, this didn't happen during my term as speaker. It led up to my speakership. But it's a great, funny story. When I went in as a freshman, it was customary that there would be smoking on the floor of the House. I was a major offender. I smoked a pipe, and so I would smoke this pipe on the floor of the House. My long-suffering seatmate, Lorraine, we were both freshmen in the back row, and she would good-naturedly complain. I don't know why she good-natured about it. It was pretty obnoxious. And she would claim that it ruined her perfume.

Everybody kind of knew that I smoked this pipe. I had a couple of incidents where I knocked out the ashes—if you've ever smoked a pipe, you know you've got ashes to get rid of. I would knock it out in my wastebasket. On two different occasions, my wastebasket caught on fire. So I had to jump up and stomp out the smoke in the wastebasket on the floor of the House, as the debate was going on, smoke rolling up my leg and stuff. That happened a couple of times.

So when I was majority leader, floor leader, before I became speaker, we were adopting House rules. Each chamber adopts rules by which they govern themselves. Those are usually not too eventful, but when a majority changes, you can have fierce rules fights. Well, we were debating rules and my friend Richard Barrett jumped up and was recognized by Speaker Ehlers. He said he wanted to offer an oral amendment. Well, we didn't offer many oral amendments then, they were usually all handwritten. But the speaker—and to this day I think he was in on this, he claims that he wasn't—he said, "All right, state your motion."

And Barrett was looking at me with a kind of glint in his eye, and said, "I move that we change the rules to ban smoking on the floor of the House."

And he offered it mostly as a jest, as a way to kind of jibe me or dig at me, and he was almost laughing when he did it. So I got up then, and tried to talk against this motion. I was not very successful. I didn't have very many good arguments why you should be able to smoke on the floor of the House. And I still thought the speaker was joking. He wasn't really going to let this go through. He called for the question, and it passed overwhelmingly. Except with the smokers there. I had some of my caucus who were

furious with me. Ruth Fisher, as an example, was furious that she couldn't smoke on the floor of the House anymore. So that was how the Legislature lost the ability to smoke on the floor of the House.

All right, institutional changes. I don't think I made a lot of them. My predecessors had. I would say Wayne Ehlers made more institutional changes. One of the ones that I made was—when I was a freshman and all the time until I became speaker, it was customary that lobbyists would be allowed into the chambers, and could stand in the wings of the chamber, and kind of beckon members off the floor.

Well, Alan Thompson came to me and said, "Joe, that's not very seemly, is it?"

And I said, "No, I think we should stop that."

So, from that point on, lobbyists couldn't come in and lobby from the wings. They could send notes in, and people would go out to the doors and lobby. So that was kind of a small change. I thought it was just unseemly having lobbyists in the wings. You know, beefing up staff. I really wanted a strong staff. That practice of beefing up our staff, really, had started years before I got there. [Speaker John] Bagnariol really wanted to beef up the staff. He understood that the governor, before we had a strong legislative staff, controlled all of the information. He had all the data. So we had to have the staff to get parity with the governor.

If I think of anything else, I'll let you know. But I was more policy focused.

Mr. Schleitwiler: How do you think you approached the role differently? Different speakers had different styles, right?

Mr. King: Well, there are different styles of speakers. I think I was more issue-oriented than other speakers. Clyde Ballard—as a minority leader and then as speaker—put a high premium on service to his members. Many speakers saw themselves kind of as peacemakers. And Lord knows in today's society we probably need some more of those speakers.

It had taken me a while to get to be speaker. It was important to me and I just made up my mind that I wanted to leave a mark. And so, I would look for these major issues, and that was really my passion. I wasn't ever a guy that would dream up these. I didn't dream up growth management. I didn't dream up the state's Basic Health Plan. But when people would come to me with ideas, I would learn which ones I thought would resonate with the public, which ones really were solving problems. And then I would attack them, with all the fervor and passion that I could. If feathers got ruffled along the way, so be it. And I think I probably did ruffle a lot of feathers.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Talking to other folks, I heard that you would be clear with people about what you were doing, and that you were seen as very formidable, but also that you were able to get along with the other side.

Mr. King: You know, I would become very fierce towards the end of the session, and very demanding. One of the things that I did as speaker with our caucus, and my leadership team, and Lorraine and Pat and

other people, we would have a caucus, Lorraine was caucus chairman, and before every session, we would have a weekend planning session. And we would adopt ten different policy goals, and we would have enormous fights about what went on that list. And we tried to be as specific as we could. So the whole caucus had a hand in adopting those goals, and then people had their input during committee hearings and stuff.

So, at the end of the session, you know—you spent all session and all the bills passed in the last ten days, virtually, twenty days—I would become demanding. I said, "Wait a minute. I know you're getting heat now, but the time to worry about that was last December, before session, when we were adopting this." Once we adopt this agenda, we are going to stick to that. And I just wasn't tolerant of people who, at the last minute, would say, "Oh, I'm getting some heat, I can't vote for that."

So I was, in that sense, very aggressive about rounding up votes, because I thought that's my job as a leader. My job wasn't to make friends. My job was to round up votes on this agenda that came from the caucus. Once in a while I had input about what went into it, like growth management. But most of those were caucus priorities, and I would fight as hard for anything on that list. I would fight like crazy for it and remind people of commitments that they'd made months before, when we said we were going to do this, as a group. So people called me a dictator. I said, "No, we just build teams here. I'm not a dictator. We build teams. We agreed to this in advance." Then I got to have people keep their word.

Mr. Schleitwiler: There were a lot of changes, generally, going on in politics and government in this time period. The role of women in politics was changing. Are there issues like that, that you remember strongly?

Mr. King: The easy answer is to say that it's more partisan. We had fierce fights, and there was no doubt that we fought with the Republicans, and they fought with us. And it wasn't always, you know—the kind of common wisdom is, we fight and then we go out and have a drink afterwards. It was a little bit more civil. But one of the changes is, I don't remember any legislators getting in trouble for working with the other side of the aisle. That has been a change that has been driven by a lot of stuff. You could work across the aisle. You weren't going to be judged by your constituents. They expected you to get stuff done.

But the other thing, I was the beneficiary of having something that was kind of a harbinger of the future. I was gifted with really a strong caucus, with particularly strong women caucus members. I don't remember how many committees we had, but I think the majority of our committees were chaired by women. If there were twelve or thirteen standing committees—I know six of them were, because that was the Steel Magnolias—but I think we had seven women chairmen, out of thirteen committees, or something.

I really think that this period—I think it really started with Ehlers—I really see it as a golden age of the Washington State Legislature. Between the institutional reforms and policy reforms that we drove, during a time in which we had a Republican-

controlled Senate—I think it might be hard to duplicate that now.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Do you talk a little bit about the end of your speakership? You decided to move on and run for governor.

Mr. King: My speakership ended when I ran for governor in '92. Booth Gardner had announced he wasn't going to run again and I had had my eye on that. Actually, I had announced I was going to run for the U.S. Senate against Brock Adams, who was embroiled in a scandal. Instead, I jumped into the governor's race. And there were no other Democrats in the race when I jumped in, but then late, like in May or June, Mike Lowry jumped into the race, and he had a strong presence in Seattle. I was from Vancouver, downstate, and had virtually zero name familiarity. I was surprised. I'd been what I thought was a good speaker, had lots of press, in the daily press. I did a poll when I started running for governor, and I had two percent name familiarity. Not many people pay attention to the Legislature.

It was the worst year of my life, running for governor. I envisioned debates, shaking hands at county fairs and ferry lines, and travelling the state and meeting tons of people. That's not what running for governor is. It means going to an office in Seattle, sitting down all day on the phone, trying to raise money. Trying to explain to strangers who Joe is and why they ought to send Joe money. It was not a fun year of my life, and I got beat pretty handily in that Democratic primary, by Mike Lowry. So that was the end of my career as speaker.

Mr. Schleitwiler: In closing, is there anything more than you want to say—other lessons you took away from your time as speaker, as well as any other stories you might want to share?

Mr. King: OK, I'll tell you a story that will do both. It kind of teaches a lesson. It was the year of the Gulf War, '91. Evergreen [State College] students were politically active. They were pissed off about the Gulf War and they wanted to let somebody know. So they came in to the Capitol, I don't know, maybe there were a couple hundred of them initially, two or three hundred. They came in and were demonstrating. And I don't remember if they allowed them in, or if they pushed their way in to the House chambers. There was nobody on the floor. So it wasn't like there was any big confrontation. But this was late in the afternoon.

I remember going out to talk to them. I remember being appalled about how little they knew. They were wandering around the state capital looking for U.S. Senator Slade Gordon. They were mad as hell, and we tried to say, "You know, guys, we can't help you much. We can't stop this war. We're not wild about it either." But they didn't want to go home. And so I said, "You can spend the night in the chambers. Stay in here. We'll leave the sergeant at arms." And quite a few of them left. There were probably thirty of them left. One of the reasons people stayed—this was a minor lesson—some people stayed because the buses out to Evergreen quit running. People thinned out about nine o'clock, when the last bus ran.

So they stayed in the chambers. When we came in the next morning, there were two left, I think, only two or three still in there. The sergeant-at-arms led them out

peacefully. I didn't mind that they spent the night there. The Republicans thought that it was disrespectful to the Capitol. I said, "Well, it's the people's House. It's good. They're all right. That's our kids in there. Let them stay."

Well, what had happened, we had the sergeant-at-arms stay, and they had left us a letter they had drafted. Here's the point of this long-winded story here. During the course of that night, they wanted to write a letter. So they thought, "Well, how do we write it? Who's going to draft it? What are we going to put in it? What else is going to happen? What are all the elements of this?" So they set up a couple of committees. One was going to draft, and one was going to research—I can't remember how they divided themselves up. Not sure I ever knew. But by the time most of them left, sometime in the early morning, this group of students from Evergreen had started to form themselves into their own little legislature. If we'd have left them there thirty days, they'd have had rules that looked kind of like our rules. Their agenda might have been a little different. By the end of the five years, the agenda would have been close to the same.

So it's my contention that nothing happens in politics that doesn't happen in your work, your church, your family. It's just writ large. And if you grab citizens at large off the street, or grab a bunch of Evergreen students, and drop them down into the Legislature, they will start to form themselves into a legislature. And I've told that story a lot, and I say, "By the end of a certain period of time, you won't be able to tell the difference between what they've done."

And people say, "Well, you don't think much of the Legislature, do you?"

I say, "No. I hold the Legislature in high esteem. But I also think the public is very smart. Drop them in there and they're going to end up doing the same kind of job with the same kind of results that we get. So I guess that was a lesson I had from my time in politics.

Lawmakers face tough agenda

Associated Press

OLYMPIA — Now comes the hard part.

Washington legislators kicked off the 50th Legislature in grand style Monday, with speech-making, leadership elections and a bit of partisan grumping thrown in.

Substantive work is taking a backseat to pomp and pageantry until Gov. Booth Gardner throws down the gauntlet in his televised State of the State Address late today. Major hearings on the mega-issues of the session begin on Wednesday.

Foremost on the agenda: Gardner's call for a half-billion-dollar tax boost to pay for educational excellence programs in the public schools and colleges.

"It's a tough pill for people to swallow," the governor said in an interview.

Gardner, trying to earn his stripes as he faces re-election next year, said he'll press lawmakers hard to approve his program, and, at the same time, hit the road to try to drum up grassroots support.

Gavels fell in the House and Senate at noon, ushering in at least 15 weeks of debate over Gardner's education and welfare reform packages and dozens of other issues.

It was a love-in in the House, where the Democrats have a super-majority of 61 seats, but the Senate had its first taste of partisan sniping. Republicans, who came within a single seat of taking control of the upper house in November, accused the majority Democrats of abusing their power.

"It's a fun session," enthused Gardner, who has heaped lawmakers' desks high with his proposals. "The issues are exciting. The time is right. The possibilities are here. There is no question, the agenda has been set — education, welfare reform, and water quality.

AP photo

Chief Clerk of the House Alan Thompson addresses the House after taking the oath of office Monday. Behind him is Speaker of the House Joe King.

"That's the high ground. I think we'll get a good part of it, sure. This certainly is a full employment act for lobbyists and reporters!"

The governor picked up the backhanded endorsement of the new House speaker, Joe King, D-Vancouver. I his maiden speech after his inauguration, King echoed Gardner's call to boldness, if not his precise proposals.

Many Washington citizens are hurting financially, but that doesn't give lawmakers an excuse for business-as-usual, King said.

"Many will ask why dramatic action is called for if there is no immediate crisis," the speaker said. "The answer is found in real people we all know, who are a little further down the (financial) slope than we. They are reporting they don't like the view from their precarious perch."

But he said Gardner shouldn't expect the Legislature to be a rubber stamp:

"I think that in spite of our personal fondness for him, in spite of our admiration for his courage, in spite of the initiative, creativity and energy behind those proposals, we need to acknowledge, however, that this is not a thunderbolt from Zeus and that we have an institutional obligation to examine closely the ideas presented."

King's House kicked off the session in style. After a military band played show tunes by George M. Cohan, members marched sprightly to their desks to a rousing Sousa number, "The National Emblem March."

Bud vases with green and yellow blossoms graced each desk.

After members were sworn in, the majority Democrats elected the House leadership, including King as speaker and America's senior legislator, John O'Brien of Seattle, as speaker pro tem.

The Republicans offered Minority Leader Clyde Ballard, R-East Wenatchee, as their token candidate for speaker, but the election went by the script and King was elected on a partyline vote.

Ballard rose to offer the cooperation of the Republicans, but warned that cooperation is a two-way street.

Former Sen. Alan Thompson of Kelso was unanimously elected chief clerk of the House, and the outgoing clerk, Dennis Heck, bade a tearful goodbye. Heck, who presided until King was elected, is expected to run for state school superintendent next year.

Spokane, Wash., Sun., Jan. 28, 1990 The Spokesman-Review Spokane Chronicle C3

Lawmakers grapple with growth, issue of the '90s

By David Ammons
Associated Press

LEGISLATURE '90

ANALYSIS

OLYMPIA — Rampant urban growth, a phenomenon that frays nerves and strains government's ability to keep pace, finally has landed on the doorstep of the Washington Legislature, a mega-issue that defies easy solution.

Lawmakers know first-hand about the problems in their home districts.

In many corners of the booming Evergreen State, highways are turning into virtual parking lots at rush hour, schools are jammed to overflowing, cities and counties aren't keeping up with the demand for services, housing is scarce and expensive, jails and prisons are overcrowded, and state services are strained.

The growth has been unequal, blessing — or cursing — the Interstate 5 corridor and leaving some counties untouched.

Now, the legislators are expected to do something about managing growth, and fast, tackling at least part of the monster before the session's scheduled end on March 8.

"We're saying in essence we're not going home till we deal with some of these issues dealing with growth," says House Speaker Joe King, D-Vancouver, the Legislature's premier advocate of what he calls "growth management."

Thirteen Washington counties grew by 13 percent or more during the 1980s — Snohomish by an astonishing 27.44 percent. Ten counties now have more than 100,000 people. It's even possible that the next federal census will result in another congressional seat for the state.

To be sure, growth has had its up side, generating jobs and prosperity in many communities. Growth is given much of the credit by state economist Chang Mook Sohn for the $611 million state budget surplus.

And many communities removed from the booming I-5 corridor say they wish some of that growth could be spread their way.

House Democrats have introduced a sweeping package of "growth strategies" they call the centerpiece of their 1990 agenda. King, who could ride the issue into the governor's mansion, shrugs and calls the sprawling package "just common-sense stuff that the public will like a lot."

Seattle City Councilman Jim Street, speaking for the state's largest city, told a House hearing he surprised even himself by doing a 180-degree turn in recent months and asking for state intervention despite his staunch belief in local control of development.

Doing nothing will lead only to growth moratoriums and drastic initiatives by angry citizens, Street said.

The House plan includes state-mandated planning by the 16 largest and fastest-growing counties and their cities; adhering to broad state policies such as containing urban sprawl; protecting environmentally sensitive areas; and providing adequate roads, housing and other basics of life.

"The people are ahead of the politicians on this one — they always are," said Rep. Jennifer Belcher, D-Olympia, who helped write the plan and who noted that slow-growth candidates did well in elections last fall.

"This isn't visionary on our parts; we just got the message in the last election that we need to do something."

GROWTH AT A GLANCE

OLYMPIA — Washington has 10 counties with more than 100,000 residents and 12 counties with growth rates of 13 percent or higher.

The fastest-growing counties during the 1980s:

1. Snohomish, up 27.44 percent.
2. Island, 25.5 percent.
3. Thurston, 24.81.
4. San Juan, 23.81.
5. Kitsap, 23.34.
6. Jefferson, 20.28.
7. Mason, 20.25.
8. Pierce, 15.49.
9. Douglas, 14.7.
10. Clark, 14.66.
11. Whatcom, 14.53.
12. King, 13.87.
13. Skagit, 12.88.

Counties that posted slower growth rates are, in descending order: Yakima, Chelan, Grant, Clallam, Klickitat, Stevens, Ferry, Spokane, Asotin, Pend Oreille, Lewis, Okanogan, Cowlitz, Walla Walla, Pacific, Skamania, Kittitas, Columbia and Adams.

Seven counties lost population over the decade: Franklin, Grays Harbor, Benton, Whitman, Garfield, Lincoln and Wahkiakum.

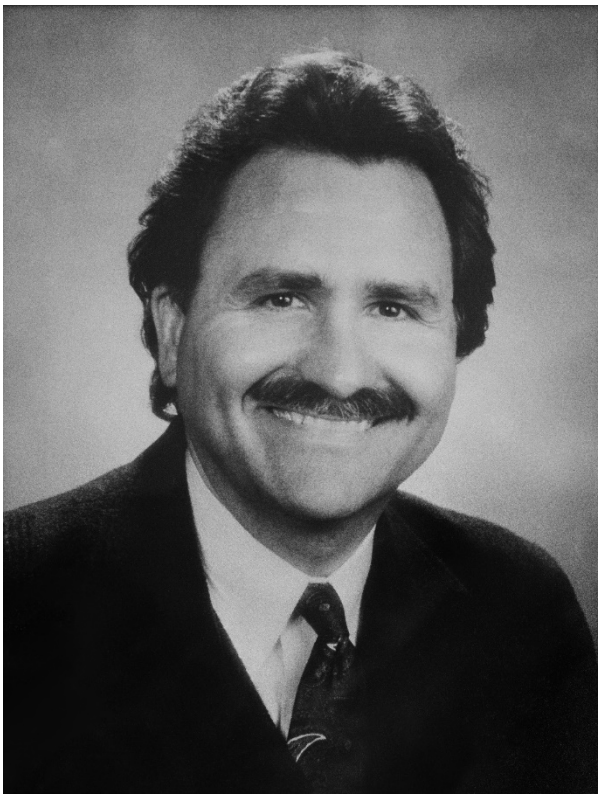
The top 10 counties by population:

1. King, 1,446,000.
2. Pierce, 560,900.
3. Snohomish, 430,900.
4. Spokane, 358,000.
5. Clark, 220,400.
6. Yakima, 187,800.
7. Kitsap, 181,500.
8. Thurston, 155,100.
9. Whatcom, 122,200.
10. Benton, 104,100.

Washington's tiniest county, Garfield, has 2,300 residents.

Source: House Local Government Committee

Brian Ebersole



Brian W. Ebersole was born on October 10, 1947 in Maryland. He grew up in Tennessee, where his father, Dr. Luke E. Ebersole, was a professor and vice chancellor of the University of Tennessee. Ebersole credits his father, a sociologist and former preacher, and his mother, Margaret, a first-grade teacher, with setting an ethical standard, liberal but uncompromising, that has guided him throughout his life.

Ebersole received a bachelor's degree in political science at Tennessee and followed his parents into education as a teacher at a segregated school in rural South Carolina. After receiving a master's degree in educational psychology from the University of Connecticut, Ebersole took a job in Tacoma through a federal antipoverty program and worked as a counselor with at-risk students in the public schools.

In 1982, Ebersole ran successfully for the Legislature from Pierce County's 29th District. He succeeded Vancouver's Joe King as majority leader in 1987, when King became speaker, and followed King as speaker in 1992. After a wave election in 1994 brought the Republicans to power in the House, Ebersole briefly served as minority leader, before moving on to serve as mayor of Tacoma from 1995 to 2000.

He left that position to serve as president of Bates Technical College and retired in 2003. From that point, Ebersole, an avid traveler, spent time visiting and operating businesses in the Philippines and elsewhere in Southeast Asia. In 2018, Ebersole opened an art gallery in downtown Tacoma, and presented his own work in a two-artist show with Governor Jay Inslee the following year.

Ebersole's commitment to education and the arts shaped his career as a representative, speaker, and mayor, and in all three roles he was involved in major initiatives, including the expansion of the public university branch campuses and a reorganization of the technical and community college system. The capital projects associated with these interests helped revitalize downtown Tacoma and included the founding of the University of Washington's Tacoma campus, the renovation of the Union Station federal courthouse, and the Washington State History Museum.

A man of wide-ranging interests and a keen observer of people, Ebersole laughingly concedes that success as a politician required some flexibility with the model of ethical rectitude he found in his parents. Nonetheless, his appreciation of human

foibles, fallibility, and needs allowed him to marshal his caucus in service to his higher goals.

Vince Schleitwiler: This interview with Brian Ebersole is about his experiences as Speaker of the House of Representatives for the state of Washington. The date is October 15th, 2019, and the interview is taking place at Speaker Ebersole's art gallery in Tacoma. My name is Vince Schleitwiler and I'll be conducting the interview for the Legislature's Oral History Project on behalf of the Washington State Historical Society.

I thought we could begin by talking a little bit about where we are, at the art gallery.

Brian Ebersole: Well, Vince, I've had an interest in art since high school, when I took a few art classes. Actually, when I was a junior high guidance counselor in South Tacoma, when teachers would send kids to me and ask me to give them a swat—this is in the '70s when that was legal—I would sometimes say to the kids, "Well, I'll tell you what. Just sit still. Let me draw you. I'll give you the picture and that's your punishment." And then that would relax them, and I'd have a chance to talk to them about whatever went wrong in class.

So it started out with portraits. And then I got busy with life and politics, and gave it up, until two or three years ago, when a close friend, who's an artist, encouraged me to start painting again. And I am painting.

And the governor, Governor Inslee, came to an art show that we had here about a year ago, and I learned that Jay was currently painting. I knew that he doodled, but I didn't know he was a real painter. So I asked him if he would include some of his paintings in my show here in downtown Tacoma. Jay said yes and very graciously invited me down and showed me his paintings in the governor's mansion, both downstairs on the first floor and up in the living quarters. And so today here we have fourteen of the governor's paintings and fourteen of mine, and this past weekend, they were part of a Tacoma studio tour. It's fun. You know, it's fun. I really enjoy it.

Mr. Schleitwiler: I thought I'd move on now to talking about your life before you were speaker, and what led up to your speakership. What in your personal background and prior experience prepared you to become speaker? I know you spoke a lot about your parents.

Mr. Ebersole: Yeah, Vince, I was very lucky. I had storybook parents. My father was trained as a minister, then became a PhD, then wrote books on lobbying in D.C. Here's one, *American Society*, that he wrote in the '50s. My mother was a wonderful, lovely first-grade teacher in public schools. So, you know, if I hadn't turned out okay—I would have had to really worked to not have had a productive life. They gave me all the tools.

This sounds kind of like Forrest Gump, and brushes with the national story—my father went to seminary in Philadelphia with Dr. Martin Luther King, as did my father's brother Mark Ebersole [all three attended Crozer Theological Seminary at various points during the 1940s]. And that played a role in my life because Pop, once he got a degree in divinity and was preaching in Philadelphia, he realized that he didn't exactly believe what his congregation believed. He had a different, more

Buddhist-like view of religion, and not a literal interpretation of the Bible.

So he hung that up and got a PhD in sociology. But when he was then teaching at the University of Maryland—it was in the days of [Senator] Joe McCarthy—my father was asked to teach his course on American society at the Pentagon to military officers. And Pop was a confirmed pacifist, so he said, "No, no thanks." He didn't make a thing of it. He just said, "No, that's OK." Because it wasn't required by the University of Maryland. Well, that was enough to get Pop on Joe McCarthy's "do not hire" list, and he was asked by the president of the University of Maryland to leave the university. Because they were losing federal money because of people like Pop, who Joe McCarthy had branded as fellow travelers with the Communists.

And so, Pop applied up and down the coast. He was out of an Ivy League school but couldn't be hired. He ended up at the University of Tennessee because, as Pop said, they were so far out of it that they hadn't gotten the list. He had a successful career there, ended up as the vice chancellor of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. But I did learn that he was offered a job in the governor of Tennessee's cabinet, for health and human services, sometime in the '50s. And Pop said no, because he thought this would be dug up, and once the governor learned that he had been on McCarthy's list, that he might not approve.

So it's funny how these national events affect your—that's how I grew up in Tennessee, and if I hadn't grown up in Tennessee, I wouldn't have ended up in Tacoma, Washington.

Mr. Schleitwiler: So you were born in Tennessee?

Mr. Ebersole: No. I was born in College Park, Maryland, which was very close to Washington, D.C. Pop was at the University of Maryland and writing his book, which I have here, called *Church Lobbying in the Nation's Capital*. It's pretty interesting that I ended up in politics, and lobbyists would try to tell me about lobbying! I'd say, "Yeah, I know something about that."

At the time, the churches denied that they lobbied, and Pop said, "Well, don't deny that. You guys were instrumental in the abolition of slavery and the civil rights movement." Women's right to vote came out of some of the churches, the northern churches.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Your father's name was Luke.

Mr. Ebersole: Luke Ebersole.

Mr. Schleitwiler: And your mother?

Mr. Ebersole: Margaret Ebersole. Mother was just—I know probably every boy feels like this, but she was pretty saint like. She never said a negative word about anybody. And as an elementary teacher in Tennessee, she was in an integrated school. It was about fifty percent black and fifty percent white. But this was in the '50s, and a lot of the whites clearly did not think that the black kids were very equal.

And so, Mother, when she would hear a racist comment, she'd say, "Now, you don't like black people, huh? Well, what about Mrs. So-and-so?" And she'd mention another teacher.

"Well, no, I like her. I like her."

"Well, what about Joe, the custodian?"

"Oh, I like Joe."

And then she'd say, "Well, wouldn't it make more sense to decide if you liked black people based on whether or not you liked the black people that you know?" You know, rather than screaming at them that that's racist, or using language that they wouldn't understand. So she was a great teacher.

Mr. Schleitwiler: So you learned a lot from your parents. What do you think you took away from them that most shaped your life?

Mr. Ebersole: Oh, I would always say, if somebody would pay me a compliment during my career—"Boy, you know, you made a good decision there, you have good judgment"—I would say, "Well, all I have to do is close my eyes and think what my parents would do." And then I'd know what was the right thing to do. I wouldn't always do it [laughs], but at least I'd know what was appropriate, and what they would have done. They were probably too—what's the right word?—too straight-arrow to have been successful in politics. I have a little bit more guile and savvy perhaps, but they had a true moral compass.

Mr. Schleitwiler: And so you followed them into education, at first, and you said that also shaped your career, your experience as an educator?

Mr. Ebersole: Yeah, that's kind of a product of national events as well. I was going to—to get a PhD in sociology like my father had, but then Vietnam came along and I was going to be 1-A and get drafted. Well, like, with my background, I wasn't about to go kill people in Southeast Asia because Lyndon Johnson thought that was a good idea. So I hustled and took some education courses, at the end of my undergraduate training at the University of Tennessee, and ended up teaching high school in rural South Carolina, in a segregated school, at age twenty-one. And my students were seventeen and eighteen. So that was quite a learning experience. But that's how I got into high school and junior high education. It was to stay out of Vietnam.

Mr. Schleitwiler: And then how did you end up in Tacoma?

Mr. Ebersole: I got a master's degree at the University of Connecticut in educational psychology, I think it was called. It was training to work in a War on Poverty program to help youth in the cities find success. It was called training to work with highly capable, culturally disadvantaged youth. So I did an internship in an inner-city high school in Hartford, Connecticut.

And I met a guy who said, "I could get you a job out in Seattle."

I said, "Cool, I've heard about Seattle." They hired me over the telephone, in those days, and I flew out here. When I got off the bus at SeaTac, they started heading south. And I said, "No, the sign says Seattle's to the north!"

And they said, "Hey, buddy, you said Tacoma."

I said, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, it's all the same—Tacoma, Seattle, Ballard." You know?

Well, he said, "No, it's not all the same. Tacoma is a separate city. It's thirty miles south." So that's how I ended up here.

Mr. Schleitwiler: And you said your experience as a guidance counselor also helped shape you?

Mr. Ebersole: Yeah. Ten years later, in '82, when I found myself in the Legislature, I always felt that if I think about, not only what my parents would do, but everything I learned about the human condition as a high school guidance counselor, I'd know better how to proceed than if I focused on "The Law." And I always felt like understanding the motivation of people, understanding people's need to be listened to, to hear the public, to understand what legislator is holding up whose bill because they don't like them or they do like them—all that is at least equally important as an in-depth understanding of the RCWs or the Washington Administrative Code.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You had a long political career, and a number of different roles. This interview is primarily focused on your time as speaker, but we obviously have to extend it beyond that. Can you talk about your career leading up to becoming speaker?

Mr. Ebersole: Yeah, I ran in '82 because a guy [now] in the Legislature, Steve Kirby, encouraged me to run. Another former staffer named Tim Strege was also instrumental. And the third person is deceased, Wendell Brown, who had been in the Legislature prior to me. So these three South Tacoma guys came to me, and had noticed me at a Democratic Party function in the 80s, and said, "Hey, we've got a seat in the state Legislature if you want to run for it." And I was pleased, like, "Wow, that's cool." And they said, "Don't let this go to your head. If you're a Democrat, we can win if you're an orangutan." So those guys called me the orangutan.

Anyway, I ran and won, and it was a safe, working-class Democratic district. It wasn't liberal, but it was very Democratic. I would say in my district, at the time, maybe fifteen percent of the voters had a college education. So most were in the trades, or a waitress, taxi driver, working at Walmart, whatever. I had to learn to see issues the way they did. And they weren't orthodox liberal positions, but I generally agreed with them. For instance, on gay rights. I remember drinking at a tavern in South Tacoma and these guys were saying derogatory things about gay people. And I said, "Well, wait a minute, wait a minute. You just said—"

And they said, "Oh, yeah, yeah. Whatever they do, as long as they do it in private, I don't care." It wasn't exactly their language.

I said, "See, you're tolerant, you're tolerant!

And they said, "Well, OK, yeah." So it was a balancing act, to stay true to what I thought were the right views, and yet respect people's differences, and try to see it the way they saw it.

Mr. Schleitwiler: And you became majority leader before you were speaker?

Mr. Ebersole: Yeah. In '87, there was an opening. Joe King was the speaker, a very good speaker. I learned a lot from Joe. And in '87, Pat McMullen moved to the Senate and vacated the majority leader position. And so, a couple staffers, particularly Terry Thompson and Paul Berendt, encouraged

me to run. And I thought, "Well, that's beyond my reach." And they said, "No, no, no, you should try." So I started making phone calls and I found out I had more friends than I thought it did.

I had five years as majority leader with Joe as the speaker and I really liked representing the caucus and constituents on the floor. I liked the debates. It was fun. I knew that they were mostly theater, but I enjoyed that role. And the other part of being majority leader is to help your members get elected around the state. We had a great guy, Bill Grant, who was a close friend. Bill was a wheat farmer from Walla Walla. And at that time, we had quite a few Democrats on the other side of the mountains. I think now they're none, except maybe Spokane. But we had legislators from the Tri-Cities, Walla Walla, now and then Ellensburg, Yakima. So my job as majority leader was to keep everybody, as much as possible, rowing with the same oar. And keep the positions that would please the Seattle legislators, who were generally the most liberal or in today's word, progressive, and the ones from Eastern Washington, who were more conservative, and had—you know, they cared about agriculture issues. Well, if you're in Seattle, you're not thinking too much about the weather and how it affects agriculture.

So that was a fun job for five years. And I was well-positioned then. And I knew that eventually Joe was going to move on. And Joe ran for governor in the primary against Mike Lowry in, what, '92? And that was my opportunity. And I had been well aware, during my time as majority leader, that people don't vote for you in leadership based on your brilliance, or your position on policies. They vote—"Well, here's what I'm trying to accomplish in the Legislature, and if I go in and pitch this to Brian, as majority leader or speaker, is he going to be receptive? Is he going to help me achieve my goals?"

So I was consciously, for five years, cultivating friendships and alliances. So when I actually decided to run, I realized I was so far ahead I didn't have a real challenge at that point.

But another wonderful member of the Legislature, Lorraine Hine, had been caucus chair during the time that I was majority leader and Joe was speaker. And Lorraine was truly one of the smartest people I've ever met, and a great legislator. And when I became speaker, then Lorraine went on to become Governor Lowry's legislative director. So that was a great, great partnership as well.

Mr. Schleitwiler: It seemed like you had a fairly smooth path at that point. It was not unexpected for you to become speaker. When it happened, was there a point where it struck you? Or were you just too busy in your work?

Mr. Ebersole: Well, I remember I called my father and I said, "Well, I've been elected speaker."

And he said "So?"

And I said, "Well, I have a lot more power now."

And he said, "Power? What do you want with power? Tell me what good you want to do with your power. Don't tell me you ran to have more power."

So that put me in my place pretty quickly. You know, of course you think, how did I end up doing this? There's a lot of talented people here that could have done the job equally well. But that's the way it went.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Let's talk about some of the people that you worked with. Maybe we can begin by talking about government leaders. Mike Lowry was governor during your speakership, but you got to work with a number of governors along the way.

Mr. Ebersole: Yeah. When I was elected majority leader it was about the time that Booth Gardner, who had been the Pierce County executive, was elected to be the governor. And Booth had come out of the private sector, a very lovely person, very kind sort of guy and just had a charming way about him. I don't know anybody that didn't like Booth Gardner as a person. And then Booth took Denny Heck, who had been majority leader when I came in, then Denny was chief [clerk] for a while, and when Booth became governor Denny moved over and was Governor Gardner's chief of staff. Dean Foster, well-known Olympia lead staffer, went over. Lorraine went over. Wayne Ehlers went over and was working for Booth. So all these former House members ended up working for Governor Gardner. And I just misspoke. Lorraine left the House to work for Governor Lowry, but Wayne Ehlers, Denny Heck, Dean Foster all went to work for Governor Gardner.

And that made things pretty seamless. I was fairly parochial as the speaker and majority leader. I was interested in capital projects for the Tacoma area, and with Booth there from Pierce County and Senator [Marcus] Gaspard as the Senate majority leader from Puyallup, we had pretty easy sledding to do what we wanted from Pierce County. Actually—it's been twenty-five years!—Marc was majority leader when I was speaker and at that time, Mike Lowry had been elected governor.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You had great relationships with the folks who had gone from the Legislature and hold other offices. And a number of those folks that you worked with along the way went on to become governor as well.

Mr. Ebersole: Yeah. My seatmate, I'm proud to say, for the six years that she was in the Legislature was Maria Cantwell. And of course, Maria is a superstar U.S. senator now. And we knew at the time she was going to be a star. She had come from Ohio. I think she went to Ohio University, where ironically, I had thought about going to undergraduate school [Cantwell attended Miami University of Ohio]. Anyway, Maria came out to work on Alan Cranston's presidential campaign in her twenties. At age—I don't know what she was, 27, 28?—ended up winning a seat in the Washington State Legislature. I remember asking Denny Heck if she could be seated with me. And I got to know Maria well. She's really very talented, very bright, very savvy—and tough! You don't want to mess with Maria.

I remember one time we were passing one more thing for Pierce County, and she had a guy named J.D. out of South Tacoma. He had a patronage job and he was the sign man. He'd make you signs and buttons for any occasion. So she had J.D. make a button that said, "Pierce County pork" with a big red line through it—meaning "No Pierce County pork." I can't remember if it was a pig's face or what, but it was pretty clear, no Pierce County pork.

And so, I learned this from J.D., he said, "Cantwell wants me to make these buttons. What do you say, boss?"

I said, "No! No!" And I took the buttons away and put them in my drawer in my office. And Maria came to J.D., and he didn't have the buttons, and she came to me, and I handed those buttons back to her! I thought, "Oh my God!" The fury of Senator Cantwell.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You worked also with Gary Locke?

Mr. Ebersole: Yeah. Gary was extremely bright, very talented. We all knew that he had star quality. And Gary was the chair of Appropriations during the time that I was speaker and made almost all of the major budget decisions. And he was so savvy and into detail that it was usually very well thought out. So I could have confidence that Gary can take care of the budget.

Mr. Schleitwiler: And what about the Republicans?

Mr. Ebersole: Well, Clyde Ballard, who went on to be speaker, was the minority leader. Also, a lovely person. Just had a good manner about him, very trustworthy. So I really enjoyed working with Clyde, and in those days we would say, "OK, Clyde, you're pro-life and I'm pro-choice. We've got a bill coming up that's going to do this and that. You know, how do we handle this?" It wasn't like, "Well now, listen. You're just dead wrong on this, so you have to change your lifelong belief, or we're going to"—you know. And I'm pro-choice, I'm not going to change my opinion. But neither one of us demonized the other because we saw this issue very differently.

I hear that it's not so much that way anymore. If you are pro-life, you're a terrible person, or from their point of view, if you're pro-choice, you are a terrible person. That's kind of sad, because you should fight hard for your position, but you shouldn't demonize people of good faith who just see it very differently. My argument was, to the people in my caucus, I'd say, "Well now, the Pope—the pope's a pretty good guy, right? He can make a pretty good ethical position for life beginning at conception. We don't agree, but he's not a bad guy because he sees it that way." So, to me, often a common-sense approach will help.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Are there other legislators who made a strong impression?

Mr. Ebersole: Yeah. Oh man, there were so many. There was a wonderful woman named Grace Cole. She was from the northern area of Seattle. And Grace believed strongly you shouldn't be able to hit a kid in school. You shouldn't be able to have corporal punishment. You shouldn't be able to give a swat. And when I became speaker, I said, "Okay, Grace, I agree with you. Let's pass it."

And it was actually a close vote, because a lot of people thought that that's a tool that a principal or teacher should have, to hit a kid. And of course, Grace and I argued, but what are you teaching a kid, if they misbehave, and you hit them—that that's the solution? Anyway, so I always remember Grace for that.

You know, this is one of those things, so many good people down there. In terms of staff, I had a director of constituent services, Terry Thompson, who is deceased.

A wonderful, wonderful person from Spokane. And he had two brothers that I also know well. One of them, Tim Thompson, was top aide for Norm Dicks for a long time. Tim's now living in Tacoma and a good friend. Alan Thompson, no relation, was chief clerk. Alan passed away recently. A very sage, wise fellow. He'd been a newspaper man. I mentioned Dean Foster, another mentor.

I had a personal aide, Kristen Swenddal, who married Rich Nafziger, who was a staffer. They were both top-quality minds and operators of the legislative process. Rick Garza was working for the House Democrats at the time, and Rick is now in Governor Inslee's cabinet. He comes to mind.

I want to mention Marlin Applewick. Marlin was—is—a brilliant lawyer who's now serving as a Court of Appeals judge. Marlin was handling the Judiciary Committee when I was speaker and he rewrote the divorce law for this state in a way that benefits children. Judges have to put children's interests, actually, ahead of the parents' interests, which was pretty innovative.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You mentioned, also, Cathy Maynard?

Mr. Ebersole: Yes. Cathy was a lawyer working for the House with Terry, and when I became speaker, I appointed Kathy as the speaker's attorney—that's the title. She's up there on the rostrum with you, helping you make good rulings. Cathy is very capable, a great person, still a good friend. And I was proud that she was the first woman to hold that position. It should have been half and half, obviously, but because of discrimination—we were lucky to be able to appoint the first woman as speaker's attorney. And now I'm also proud that the House has elected, to replace current Speaker Frank Chopp, Laurie Jinkins, from Tacoma—from the twenty-seventh district. So congratulations to Laurie. She'll do a great job.

Mr. Schleitwiler: What about relations with folks outside of government, or with the press?

Mr. Ebersole: The press was always good to me. I had a little bit of an "in" because the publisher of the Tacoma paper [*The News Tribune*] was a friend, named Kelso Gillenwater. And Kelso was from Tennessee and had actually been in my fraternity at the University of Tennessee at about the same time. We didn't know each other, but his high school football team from Bristol, I believe, played my high school, Bearden High School in Knoxville. Anyway, a lot of coincidences here. But Kelso was good.

We had other reporters, capable reporters here. Joe Turner, David Ammons, Pete Callaghan—a lot of capable journalists, print journalists. And sadly, you know, they're going away in the digital world. But I never had a problem with the press. I always thought they were fair, doing their job.

Lobbyists—I learned from Wayne Ehlers, who said, "Take their contributions and then vote against them." And I would say to new members, you know—whether they're teachers out of the teachers' unions, or they are Boeing employees who are executives at Boeing, or whatever their background, real estate agents, you know—vote your conscience. And sometimes it's good to vote against the interest groups

that everyone expects you to always vote with. If they're wrong, vote against them.

And it's sad, what a big influence money has in politics. If you're from a swing district—I used to tell this story—I won't use any names—I had a Democratic friend who had to choose between the dentists and dental hygienists. This was an economic issue. The dentists, they're usually supported by the Republicans. The dental hygienists are usually supported by the Democrats. It's hard to know where truth and justice lies when you're talking about, you know, how much supervision you need to clean your teeth, but both would say it's absolutely critical for dental health!

The dentist would say that they supervise the dental hygienists and then the dental hygienist says, "Listen, it's all about money. We can clean your teeth without a dentist looking after over our shoulder." Blah blah blah. But I noticed that this legislator who I knew was favorable to the dental hygienists kept voting with the dentists.

And he looked at me and said, "Brian, you're from a safe district. You can do whatever you want and you're going to be reelected. I need the money. I need the money. So I vote with the dentists." Like, duh—that's what he was saying.

And it's against the law for Boeing to come in, or the teachers' union, and say, "Well Brian, here's the money I gave to your members last time. And here's what we can do next time, based on what happens with our tax increase or a tax cut or salary increase or a salary cut." You can't make that linkage, but it's beneath the surface. Political contributions are something that every legislator has to wrestle with, and it's a problem.

Mr. Schleitwiler: I know that, for a lot of the major things you accomplished in your career, you often played multiple roles. So I think we agreed that it would be good to talk through some of the major projects, maybe beginning with UW [University of Washington] Tacoma.

Mr. Ebersole: Well, as you know, throughout recorded history, the University of Washington has only existed in Seattle. It's in the Montlake area of Seattle. And in the '70s and '80s, there was a movement to expand undergraduate opportunities to people throughout the state in the form of branch campuses. And the legislator who I think deserves the most credit on the idea of expanding access is Dan Grimm. Dan and Danny Heck were on the staff of the House of Representatives in the '70s and Dan was staff on the higher-ed committee. He was writing about the need for UW and WSU to have branch campuses throughout the state in the '70s.

I came on the scene in '82, but it didn't really develop as an issue until '87. And Dan, who was chairing Ways and Means, and Brian, who was majority leader, stuck money in a bill to study the issue. Should there be branches? Who should have them? Where should they be? Where are the population centers?

And Grimm also stuck in there—I was aware of it, but I think it was probably Dan's idea, I can't remember—that, if indeed the University of Washington should decide to have a branch campus south of Seattle, it shall be located in Tacoma, Washington. [laughs] And so we got an editorial out of

the *Seattle Times* that Grimm and I were extorting the university because we put the location into the bill.

We said, "Well, we weren't exactly extorting, but it was a pretty strong suggestion."

Anyway, there was a study done by the university, and in '89 I was fortunate enough to be able to sponsor the bill that ended up creating two branches at the University of Washington [UW]—the southern branch in Tacoma, the northern branch in Bothell—and WSU [Washington State University] got branches in Vancouver, Tri-Cities, and Spokane. And as I've said before, there were key legislators in each of those areas. How much that had to do with the location of UW and WSU is, I guess, anybody's guess at this point.

Anyway, the branches. The University of Washington, Tacoma has been hugely successful and I have never talked to a student, and I've talked to very many, who have come out of UW Tacoma that doesn't rave about their education. Smaller classes, professors teaching the classes rather than graduate students, attention to the individual student. The diversity—students of color are the majority at the University of Washington in Tacoma. And, something that still bugs me, I was talking to an African American student from West Seattle who was at UW Tacoma and I said, "Why are you going here rather than Seattle?"

"Oh, they wouldn't let me in. My GPA out of high school wasn't good enough."

I said, "What was it?"

It was just, like, a 3.5—they wanted 3.7. You can't make this up.

But anyway, that's enough of complaining. Although at the time, Grimm and other advocates of the branches for UW—the biggest opponent was the University of Washington in Seattle. They felt that the university had a privileged position as an elite, exclusive school. Huge amount of federal money from Senators Magnuson and Jackson. Big emphasis on PhDs. Not such a big emphasis on teaching undergraduates. And they just thought it would dilute either the education being delivered or the prestige of the university. And so, UW President Bill Gerberding and others were opposed to it at first.

Although, I will say, before President Gerberding passed away, I saw him at a Husky football game maybe eight years ago, and he said to me and to Herb Simon—at the time, the UW regent from the Tacoma area—he said that that was his biggest mistake, that he had not understood that we needed to have branches.

Mr. Schleitwiler: So it was '89 that you sponsored the bill. And then it was passed.

Mr. Ebersole That was a big year for me. Also, in '89, we passed the anti-drug bill. We said we were going to have prevention of drug use, intervention for drug addicts and higher penalties. The thing that we did the most of was higher penalties. I'm not happy with that. Not proud of that. And we actually doubled and tripled the prison time for some drug offenses. It did help curtail drug use. But we had a lot of, predominantly, young men spent a lot more time in prison than I think was wise. But that happened that year.

There was another bill, I'm not sure of the year, that I was proud of—a workforce training bill. We worked with business and labor, and at the legislative level, my seatmate, Steve Conway, at the time—he's now a senator. And another legislator, Tim Sheldon. They were big proponents of workforce training and we were able to use some money out of the workers' comp fund to help laid off workers retrain. Let's say, if you're a timber worker in Grays Harbor and you get laid off, you need to retrain and learn something about computers to get another job. So that was the concept, and it was successful.

Another bill, coming out of the public schools, K-12. I was always puzzled by why the vocational technical institutes—Bates, Clover Park, Lake Washington, Bellingham, I'm missing one—why they were in K-12, when the average age of the students was like twenty-eight or thirty. They were clearly adults.

And everybody just said, "Well, that's kind of the way it developed historically. And you're never going to take them away from K-12."

Well, we did. We sponsored a bill to move the five vocational technical institutes in with the community colleges. Now we have the community and technical college system, rather than a community college system and the tech schools part of K-12. And that was a fight. Randy Dorn, who went on to be superintendent of public instruction, I had appointed as chair of Education. So I had the bill drafted up, sent it to Randy, and he popped it out of committee before the K-12 forces could organize. We passed it over to the Senate, and had a big fight there, and prevailed. A Spokane senator named Jerry Saling helped. Anyway, the legislation moved the five vo-techs into higher education, and that was a successful effort.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Randy Dorn was the—?

Mr. Ebersole: Chair of the House Education Committee at the time. So he was an ally. He thought that was a good idea.

Mr. Schleitwiler: And before we move on to other capital projects, you ended up much later—

Mr. Ebersole President of Bates. Yeah. I resigned as mayor of Tacoma in 2000 to become president of Bates. I really like vo-tech education. I really like the trades, helping adults get skills, get crafts, and move it more toward the European model. I never thought I'd end up there, but the Bates board understood that being president of Bates is somewhat educational and somewhat political. My job was to get the funding out of the Legislature, and we had lots of academic types to supervise the curriculum and do all the other things. So I always said, "Yeah, did I get that job because I was political? Absolutely." But I think I did a good job, and got pretty good reviews, as president of Bates. I enjoyed it.

Mr. Schleitwiler: And the capital projects?

Mr. Ebersole: The Union Station renovation—the courthouse in '83. When I first went down, Ray Corpuz, who ended up being the city manager when I was mayor of Tacoma, was working for Pierce County.

And he said, "We're trying to renovate and save Union Station. We need money for a new capital dome."

So I carried the ball in '83, to renovate the Union Station and that money was appropriated. And that enabled us to save the building. There was talk about tearing down the historic Union Station building. And then, much later, Congressman Dicks came up with the money, along with some state money that I helped with, to turn it into the federal courthouse. So, first, we saved it from having to be torn down because the copper roof was leaking. And then we came up with the purpose of a federal courthouse. The state put in some money. Norm put in, obviously, the lion's share of the money because it's a federal courthouse.

The other capital project—it's ironic, they're all in the same area. You have the University of Washington on one side of the street, the Union Station on the other and next to it is the Washington State History Museum. I was on the board, Grimm had been on the board, and Grimm—in '88, '89?—when we were deciding where courthouse should go Grimm put in the money to build it in Tacoma. Olympia wanted it. Seattle wanted it. Tacoma got it.

Mr. Schleitwiler: The museum?

Mr. Ebersole: The museum. It ended up in Tacoma. The Washington State History Museum ended up in Tacoma—not in the state capital, and not in the biggest city. And largely because of our delegation. And I would give the lead credit there to Dan Grimm.

Mr. Schleitwiler: These kinds of big capital projects punctuate your career. Do you want to say more about why those are important and why they are something that you in particular focused on?

Mr. Ebersole: Well, yeah. What we probably should tell the listener—I was fortunate that when we lost the majority, and I became minority leader, that's like, you might as well stay home and read about what's going on. It just gives you a little bit better seat. But if you're in the minority, you're not much of a player. So I ran for mayor. There had been a vacancy caused by the death of Mayor Jack Hyde. And so, I ran for mayor and was successful. Well, about that time, we were going to be building—continue to build—the university, Union Station, the History Museum. And then we had—we have the Car Museum, the Chihuly Museum of Glass. I shouldn't call it that. The Museum of Glass that Dale Chihuly inspired.

And at the time, I always said, well, Tacoma has a reputation as an industrial town that is a little bit backward compared to Seattle. We're not as educated. We're not as fashionable. And what makes a city more fashionable and attractive to college-educated people with money? Museums and art. So the LeMay Car Museum, the history museum, the glass museum, the art museum, the university all played a role.

And now when I talk to young people like you who have moved into Tacoma—you're still mistakenly living in Seattle [laughs]—but when I talk to young people that moved here, they all say, "Oh God, I love Tacoma!" You know, the traffic isn't so bad. You don't have to wait in line to see a movie or pick up your kids or go to the dry cleaner. It's just so much more livable. And you have all the arts and culture and museums. So I was happy to play a role in what we called the renaissance of Tacoma. But a lot of people, a lot of people played a role.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Can you think about the specific period that you were speaker and any major events or major controversies that were affecting politics then?

Mr. Ebersole: Well, there was one big issue, health care reform. It was high on Governor Lowry's list. I always understood it was important that every Washingtonian have health insurance and access to good health care, but it was never an issue I had focused on so I would not consider myself a leader on that. We had Denny Dellwo from Spokane, Washington. He was the chair. We had a very good staff member, Bill Hagens—who lives in Tacoma and is a friend—he was a good thinker on the issue. Dennis Braddock, who went on to be head of DSHS [Department of Social and Health Services], had laid the groundwork when he was chair of the Health Committee. Eileen Cody, a nurse, was knowledgeable. So there were people who were very much for it.

There were also people who were very much against it.

And I remember that the dentists came in and said, "We won't fight it if you'll leave us out of it." Well, that seemed like a pretty good trade at the time, because, you know, the more people you put into it, the more economic interests are threatened. So we left the dentists out. It was complex.

We had a doctor in the House [laughs]. Dr. Art Sprenkle, who [had been] a legislator, he was very much opposed to it, and he kind of led the charge of the M.D.s against it. And they had legitimate concerns.

At the same time, the Clintons were pushing their health care reform. Bill Clinton, of course, was the president, and Hillary was heading up this issue. And ironically, when we campaigned the next year, people were either happy or unhappy with what the feds had done, and they weren't particularly aware of the state's attempt to reform health care and health care insurance. So that whole thing was rugged going, and as often happens, particularly these days, there was misinformation about what it was really doing and not doing. And some of it got undone when we lost the majority to the Republicans, who were largely opposed to it. They thought it was too much government interference in health care. And as you know, that debate is still raging at the national level as we speak.

Let's see what else. I was always fascinated by the lobbying efforts. And I don't know if people are aware of it, but you have lobbyists that carry the ball for Democratic interests, such as the trial lawyers, labor unions, teachers, state employees, dental hygienists, chiropractors. Don't ask me why some of these break down partisan-ly, you know, it'd take 50 years of research to figure that one out. But then the corporations, Boeing in particular, and Weyerhaeuser, had their biggest supporters among the Republicans.

And everybody is talked to about the importance of the issue, and most people believe it. However, the money that is behind the issue is what's troubling. For instance, I remember a huge fight, one time, over tax on services. Governor Lowry wanted to tax services, including legal services. Well, the lawyers did not like that, and they defeated that. And we ended up increasing the B and O [business and occupation tax] instead, to get enough money to fund K-12, higher ed and

everything else the state does. And that was probably a bad decision.

But again, it's more clean-cut when, uh, Boeing wants a tax break, and from their point of view, it's absolutely necessary. So, again, I don't know the answer, but I know that to say money doesn't play a role is just nonsense. It plays way too big a role in what happens, not only in Olympia, but in D.C.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Are there a couple of voter initiatives which we should talk about?

Mr. Ebersole: We talked a little bit about "three strikes and you're out," right? Yeah. The anti-drug bill, the health care bill, the "three strikes, you're out." That's what comes to mind as the biggest issues.

Mr. Schleitwiler: For you, it seemed that a focus on process was really your major concern, what was driving you as speaker wasn't so much a set of issues, as—

Mr. Ebersole: As how it works, how it works. For instance—just to give you a "for instance"—[Senator] Gaspard might come over and say, "Why are you holding up Senator [Lorraine] Wojahn's bill in the Capital Committee?"

And I would say, "I don't have a clue. Let's go ask the Capital chair."

And the Capital chair will say, "Well, that's easy, she's friends with Senator [Pam] Roach, and Roach is sitting on my bill in another committee"—on a totally different topic. You go talk to Roach.

"No, no, I'm not. I don't know why that bill is stalled." Then you figure out that no one here knows why that bill was stalled! So, OK, we'll move it. But the linkages—every chair is trying to leverage the Senate to pass what they want and holding up the senators' bills as leverage. Every Senate chair is holding up their counterparts' bills for leverage.

When we negotiated the budget, as majority leader, I would be sitting there with Gary Locke, who was the budget writer, and one member of the minority, across the table from Jeannette Hayner, the Senate majority leader and the Senate Republican Ways and Means chair, Dan McDonald. And they're trying to sniff out what we really need from our members, to get to our votes, of 50, and we're trying to learn what they really need—member priorities.

For instance, you might have—again, I'll leave names out of it—you might have a legislator, even a team player, that said to you, "I just can't go home, after voting for this budget, unless there's ten million in to dredge Grays Harbor, so the ships can get in."

And you say, "What?"

"Yeah, I've got to have this ten million, or I can't." So that's a "no" vote. And now the budgeteers know, to get that vote, they have to find some other way to pry that vote loose, or they have to get ten million to dredge Grays Harbor. Well, once McDonald learns that, now he's got you. He finds three others, then he's got you down to 48 votes.

So how all that works—and it's all so human! [laughs] And there are legislators that understand this and try to figure it out.

And then there are others, that are just frustrated that it's not based on policy concerns, and it's not based on logic and reason. It's more based on superstition and myth and tea-leaf reading. And that part of it fascinated me! I thought that was great fun. I just accepted there's very little logic here. But we'd have some members who'd go out and make impassioned speeches about why this must happen for the good of the world. And they actually thought somebody was listening, that they might change a vote.

Well, Ruth Fisher—a wonderful colleague from Tacoma, who is deceased—Ruth would always say, "Brian, you and I enjoy the theater of it all. We just sit back and watch the show."

And then I said, "What do you mean?"

She quoted somebody: "This is show business for ugly people." [laughs] You go to the movies to watch beautiful people. We just watch the show.

And the theater of it all is, I don't know, it's inevitable. It's not like you can ever have people that will go down there and act just on reason and ignore self-interest or economic interests. And to see how it all works, it's kind of beautiful. There's nothing wrong with democracy acting the way it actually acts. If you think it's going to act like the textbook, you're going to be really disappointed. If you say, "OK, this is fascinating, let's try to figure out what's really going on," then you can enjoy it.

Mr. Schleitwiler: It sounds like your interest in process wasn't so much about a set of rules to make things easier, but it was about getting to know the people, and really paying attention to the specific personalities.

Mr. Ebersole: Exactly. Learn everyone's motivations, learn what they really need and don't need. Ease their fears that every tax vote is going to get them unelected. Ease their fears that they'll be able to go back to their job in the spring as a schoolteacher, having voted against the teachers' salary increase. It's very complex, and you can either view it as incredibly frustrating and all screwed up, which it is, or you can just say, "Isn't this marvelous, the way democracy works?"

You know, I personally think that President Trump is a terrible president. He's wrong about most everything. So I don't want the listener to say that anything goes. But as long as you do what you think is right, and you treat people fairly, and you follow the golden rule, you're going to be OK. But just accept it for the way it is, not the way you want it to be or wish it was, because I don't think we're going to attain that. So best you can do is vote your conscience, try to figure out what's going on, get to know people, compromise, work together. Understanding that it's a very human process, built on relationships and friendships.

When I ran for speaker, I went to people's homes to ask for their votes. I'm sure that's happened before, but I believe I did it to a greater extent than most. I remember going to Yakima, and meeting with a young legislator-to-be, named Jay Inslee. And Jay was living on a family farm with Trudi, his wife of forty-plus years, and his sons—I think all three sons had been born—and getting to see him and learning his background. He was from Seattle and his dad had been a high school coach. And he

had joined a law firm in Yakima, and there was a pretty good chance he was going to win. And I figured, "Well, if I go visit him in Yakima, get to know his life, then there's a pretty good chance he'll vote for me for majority leader." And so that's an example.

I remember visiting Bellingham, chasing down Tom Bristow in the Okanagan, driving around Spokane to find Denny Dellwo. Another legislator, Lisa Brown, who ended up as Senate majority leader—here's a human story. One time Lisa brought her child onto the floor of the House, and he was maybe a year old, maybe two years old. And I was the speaker. Well, this outraged, some of the old white guys. [laughs]

"How can you allow this?" You know—"You've got a romper room here. What's the deal? We have to wear a tie and she can bring a baby on the floor?"

So I thought, you know, "Well, get a grip. This is fun." But then a day later, in the *News Tribune,* my home paper, they had a picture of me up presiding, and it said "Romper Room," and they had the kid going crazy, and people jumping all around. They exaggerated the situation.

But knowing that Lisa was a single parent, and there were times that she was putting her child first, that was important to know when I was dealing with her. So knowing the members, knowing their family, knowing what motivated them, what didn't, what issues they really cared about, what they didn't, how ambitious they were, how much ego they had. All of that's important.

Mr. Schleitwiler: So I imagine that a single mother with a small child on the floor was a sign of changing times. Do you want to talk about how times were changing?

Mr. Ebersole: Well, it was, looking back, it was pretty sexist. I would be the first to admit that we guys, and we were almost all white—we weren't old. Most of us coming in were in our thirties. Anyway. It was pretty sexist. I remember, if we were really going to do a deal, we figured the women were not flexible enough. They were ideologically driven. And that was a sexist attitude. And then we got Maria Cantwell, who was more of a "guy" than anybody. I mean, she was savvy. She talked the way we talked, and she played baseball, and drank beer. And so that kind of helped break the mold, when she was a new model of how you can be a woman and a great legislator.

We also had a bad habit, and this is nothing I'm proud of, but when I came in at '82 I learned, "Oh, you can have any drink you want, any time, from the sergeant-at-arms over here."

"Well, you said on the floor?"

"Yeah. Or you can go downstairs, to the members' cafeteria, and there's a beer keg and wine down there."

"You said any time?"

"Yeah. Any time you want. Yeah."

Then I learned that you did all the tax bills—in '83, the tax bills were run between midnight and 6:00 a.m. under a call of the House. You couldn't leave without voting. And that meant you couldn't leave, if you were a Democrat, without voting "Yes" for

the taxes. That's the way it was done. So you learn that.

And then at press briefings, I learned from my predecessors, you'd have to have Scotch out there for a certain reporter from the AP [Associated Press], and you had to have bourbon for this guy from Spokane. And so, you had alcohol in the press briefings, in the majority leader's office and the speaker's office. Now, when Clyde [Ballard] came in, he has a different, and probably a better attitude about this. And so, I think Clyde did away with alcohol on the floor. And things are probably running better. But I'll bet tax votes are harder! [laughs]

Mr. Schleitwiler: Do you think that the nature of politics was shifting at that time, or do you think it was pretty stable? I know things seem very different now.

Mr. Ebersole: I was always pleased with friendships with Republicans, and they were usually pleased with friendships with Democrats. And everyone understood that we just see things differently. I haven't been down there in twenty years—I mean, as a legislator. I hear that that has changed, and there's a lot more tension in the air. And it's not to say that we didn't try to make the other side look bad. And they tried to make us look bad. But it was all done—more with a sense of theater, I think. I wasn't aware that there were legislators that hated people on the other side. It might have existed, but the standard was, you'd be civil. You'd be kind. You'd be nice. And then fight hard on the issues, but don't take it personally.

Mr. Schleitwiler: And you said that sometimes you would even work things out, in advance—the way that you would fight each other?

Mr. Ebersole: Yeah. Actually, this is probably Joe King's story to tell. But I remember, one time, Joe came back from a meeting with Senator Hayner. Again, I shouldn't be telling you, but anyway, this was pretty funny.

He said, "Well, we worked it out. They're going to accuse us of not understanding the private sector and spending too much money on waste and abuse in government. And then we can hit them on [saying] that they don't care about disadvantaged children, or special education." He said, "I tried [to get them to agree that] we could hit them on crippled dogs, but she said, 'No. No, you can't do that.'"

That's overdone, but we would have dinners with the Senate Republican leadership. We liked each other. And we understood, "Well, we're going to hit a road jam on that one, you know." Particularly something like abortion or capital punishment. I remember those were the two issues that you've got to talk through—how you're going to handle them. You can't have people screaming at each other, attacking their motives. That's just unacceptable. And I think the discourse, at least certainly at the national level, has gotten a lot nastier.

I learned from my mother. She always said, "If you don't know what to do, Brian, just be kind. What's the kindest thing you can do in this situation?" That's pretty good advice.

Mr. Schleitwiler: So you were speaker for one term?

Mr. Ebersole: Two years. Most analysts thought we lost because the Clintons had done some controversial things on health care. And generally, if you look at state elections, they follow the national patterns. So, yeah, the Democrats lost the majority in '94. And then I became minority leader—which, as I said, you might as well go home because you're not a big player anymore.

Mr. Schleitwiler: But then you transitioned quickly and continued to work on some of the same projects as mayor [of Tacoma].

Mr. Ebersole: I ran for mayor and was able, fortunately, to continue on with the university and Union Station and the History Museum. And now we're in the position of, well, the university needs the telephone poles taken down, going through campus, or they need the railroad track removed. So we were able to facilitate the development of the university. I was there at the groundbreaking of the new campus as mayor. And I was fortunate that as majority leader I was the first commencement speaker at UWT, when there were five graduates. President Gerberding asked me to be the first commencement speaker—kind of to make up for his opposition to the campus. There were five graduates from the Tacoma area at UW Tacoma. Now I think we're up to—boy, I don't know. I think, at any one time, there are three to five thousand students on campus. It's really been a great success.

Mr. Schleitwiler: It's interesting to see what people did after they became speaker, and the very different decisions people made. What you did meant staying involved in the same projects. But you've had other interests after that, too, and I'm wondering if this says something about your character and your approach to being speaker—what you cared about. Do you think that some of the things that you chose to do, after your speakership was over, say something about what you were in it for?

Mr. Ebersole: Could be. I left Bates after just two and a half years, and I moved to Cambodia and the Philippines. I ended up buying a hotel in the Philippines, and then three other properties. I made a little money and lost most of it. Pretty much broke even after I'd made something like seventy-five round trips to Asia and given up on small business there.

But, you know, when I look back, I was always interested in learning about the world. So, when I left Bates, I told the newspaper, "Well, I know how middle-aged white men in suits behave in meetings. I got that down. Now I want to learn about the half of the world that struggles to get enough protein every day to feed their children." And I've been fascinated by how varied and diverse the world is, learning different cultures.

And it makes you a patriot. Our system, our rule of law, is so wonderful compared to developing economies and developing countries. And I don't really think you can have a true democracy if you have an undeveloped economy. If you've been there, you kind of say, "Yeah, I get it." I don't really think you can have extreme poverty and democracy. There's just too much at stake. And a strongman or woman can promise to feed people's children, and they'll go for it whether or not they have the right to vote.

So that's been fascinating. Probably, again, from my father being a sociologist, trying to

learn how people live differently, think differently, see things differently. And we're not born with set attitudes. We learn them through people we associate with, the culture we grow up in, the attitude of those around us. And learning about all that, I think, is the joy of being alive.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Can you tell me more about the traveling you were able to do?

Mr. Ebersole: Well, actually, I don't know if this is a good or bad thing. I traveled as much as I could as majority leader and speaker. There was one fascinating trip, AIPAC [the American Israel Public Affairs Committee]. I have a good friend, Herb Simon. [Simon held several local and national leadership positions with AIPAC.] They look for people that might end up in Congress, and they start trying to fashion their views about Israel. Herb sent my wife, Lillian Hunter, and I to Jerusalem and Tel Aviv and other parts of Israel. And we were sent with two Jewish members of Congress. Because we were with them, we got to have a meal with Yitzhak Rabin, the prime minister who was assassinated nine months after that, and with Shimon Peres, [the Nobel Peace Prize winner] who had been prime minister, we were in on negotiations with [Yasser] Arafat's Palestinian negotiators in the Orient House. That was pretty fascinating.

I went to with Paul Schell, when he was mayor of Seattle, to Sweden. I've traveled to our various sister cities. I'm currently chairing the Tacoma-Davao, Philippines sister city [committee] and the mayor there [Sara Duterte] is the daughter of the Philippine president, [Rodrigo] Duterte, who I've met. And he's a controversial figure, for good reasons.

But I've been fortunate. What I'm trying to say is, I've been very fortunate. And although many people think that those kinds of trips are frivolous and not useful—and you can certainly make a point that government shouldn't pay for them, or pay for all of them—what I have learned, I think, has had truly made me more effective as an elected official. We are such a trade-dependent state and city that to understand what goes on at the Port of Tacoma, to understand the importance of China in even our state policies—I've learned a lot traveling.

I do want to say something else about an influential person. In '91, I had the good sense of marrying a wonderful woman, Lillian Hunter. Lillian had been born in Denmark and moved with her family to Canada at age three or four. Then eventually they migrated down to the U.S. and made their way from Utah to Tacoma. Her dad, a wonderful guy, is a bricklayer. Lilian's brothers are both bricklayers. Her nephews are bricklayers. And she's always been a champion of working people, of labor and organized labor. Lillian has now had the good sense to move on from me. So we are the world's best divorced couple now, having been divorced for twelve years. And Lillian is now on the Tacoma City Council and doing a wonderful job. So she was hugely influential in my career, as a support system and as just an intellect. She's one of the brightest people I know. And Lillian served on the board of Bates, served on the Tacoma library board and, again, now is on the Tacoma City Council and doing a stellar job.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Can you tell me a little more about what you think are the characteristics of an effective speaker?

Mr. Ebersole: Yeah, sure. Being a good listener. You're speaker as long as the majority of your caucus approves of you, even though you're voted for by the whole House. I think [it would be] listening to your members, listening to outside groups, [and] remaining levelheaded about it. Try to keep your own ego in check. Relying on staff, giving a lot of autonomy to the chairs, and helping the new members learn. There is also a built-in tension that; if you're not a secure legislator, then you don't want to share everything you know with the new people.

But I think delegating and sharing the power. If you're going to screw somebody over, you tell them. You know, "We're going to run over you on this." And just like in football, you don't want to telegraph every move. The quarterback doesn't tell the other side, "We're going to be running this time, not passing." So there is a lot of room for misunderstanding and bad feelings. Because in two years, we're going to be trying to defeat all you guys, and you're going to try to defeat us. So staying within the bounds of fair play and not questioning motive—that's actually a House rule. I can say, "This bill will be terrible for women." But I can't say, "You are a sexist." That's formally against the rules. I would have to gavel somebody down.

And when we were debating gay rights—oh, another wonderful legislator, Cal Anderson, has he been mentioned? Cal was gay—as far as I know, [he was] the first openly gay legislator. But he told me once, "I want to be known as the best chair of Local Government ever who happened to be gay. I don't want to be known as just a gay legislator; I want to be known as a great legislator who happened to be gay." And so, when we were debating—at the time, one of the civil rights issues was [to require that] landlords could not discriminate against gay people, gays or lesbians in housing. But then again, how do you actually write that and how do you know? It's tricky stuff.

So one of the Republicans was going over the line and I'd look at Cal, and he'd tell me when to gavel them. They might say something that wouldn't sound politically correct. And he'd go, "OK, I'll take that." But if they went over [according to] his sensibility, then I'd gavel them down. And I was proud of that, that I knew enough to know that I don't know. I know that if they overtly say something that shows their prejudice against gay people, well, in 1987, that probably would have been most people down there, in both parties. Even though they might deny it. But I used Cal as the barometer and I think that's an example of a quality I had that I thought was good.

Another time—I think I had a good sense of where the caucus was on anything. One time, Helen Sommers was writing the budget. After Gary [Locke], Helen was the chair of the Budget Committee. We were on the floor, and the Republicans were trying amendment after amendment and Helen would just stand up and say "This is stupid, vote no. And this is stupid"—you know. And I could tell that the Republicans were getting really pissed.

And so, I said—oh, Shirley Winsley was offering an amendment to put in a swimming pool in Clover Park, which is in Pierce County. Nothing wrong with that, they needed one, I think it was even in the list, you know. But Helen hadn't put it in. So I sent a note, let this one go. Except she looked up, and I said [whispers], "Let it go."

So she stood up and said, “OK to this amendment.” Wild applause from the Republicans. It changed the whole climate. They had gotten one. They were happy.

And afterwards, Helen came up to the front and asked, “How did you know?”

I said, “I just had a sense that we were running roughshod on them too much.” We needed them to participate.

Helen said, “I didn’t get that. Boy, that’s good.”

So anyway, I was proud of that, that I would have a good sense of the caucus.

Mr. Schleitwiler: I think that says a lot about what you were saying earlier, about being a listener and being attentive to human element. And I think that the story about Cal Anderson says a lot about the importance of, first of all, having him there, but also, that you would know that you needed to listen to him.

Mr. Ebersole: Right. He gets to call the shot, of whether Republicans go over the line or not. I didn’t know. I think one of them used the word “queer” on the floor, which I think I did gavel them on. Ironically, now that word is OK. But it was clearly over the line. I think they said something like, “I’ve got nothing against queers.” Well, they knew they meant it in a derogatory way. And so, we gaveled them. And that’s kind of like, how times have changed. Now it’s in the nomenclature.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Any other broader lessons for politics or government today? You already talked about how different the environment feels now.

Mr. Ebersole: Yeah. You know, I am optimistic that we’ll get through this national turmoil. We are recording this during the beginning of the impeachment inquiry into President Trump. Obviously, I’m in favor of that, but I have seen signs that things are holding. And having lived in the Philippines, where things are totally corrupt, we have a different standard here about what’s over the line. But I thought it was encouraging that, a couple of days ago, the FBI—under Barr, under Attorney General [William] Barr, [who was] appointed by Trump—had those two Ukrainians arrested. And he didn’t interfere, because he doesn’t want to put himself in legal jeopardy. Well, that wouldn’t happen in Russia or the Philippines. If you’re in the tank, you’re totally in. Here, Barr might have wanted to say, “You can’t arrest those Ukrainians. That’s going to make Giuliani and Trump look really bad.” As the top law enforcement officer, he wasn’t going to clearly break the law. And to me, I’ve said that to some people, and they say, “Well, that’s nothing. He shouldn’t be doing this or that.” I say, “Well, it’s all a matter of perspective.”

I remember one time reading in the Manila paper, “Only two hundred and fifty campaign-related homicides this year. What a great election year!” We count on our fingers the number of political assassinations. We still remember that the Kennedy brothers and Martin Luther King, and the attempts on Gabby [Gabrielle] Giffords and [Steve] Scalise, it is so rare. But in many countries, you get out of line, and—or an investigative journalist. Rachel Maddow and Anderson Cooper are still

reporting every night without worrying that they're going to be taken out. So I don't mean to use extreme examples, but our democracy is still holding. The rule of law is still holding. Even with this ill-equipped, ignorant, unprepared-to-be-president president.

Mr. Schleitwiler: So a lot of people are very cynical about the workings of government now, but you have confidence in it?

Mr. Ebersole: Yeah, I have confidence. I'm disappointed in the way it's gone. How far it's gone. I'm amazed by the political cowardice in the Senate—that people might be primaried. So what? You lose the job, it's not that big a deal. But having been there, I know how important reelection is to every politician. It takes on undue importance, and you justify it.

"Well, if I'm not elected then the bad guys will take over and"—you know, blah, blah, blah.

Mr. Schleitwiler: And in terms of state government, in terms of what's going on in Washington State?

Mr. Ebersole: I think it's getting better. I am a big fan of our governor, Jay [Inslee]. Governor Inslee is extremely sincere and ethical. And I think he ran for president to advance the issue of the dangers of climate change. I think he did move the ball on that. So I am very proud of the governor. I think our current legislators are doing a great job. Probably a better job than we did. I think they push back, against the money interests, maybe more than we did. I think things are getting better.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Any other thoughts that you want to share?

Mr. Ebersole: No. It's been a pleasure to talk with you. Most people aren't interested in what I think about what happened twenty-five years ago. So for me, it was fun. Thank you. It's a good way to spend the morning.

House approval of gay rights bill sets up Senate battle

The Daily News and AP

OLYMPIA — The state House approved a civil rights bill extending the state's anti-discrimination protections to gays and lesbians, but the measure faces a tough test in the more conservative Senate.

Washington LEGISLATURE '93

Sponsors were jubilant after Friday's 57-41 vote, particularly since an anti-gay rights initiative may be on the statewide ballot next year. Gov. Mike Lowry hailed the vote and said he would stake some of his personal popularity to try to persuade senators to follow the House's lead.

"It will be a tough fight," the governor told a news conference. "Civil rights for all of our citizens, all of our people, is extremely important. I will do all I can to make it prevail in the Senate."

Passage followed the longest and most impassioned debate of the session. During more than 90 minutes of debate, 27 members rose to praise or denounce the bill. House Speaker Brian Ebersole, D-Tacoma, a supporter, praised the quality of the debate, noting it did not get nasty or hateful.

Many legislators said they had agonized over their vote; some freshmen said it was their toughest decision so far.

Majority Democrats provided enough votes for passage, 52, and were joined by five moderate Republicans. Opposition came from 28 Republicans and 13 Democrats.

"I was extremely pleased with the vote," said Rep. Cal Anderson, D-Seattle, the prime sponsor. "I would have liked 60 votes, but this vote still will have a very positive effect in the Senate."

The last time the Democratic-controlled House voted on the bill, in 1990, the vote was a closer 51-47 margin. Previous efforts have died in the Senate, which was controlled by the Republicans before the Democratic landslide last fall.

The House has given larger margins to a companion bill to add homosexuals to the protections of the state's malicious harassment law.

During Friday's debate, opponents called it a moral issue and said they resented setting up "special rights" to protect a culture many citizens oppose.

The bill, HB1443, would give gay men and lesbians the same protections against discrimination now granted others based on race, creed, national origin, sex, marital status or disability. Employment, housing, public accommodations, and access to credit and insurance are covered.

Lawmakers sparred over the message being sent by the legislation.

"We are sending a strong message that here in Washington state, we will not tolerate discrimination," Anderson, who is gay, said in a long and intense speech.

Local lawmakers speak out on bill

By Laurie Smith
The Daily News

OLYMPIA — Local legislators had quite a bit to say during Friday's debate on a civil rights bill extending the state's anti-discrimination protections to gays and lesbians, even if they didn't plan it that way.

"I resolved that I was just going to sit down, keep quiet and vote yes," said Rep. Mike Riley, D-Longview, after standing up to speak. "But I just can't stand it."

Riley said he was spurred to speak by allegations that homosexuals present a hazard to children.

"I investigated child abuse cases for 10 years, and I have studied this issue," he said. "And there is no significant correlation between homosexuality and child abuse."

Riley added that he would have no reservations about having a gay babysitter watch his four children.

"As usual, bigotry comes from ignorance," he concluded. "But ignorance is correctable, and this bill is a step towards doing that."

Rep. Betty Sue Morris, D-Hazel Dell, told the House she had finally decided in favor of the bill just Friday morning when she was brushing her teeth.

Morris said that her next-door neighbor's son died of AIDS, and that his family did not even know he was gay until he was too sick to be helped.

"This morning, I thought 'what if that were my son or one of his friends, or my daughter or her friends?'" she said.

"And then I realized that if anyone told my son or daughter, or any of the wonderful young people who have been in my house, that they couldn't live where they wanted, as a mother, I'd want to scratch their eyes out."

Another message, albeit a silent one, was sent by Rep. Bob Basich, D-Aberdeen.

Basich changed his vote from yes to no when it became apparent the bill would pass.

"I wanted it to pass - I have a lot of respect for Cal Anderson, and I don't want anyone discriminated against," he said later.

Northwest

Gavel falls on what looms as a taxing session

OLYMPIA (AP) — Upbeat lawmakers convened the 53rd Washington Legislature with fanfare and pledges to heed voters' anger with politics-as-usual.

Washington LEGISLATURE '93

Gavels fell at noon Monday in the House and Senate, ushering in a session that promises to be taxing in more ways than one.

"I keep checking to see if there are bungee cords attached to my ankles," said Rep. Ken Jacobsen, D-Seattle. "I feel like I'm jumping over the edge."

He was referring to the politically risky decisions the new Legislature faces:

□ A projected deficit of at least $1.2 billion probably will require an unpalatable mix of service cuts and tax, tuition and fee increases.

□ Soaring costs and a chronically uninsured segment of the population are adding steam to the push for universal, state-regulated health care.

□ A proposed overhaul of the public school system, including the dumping of state regulations and graduation requirements, carries a billion-dollar total price-tag, including $200 million this year.

Newly installed Democratic leaders in both houses sounded optimistic and exuberant.

"The issues will be very difficult, for sure, but there is more enthusiasm and excitement than I have seen in years," said Senate Majority Leader Marc Gaspard, D-Puyallup.

"This is a day for new beginnings," said House Speaker Brian Ebersole, D-Tacoma.

Both Ebersole and Gaspard said the election of Bill Clinton as president and the popularity of Ross Perot in the state mean voters want decisive action.

"With the elections, people showed they are willing to give elected officials a chance to make government work, work for the common person, with a sense of bringing people together. It is the opportunity of a decade," Gaspard said in an interview.

"They want change," Ebersole said in his inaugural speech. "They don't want excuses, delays or partisan posturing.

Associated Press photo

Members of Washington's 53rd Legislature take oath of office Monday

"That kind of mechanical ideological response to problems has polarized American politics in a way that is neither useful nor sustainable — and is a way that is simply not reflective of the real concerns of most citizens.

"Constituents know this, and they want us to turn off the cruise control, get out of the car and walk a mile or two in their shoes."

Still, there was more pomp than circumstance on opening day.

In both houses, newly elected members were sworn in, en masse in the House and individually in the Senate.

A Catholic nun, Sister Joann Starr, gave the invocation, an exhortation for lawmakers to become "partners in the dance of life." She quoted former Texas Rep. Barbara Jordan about the need for social justice.

Barbara Durham, first woman acting chief justice of the Supreme Court, swore in the members.

In first-day snafus, the House reading clerk tripped over some of the new names, visiting senators were called representatives and Rep. Suzette Cooke, R-Kent, mistakenly voted for Ebersole rather than her party's nominee for speaker, Clyde Ballard.

Senators observed a moment of silence for a departed colleague who was seldom silent: the late Sen. A.L. "Slim" Rasmussen, D-Tacoma, who died last week. A portrait and flowers were on his desk.

Ebersole made note of the largest number of female legislators in America, the country's first Korean-American state representative, Paull Shin, D-Edmonds, and the state's first Filipino-American legislator, Rep. Velma Veloria, D-Seattle.

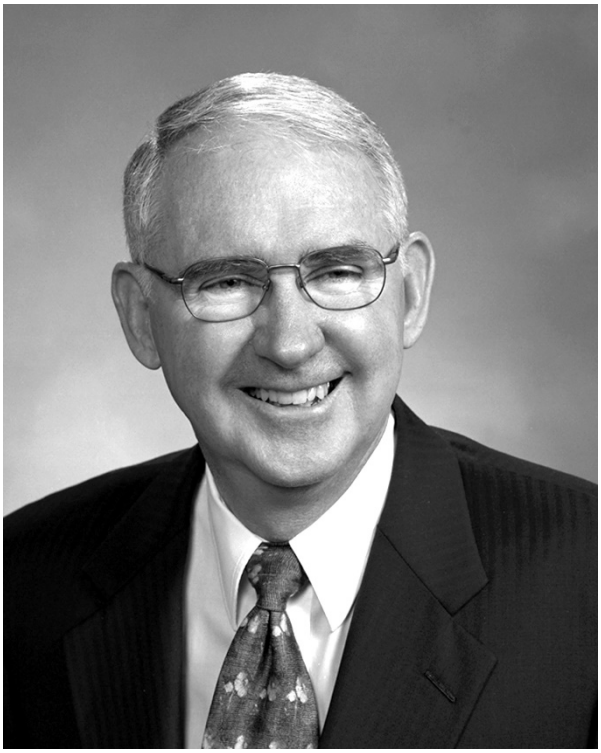
Of the 147 legislators, 54 are new, the largest number in at least a decade.

"It's the year of change," said Rep. Louise Miller, R-Woodinville.

Ebersole succeeds Vancouver Democrat Joe King as speaker. King retired from the House to make an unsuccessful run for governor.

Gaspard, previously the Senate minority leader, became majority leader after his party won control in the November elections.

Clyde Ballard



Jeffrey Clyde Ballard was born in 1936 to Jeff and Monnie Ballard of Izard County, Arkansas, and lived an itinerant life until his family settled in East Wenatchee when he was in the ninth grade. Growing up in a proud but stigmatized community of migrant workers from Arkansas, Clyde developed strong values of hard work and personal integrity. In 1954, he graduated from Wenatchee High School and began working as a box boy at the Peter Rabbit grocery store, ascending to general manager in just six years.

His wife, Ruth, has been a fixture in his life since they were married in 1955. Soon afterward, following Ruth's lead, he became a Christian. Together, they founded Ballard Ambulance in 1967, running the business from their home. An industry innovator, the company was a leader in EMT training and paramedic certification; defibrillators and other technological advances; and was the first licensed air ambulance service in Washington State. Clyde and Ruth sold the business to their sons Jeff, Shawn, and Scott in 1986.

Ballard was first elected to the House of Representatives from the 12th District in 1982. In 1987, he became minority leader, and led the Republican House caucus for sixteen years. He became speaker after the landslide election of 1994 and remained in that position until he was made co-speaker with Democrat Frank Chopp in 1999. The House remained evenly split between the parties in the 2000 election, but after a Republican loss in a 2001 special election in the 21st District, Chopp became sole speaker. Ballard retired from the House in 2002.

The length of Ballard's tenure as speaker and as head of his party's caucus reflects his skills as a leader and a politician. But it is his character, defined by his marriage, faith, and the values instilled by his upbringing, that won Ballard respect and friendship from his colleagues, including those who didn't share his conservative politics. He and Ruth still live in their home in East Wenatchee and remain active in their church and local community.

Mr. Vince Schleitwiler: I'd like to begin by talking about your personal background, and the events that led up to you becoming speaker.

Mr. Clyde Ballard: OK, I'll start with my personal background. It's a little unique. My family were migrant fruit workers. We were from Arkansas. There were not any Mexicans doing the fruit work at that time. So we moved constantly—different schools,

sometimes two and three a year. I was always the outside kid. We lived in shacks, I can show you a picture of one of the shacks. They were shacks with no running water, a lot of times. Other than that, we lived, usually, in upstairs apartments. We traveled back to Arkansas some.

When I was very young—I don't really remember the age, 6, 7, or 8—my mom and I were placed in a TB [tuberculosis] sanitarium. I spent six months there and my mom was there for two years. That is quite an interesting experience, when you're six or seven, to be taken away from your parents and put into an institution.

My parents bought a home in East Wenatchee when I was in the 9th grade. I went to school here. I was not a good student because I was not focused. My junior year I had trouble getting to school, I just couldn't find the school. And, anyway, I was really fortunate. A number of teachers were incredible teachers, and they took time and did things in my life that really made a huge difference. One of those was a band teacher who allowed me to become the drum major. I was a drum major who could not march in time with the music! I couldn't read a note and couldn't play an instrument, but he was a really neat guy. He gave me an opportunity, which changed my outlook significantly.

Mr. Schleitwiler: What was his name?

Mr. Ballard: Tieman. Mr. Tieman. He left here and went to Spokane. He did a lot for a lot of people. From there, I graduated from high school, and went to work at a new supermarket in [on] August 1, 1954, as a box boy at a dollar an hour. And six years later, I was general manager of the corporation. I met this young lady [Ruth Ballard] and we were married February the 6th, 1955. We've been married now for 64 years. So it's been a while.

We moved to California, to work in a supermarket down there, and then came back and went into the supermarket business again. The main focus of our lives, starting about when my age was 21, was my relationship with Christ. That was the focus. I learned a lot of things that were very helpful, and still to this day, that is our total focus. That's been really the essence of—allowing me to have the attitude, the work ethic, the caring about people, that allowed me to do the things I did. I will just say this as a matter of interest. If you read—I keep a daily diary, actually two times a day, and I do my devotions, and you will find it in there, time and time again. How is it that Ruth and I were allowed to do impossible things? I mean, become Speaker of the House, and to have this or that? That is still a mystery to me.

Mr. Schleitwiler: How did you come to Christianity? Was it through a particular church?

Mr. Ballard: Ruth had been a Christian when I met her. We were going to a local church, the Assembly of God Church. We went there for almost twenty years, and it was there—interesting scenario, you know, you talk about the coming of Christ, and all that. And Israel had just invaded Egypt [in 1956]. In the scripture, it talks about those things. It got my attention, and it changed my vocabulary, it changed my priorities, it changed literally everything. It was quite a dramatic change, and it was a good change. We probably would not have been married sixty-four years if I had not made those

changes, because my personality then would not have allowed us to go that direction. We became youth leaders and our current pastor—who is forty years of age—his mother was in our youth group! So long circle.

From there, I left the supermarket and spent a year with Ruth's father, painting. He was a paint contractor. During that time, I started one of the first greenhouses, which you see in the supermarkets [outdoor structures selling plants to gardeners]. I started one of the first ones of those in town for a local company [Sav-Mart]. And then in August 1, 1967, we had some friends that had funeral homes, who came and said, "Hey, why don't you go to work here? You can work two or three hours a day, you can be with your wife, and run the ambulance service." My qualifications were, I fainted at the sight of blood—literally.

Ruth and I started the company here [in the house where they still live]. First, we had a little desk in there [gesturing], and then we had the office down here. We had the crew here. We had three sons and we had taken in two girls from our church. So we had five kids, and the crew [in the house], and we dispatched. Ruth cooked and did all of that out of here. I mean, part of what I'm sharing is, we have a work ethic. In the first year, we had three days off. I was on call seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day. I ran every first call out. [The way the house was] was near what it is now. Ruth was right in the middle of that [business]. And we kept that company for twenty years and then sold it to our sons, who still operate it. And so that company has been in existence for fifty-two years.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Ballard Ambulance.

Mr. Ballard: Ballard Ambulance, yeah.

Mr. Schleitwiler: I imagine that must have been quite a way to get to know people in the community.

Mr. Ballard: It was a great way. I had been a fire district commissioner for four years and I was a water district commissioner for nine and a half years during all of this. We were deeply involved with youth, and all of those things. We had the first licensed air ambulance service in the state of Washington. In fact, when we started that, they didn't know how to say that this is good or bad. I got license number one. I also served with a group of doctors, including Mike Copass [the longtime director of Emergency Services] at Harborview—I'm sure you are aware of that name—and three other physicians. For a few years, I don't remember how long, we wrote all the rules and regulations for people in the field—nurses, EMTs, paramedics. I was one of the first, if not the first, EMT in the state of Washington. I had to go to Oregon to—[there were just] thirteen classes nationwide [offered by the American College of Orthopedic Surgeons]. There were no EMTs in the state of Washington. We were on the cutting edge of all of that.

It was during that time that I had some of my first encounters with the government. Some of them were very good. We met some great people. Some were real jerks. The way I was treated by agencies and the way other people were treated by agencies concerns me deeply. One of my main passions in life is people getting treated fairly, respectfully. Being a kid from Arkansas, we were [treated as] less than the Mexicans are now. I grew up saying, "I'm

not going to let that happen." That was that was literally one of my driving forces. Also was my belief that you treat everyone the same.

I was the campaign chairman for a guy by the name of Rollie Schmitten, who was a state representative. He didn't have an opponent. So it was a really tough race. He resigned to become [the director of the Washington State Department of Fisheries]. I decided to become involved in the political arena, outside of the local. There was an appointment process. I did not get the appointment and so the next year, in 1982, I ran for the Legislature. Once elected, for the first two years, Ruth and I were on call seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day, working hard, not having any money. We didn't have a personal car to drive from 1967 until 1981. Everything we drove, either it delivered oxygen, or it had a red light and siren on it. Those were interesting times.

I ran, and for the first two years, like I say, I sat and listened. In fact, Lori Matsukawa, did the first interview with me, in 1983. I remember her very well. I had run a bill that said, if you're in the water with a boat, you have to have a flag visible to let people know. She did that story. That was kind of the start.

I got involved, and I have no idea why, if there was a meeting with Governor [John] Spellman, with our leader, because I was just a committee person. But I got invited to sit in some of those meetings in 1984, which would be for '85. I decided I was going to run for minority leader. We had a huge class of freshmen, and we had some people that had served a long time, and worked hard, but we felt that there needed to be more of an inclusion of people. I ran for that position. I lost it by three votes. I was elected caucus chairman, which in the hierarchy, for the minority, is the second position. The gentleman that was leader [Gary Nelson] did not like conflict and pressure. I ended up, basically, outside of presiding and things, doing all the things for the caucus for those two years.

In the next election, I was selected as the leader, in '86. It started my time in leadership, I think—and I haven't checked it out—but when I retired, I was the longest serving leader in the history of the state. Now that lasted until Frank Chopp came along. He stayed there forever. We developed a really good team and worked hard. When you are in the minority, you have to learn to work with the majority. I was just at a memorial service at the Capitol two weekends ago, and Wayne Ehlers—who was speaker then—he and I shared some stories of when I was minority leader and he was speaker, and, of course, working with Joe King who is a really interesting, great guy. I developed a good staff, but we just were not winning seats. We were in the thirties for most of that time. We worked well with Booth Gardner. In fact, I considered him a friend. He considered me a friend. Even though we were in the minority, we were still a player in issues.

One of the major things that happened during that point, during that time [in 1991], the teachers in the state of Washington went on a wildcat statewide strike. They were very aggressive in the Capitol. They were so aggressive, we locked the doors so they couldn't get to the members' rooms. They were very, not all of

them, but a lot of them were very threatening.

They said, "You will call a special session, and you will pass our requests." To do that, all four caucuses have to agree. If they don't agree, then there's no special session.

Marcus Gaspard was minority leader in the Senate. He was for having a special session, which made sense, because teachers were good, strong supporters of their caucus. Joe King had sixty-some members and Joe is a tough guy.

He said, "We're not going to have a special session." [But] he came to me two or three days later and he said, "Hey, I got too much pressure building. I'm going to have to vote to have it." Jeannette Hayner was the Senate majority leader and was one of the finest people I served with. They were at a twenty-five to twenty-four [one-seat majority].

She said, "Absolutely not." [But] she had one of her members from Spokane who said, "I'm going on vacation and I don't care what the issue is." She lost her leverage.

We had, I think, thirty-three members. I called a caucus and I said, "Here's the deal," and told them what was going on. I told them, "I want you to understand, if we vote to block this, some of you are going to be defeated for it." That was the truth. That was a fact.

They all, to the last person, said, "We're going to stand." So, because of our standing, they could not call a special session.

The night of the announcement, Booth Gardner—it was late—and Denny Heck, who now is a congressman, but was then his chief of staff, called me and said, "The governor wants you to come down to the office." Its 9:00 or 10:00 at night. If you've been at the governor's office, where the big table is, it was full of reporters and they were all waiting to see what happened. We went in, and I'm standing, and they say, "Well, sit down. We're going to let everybody wait a while." So, in a little while, we went out and he said there would be no special session. That was kind of a major, major issue at the time.

In 1994, the governor—

Mr. Schleitwiler: Was that Mike Lowry?

Mr. Ballard: Now, Mike Lowry was a guy that drove me wild when I watched him on TV, in Congress. Just drove me wild. Mike Lowry turned out to be a friend. Don't get me wrong, we were on opposite sides on a lot of issues. Mike Lowry, when he gave me his word, it was solid and I never had to question it. That speaks highly of whoever it is. Mike Lowry had pushed through the health care bill for Washington State. If you remember right, Hillary [Clinton] flew him back to Washington, D.C., and they were going to use the Lowry health care plan for Washington as the blueprint for their [national] health care plan. I spent 1994, the year before the election—we were thirty-three members now—traveling the state. I did that all the time. I was all over the state.

We had sold our company, which had morphed into different divisions. We had fifty full-time employees, about twenty part-time employees. I'm in the Legislature,

and I'm trying to be the leader, and I'm trying to run a company, and the crew would call me and say, "Hey, we've got a decision to make."

I'd say, "I can't talk to you now."

So, four years later, in 1986, we sold the company. We sold part of it to a company in Reno. We sold the ambulance division to our sons. We sold the other part to a cosmetic company that had gone into home health business, because we'd started a home health company at the same time.

So we sold out, and I was able to travel with Ruth. Ruth was with me in everything I did. We traveled the state, talking about how this is the plan, and this is what's going to happen. The night of the election, I was sitting over there [gesturing], Ruth is sitting here, and we started listening to the accounts come in. We had thought, in the two previous elections, that we were going to pick up significantly and we didn't. As we started listening, the numbers started climbing and we were looking at each other like, oh my. It ended up that night we had fifty-nine members. The next morning, we had a member from Bellingham that I didn't even know was running. We were at sixty. And then we had two Democrats switch over. So we went to sixty-two.

It's kind of ironic. Kim Peery, who was the majority leader in the Democrat caucus—nice guy. He was from Vancouver area. He had stated publicly, "We've got so many members, it wouldn't hurt to lose a couple." He said, "That wasn't what I had in mind."

I started out and got elected Speaker of the House. We had a lot of conservatives. We had the usual blend, but sometimes when people get elected in a landslide, they take it to mean that the entire state has decided to believe the way they believe. And I am a conservative. I mean, they use the term, "someone who cares." But some of our members thought, this is a message that everything we want has to be done. It was a bit of a challenge. In fact, sometimes it got really difficult, because people were doing things outside of the caucus.

We had one issue where they were having meetings and planning some things. I heard about the meeting. I penetrated the meeting at a home. The next day I called a caucus together, and there had been letters written about members disparaging them, and so I told the whole caucus, "This is what's happened." The members are all sitting there, and eyes are this big around, because you don't do that. I said, "We're going to have none of this." I just hit it head on, which I believe—in life, if you don't hit it head on, and I'm not talking aggressively—but I had some members say, "You shouldn't have done that." I believe to this day, that's the only thing you can do, is to do that.

When I started out, I believe, we put together a great staff. The lady [Jamie Daniels] that ended up being my staff director had done the research on Dukakis in that election, and she had a huge staff doing that. One of the guys, Jay Jennings, had worked for her on that issue. The gentleman who was my attorney, who'd been my attorney in the minority—each minority leader and speaker have an attorney that advises them politically and during debate—I had a guy that was outstanding. In fact, I just did a memorial for his wife about four months ago and he

just visited us up in Manson. We're still close friends. Allen Hayward was his name. Allen Hayward was highly respected. We put together a great staff, worked hard.

Several of our members said, "We don't want to raise last year's budget one penny. No matter what." That presented a little bit of a problem.

Now, there was another thing that happened during that time. All these years, I'd sat in committees. We'd have people from all over the state—from Spokane, from Winthrop, all over—come in to testify about bills. I would sit in these committee meetings—and this is not a put down, it's just a decision they made to run them. First, they would let all of the agencies testify. And agencies can testify a long time. You've got a committee meeting that's an hour or an hour and a half long. Then they would let all the lobbyists testify.

And, this was not unusual, they would say, "OK, we've got nine people signed up. You guys take a minute, talk to yourselves, and you've got five minutes to present your plan."

That was not something I liked. When I became speaker, I called all of our committee chairs in and I said, "Here's the deal. The public testifies first."

The other thing that was done—I'll just [explain] that two years before, when we were doing the budget deal, Dale Foreman, who ran for governor, who is our attorney locally here, he was our lead on negotiations on the budget. They wouldn't tell him where the negotiations were! All of the discussion was made by the party in power. That's their option. I'm not wimping about it. We couldn't even find where they were negotiating and writing it.

When I became speaker, I said, "Here's the next thing: all negotiations will be done in public." You could have set a nuclear bomb off, politically, in the Capitol. It would not have had a bigger impact.

People [who] had been there a long time said, "You cannot do this."

Mr. Schleitwiler: This is for the budget?

Mr. Ballard: For all things. Dale Foreman said to me—he went to Harvard, one of the top of his class—he said, "I've never done anything so hard in my life." Now, that did not last, but it was a cannon across the bow. It goes to what I believe is fair. Today I believe strongly that if the negotiations in Congress, and in the House of Representatives, and in the Washington State Legislature, if they were done in public, it would take him a couple of years to get used to it, but I just dream of what kind of good legislation we would have. Because you'd have to vote for what's right, versus just whatever.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Can you tell me about the beginning of your speakership? On your first day, did you stop and think, "Look at how far I've come from how I grew up?"

Mr. Ballard: It was a high honor. I don't say this lightly. This is a kid from Arkansas who was nothing, had nothing, had no respect. Ruth and I were just elated that we were given this, what I call a high honor. In fact, that picture on the wall over there [gestures] is where I'm walking down to be sworn in. So it was an amazing experience.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Do you want to talk more about important members of your staff, during your speakership, and important members of your leadership team?

Mr. Ballard: We had both. Now, remember when you talked about a leadership team, I had several leadership teams. Like I said, Jamie Daniels was my chief of staff. Tim Martin was the chief clerk. Sharon Hayward had been my assistant chief clerk and she had been my staff director. Right from top to bottom we had an amazing group of people. Dale Foreman was majority leader, that first time. Barb Lisk, who was from Yakima, was the first woman majority leader to serve. She wasn't the first one elected. Lorraine Hine was first elected. She was the first one to serve as the majority leader. I'm just trying to think. There are so many people. They were excellent. You have to have good people backing you.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Can you talk about other government leaders that you dealt with? You spoke about Governor Lowry.

Mr. Ballard: We dealt with Spellman to start with. When we were in a meeting, I voiced an opinion on what his campaign was doing. Booth Gardner came along, and like I say, Booth Gardner liked to be liked, and he was easy to like. This is a side note—I met with Booth early on and I gave him the same conversation that I gave to [former Governor] Gary Locke and I gave to [former Governor] Chris [Christine] Gregoire, and that is, remember there's two parties, and there are the people. The people are what's important and do not let partisan politics take over running the issues. Booth really worked hard at it, but there are strong pressures from the parties. If you aren't dancing the dance, you're in trouble. Gary and I were really good friends. He stayed at our house, ate at this table. There was a transportation issue that came up, where, at the end, we really lost our friendship. And I regret that deeply. I regret that I did the things I did. I was right, but you can be right and you can [still] be wrong.

Chris Gregoire, I didn't serve with her as governor. Chris Gregoire called at the Red Lion in town where we used to have a lot of meetings. People would call up. She would call up and have coffee with me. She was the attorney general.

We talked awhile, and she said, "Gary has not made a decision whether he's going to run for the third term or not. If he doesn't run, I'm going to run for governor."

I said, "Chris, whatever you do, be your own woman. Do not let partisan politics [dominate]."

While we're talking, she gets a call, and it's Gary Locke telling her, "I'm not going to run." I was talking to Chris Gregoire when she learned that she was getting ready to run, which was interesting. Its interesting history—for me, it is!

Mr. Schleitwiler: You talked a little bit about Mike Lowry already, and Gary Locke. Are those the two that were governor during your speakership?

Mr. Ballard: Well, Booth Gardner was, for eight years.

Mr. Schleitwiler: That was before you were speaker?

Mr. Ballard: That was before I was speaker. I'm sorry. Mike Lowry and Gary.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Were there other important state officials, or members of the congressional delegation, who you thought had a big impact on your career?

Mr. Ballard: Yeah. Your mind gets overloaded with the people that we established a lot of good relationships with. Jeannette Hayner, George Sellar—who was a personal friend and a great senator. I just did a memorial on Alan Thompson, who as a Democrat, was chief clerk. Mark Schoesler, who is the current minority leader in the Senate. He was a member of our leadership team all the way through, just a very good guy.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You mentioned before, Joe King.

Mr. Ballard: Joe King—you get in front of Joe King and you call somebody to help you. I'll show you a picture of Joe King and me that's quite well known. You got in front of Joe King, you had troubles. And yet I really like Joe King. Talking to Joe it was this: he was big. And yet—that's the other personality you get when you're from Arkansas. You ain't got nothing to lose, and so, you stand up for what you believe. Otherwise, you're not respected. All too often in politics today they don't stand up for what they believe. One particular incident, Joe called—we were in caucus late at night—and he called me over, and he was short three votes.

Speaker Joe King and then Minority Leader Clyde Ballard. (Courtesy of the Washington State Archives)

He said, I won't go into the details, he said, "Here's the deal"—he had been drinking some "soda"—he said, "You guys are not only going to give me the votes, you're going to vote for it [personally]."

And—I'm not sure I want you to use this statement that I made!—I said, "Joe, when hell freezes over. You're not one minute closer to my voting for that." Now, he was enough of a man [to accept it]. We went home, and it was never mentioned again. But that was just his style. I knew that and he knew that.

After I left the Legislature, Joe—who had been a lobbyist, a very good lobbyist, he was well known, and everything. He called me one day and said, "Hey, I've got a proposal for you. How about you and Brian Ebersole"—who was the speaker right before I was—"How about you and Brian and myself form a lobbying company?" Quite frankly, that would have been very powerful, because we're all well known. I was a Republican. They were Democrats. I thought about it, but we're home, we're involved in our church, the family's growing up, all of that, grandkids.

I call him back, and said, "Joe, I just can't do it." But I thought, here again, I use the words "a high honor," and that is not just something I throw out. It was a high honor

for me to have Joe call. I mean, not many people would get that call.

Mr. Schleitwiler: It takes a lot to decide to turn that down, as well.

Mr. Ballard: It meant we turned down a lot of money. I'm talking real, real money. So here we are.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Something that it's hard for people today to understand, I think, is how you managed to fight so hard against folks and still maintain really strong relationships. I want to hear more of what you have to say about that.

Mr. Ballard: Well, you respect everyone. And we had heated moments. We've got, underneath this table, stacks of articles, hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of articles. Many of those articles, you read, "Ballard and Locke at odds," "Ballard and Joe King."

We'd have conferences, and I would say things that were aggressive: "You're absolutely wrong." We took the gloves off. I'll show you a picture downstairs of Joe King that just gives you a little bit about the difference with what's going on now. We had political party differences, but we didn't hate each other.

So I got a call from Alan Thompson's son, who is the lobbyist for all the newspapers in the state. He said, "Dad just passed away." This is a Democrat—I had worked with him a little bit when I was in the minority, and then when he was chief clerk.

He said, "We really would like to have you come and speak at his service."

I said, "I can't, my sixty-fifth class reunion [is the same day]."

He said, "Oh, ok. I understand."

Then he talked to Denny Heck and said, "We need to get him here now."

Wayne Ehlers was speaking, and one of our Republican governors from a long time ago—there were five of us. So they said, "What if we charter a plane and fly you over?"

I said, "That would work."

I called a guy that helped me start the first air ambulance service. He says, "I've got a plane, I will fly you."

I flew over for that, so I got back in time for my class reunion. And the same day Ruth's sister was having their annual family reunion, probably the last one they'll ever have, at noon that day. So I had those three issues. Now, it would have been easy to say, "Hey, [I have] the family [reunion] and my class reunion"—which I was taking an active role in—but you don't do that. So here again, to be asked to speak at Alan's memorial service was a big deal to me.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You talked a lot about the importance of your marriage. If that was so important to you during your speakership, I want to hear more about that.

Mr. Ballard: Well, if Ruth hadn't been the partner she was we wouldn't have succeeded in the ambulance service, because she worked hard. In the Legislature Ruth was—well, for instance, she baked chocolate chip cookies, and went to the

Democrats' door, knocked on the door, and they wouldn't let her in, to start.

They said, "What do you want?"

She said, "Well, I want to give you some chocolate chip cookies."

Ruth would give tours. She treated everybody with respect. The staff loved Ruth, not because she's my wife, but because Ruth treated them with a lot of respect. We had people to our house all the time, from my perspective. We worked a lot of late nights. If I worked till 10:00 at night, I would call Ruth and say I'm coming home. Ruth would have the meal ready for me, not in the refrigerator. When I was running the ambulance service, if I got back at twelve o'clock at night, Ruth wasn't in bed. She was waiting for me.

We had this super, super, relationship and we still do. It is amazing, after sixty-four years, that you love your wife more. If I hadn't married Ruth, with her attitude and her incredible support, I wouldn't have achieved these things. I'm serious. Not on my own. It was a big deal. It continues to this day. She still seeks out—there's a new guy at church, Sunday morning, and so the first thing, when she sees somebody new—if you go into a church for the first time, it's a funny feeling—so she seeks them out. There was a guy behind us—she said to me later, "[Too bad] he left early. I was going to invite him to lunch."

Mr. Schleitwiler: Let's move on to talk about your relations with the press during your speakership. You talked already about how you wanted to change the rules to make sure the public testified first in committee meetings. You talked about also having your first interview with Lori Matsukawa. Is there more you wanted to say about that?

Mr. Ballard: We had a lot of friends in the press. Friends can write an article about you and trash you. But we had some people from one of the Seattle newspapers that I would not talk to. For me not to talk to someone, that means that they write things they know are not true and when I talked to them, they quote me in a way that's not true.

One of their key reporters, she said to me years later when she ran into me, "You don't have to be afraid of me."

I thought, "You don't have a clue."

But here's what I did with the reporters. When I was in the minority, you didn't get quoted very often. So I usually had reporters in once a week. Right off, I said to them, "You ignored me when I was in the minority. Do not ignore the minority. They have a voice. They have an opinion." I mean, they're not going to treat him or her like they would the speaker, but I felt very strongly about this because for many, many years, you're just kind of ignored.

Now, Dave Ammons was just a great writer. If you did something he didn't agree with or thought was wrong, he had put the boots to me. Not a problem. The *Tacoma News Tribune*, there were some good reporters there. And Lori Matsukawa.

There was a reporter from Channel 4 [Bob Turner], I think he eventually moved to Idaho. He was a cameraman and the reporter, which is unusual. They all had offices there during these times. He was a

guy who was really quiet, very efficient. We were having a session one day, I was presiding and he was in the back with his camera. I said, "Will the sergeant at arms escort [Bob Turner] to the rostrum." The guy almost had a heart attack. He thought he had done something really, really bad. The sergeant at arms takes him marching up to the rostrum. In the meantime, the executives from Channel 4 were all sitting in the wings, and we honored him for the good job he had done. That's what you do.

Mr. Schleitwiler: It's clear how seriously you take being fair to everybody, and how much personal integrity matters to you. Can you say more about what kind of personal characteristics—I'm asking you, perhaps, to talk a little bit about yourself—what kind of personal characteristics allowed you to remain in a position of leadership for so long for your caucus?

Mr. Ballard: First thing, even the people that are against you in your caucus, you still treat them with respect. I would have somebody who had done something, and I would still honor them, if they were the person who was qualified to be a head of a committee. When you have sixty-two members, or whatever your number is, there's a whole bunch of them who want to be the leader. I mean, "I should be leader." So there's a natural competition going, all the time. I used this statement [speaking] to them numerous times, so they would understand how you get to be a leader. There is a scripture in the Bible that says, if you want to be the leader—and I'm paraphrasing—the first thing you have to do is, you become a servant to all. I quoted that, you don't usually quote Scripture, especially a scripture like that, but that's what we try to do. From the guy who worked in the garage when I'd pull in the morning to any staff person, Republican or Democrat, to any member—you still tried to treat them with respect.

I had a guy who tried to overthrow me. I would go into his district and campaign for him. That's just what you do. If you don't do that, if there's a line you cross—and don't get me wrong, purity is a long way from me—but if there's a line you cross in treating people unfairly or trying to take somebody down, that will return to you. Because you have entered into a world [like the one] that we have right now.

Mr. Schleitwiler: When you began as speaker you had a landslide victory and you said you had to manage expectations about that. Can you talk about some of your major accomplishments in those first two terms, both institutionally and legislatively?

Mr. Ballard: Well, the one we thought was major—we overturned Mike Lowry's health care bill. That was one of the first things that we did. In fact, Mike came over. I had a meeting in my office, and we went into my attorney's office, and Mike and I sat down. Remember, we were just gutting his bill. We sat down and had a very personal, friendly conversation. Usually, it's screaming and hollering. That wasn't the case.

I can't remember—the bills run together over the years, from [when I was in the] minority—I have to sort out the years. One thing is in the second term, Dan McDonald was the majority leader in the Senate, and we passed a budget that enhanced the amount of money for colleges and for education. But that's a question, I'd have to stop and give some thought to it.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You also said there were some issues with the budget. You started talking about that earlier. Were there people, coming in, not wanting to raise the budget?

Mr. Ballard: Yes. So what happened is, they said, "We will not vote for a budget with one penny extra." That was difficult because they wanted things, but they didn't want to raise the budget one penny. I'm the speaker, but the Senate's in Democrat control. We had all kinds of long, long meetings. It was unfortunate. I see it today [too]. It was unfortunate that some people, with good [intentions], stopped us, during the first two years, from doing some very meaningful things because they had set this magic line on all things that you couldn't cross. You can't do that in your personal life, or in government. They had enough votes that did not allow us to do those things. We had some caucuses, four- and five-hour caucuses.

Nita Reinhart, she was a senator, and she was in charge of the budget in the Senate, and she was a good friend. She and I sat down and I said, "Nita, this is a problem I've got."

She said, OK—because we would have still been there. It was that kind of a deal. She said, "OK, I will honor that," which for her and her caucus, was not easy. Because caucuses, especially if you're more of a liberal caucus, always like to spend more. Our members liked to spend more, but they also liked to be representatives. She said, "Ok, I'll write the budget."

I told her caucus, "This is the deal," and she was fair about it. She knew we would have written a different budget if we had written it. I haven't talked to Nita in probably ten years, but she is a person who I had great respect for, and I trusted. Now, if you trust somebody who is head of the budget in the opposite party, you've got to make sure that you really do trust them. I did trust her. That was the first two years. Now, the next two years, with Dan McDonald, we had more latitude and we passed a lot of things. I just don't remember the details, but Gary Locke was proving his manhood, and he started vetoing. He vetoed a whole bunch of stuff, a bunch of stuff that was good stuff. But you have to feed the flock behind you.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Even though you had a landslide, there was no point where you didn't have to always be working with opposition.

Mr. Ballard Oh no. Brian Ebersole, he had been the speaker two years before I took over, and he was the minority leader. Brian was the one that Joe talked about going into partnerships with. Brian was just a guy that I genuinely liked. I know you can't say that, it would get you out of office today, but people you genuinely liked. Then Alan [Thompson], having worked with him as the chief clerk—we had established good relationships with several others.

Mr. Schleitwiler: In media accounts of that time in your career, there is definitely an emphasis on fiscal responsibility, on you being strict about that. As we talked, you say you also had to be, kind of, more reasonable about that.

Mr. Ballard It had to be real. I mean, I'm serious. There is no way that we would have ever gotten out of there with this unbelievable demand and that—"No, we

will not spend one penny more." You put your money where the people have needs. But they had enough votes. Nita Rinehart was the answer to that.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You had a kind of a big election that set you up for the first term, and then another term as sole speaker. What were the issues that were driving those elections, when you were Speaker of the House?

Mr. Ballard: Fiscal responsibility, spending the money where you need to spend it. A lot of issues with the agencies; I had grave concerns with [state] agencies. I remember bringing in one of the agencies that wasn't taking action to stop flooding in a district. My approach was bring them in and sit them down and say, "Can you explain to me why this is not fixed?" I did that with their understanding that, if they didn't do something, I would. I didn't have one moment's hesitation in saying, "We're going to do this, and we'll pass the budget that way. And so why don't you fix it?"

In fact, as a side note, when I was first speaker—because everybody gets used to, you know, "They just give us money" —the president of the University of Washington came into my office, because I have meetings all the time, and he had a big entourage. This is University of Washington. You know, I mean, "We are the University." He came and he started giving me his list of all the things he wanted. I said, "Hold it." I don't remember how I said it, but this is what I said, "There's a new deal going on, and I've got some concerns about what's going on in the University of Washington. I want to know why they're not fixed."

During that time—I don't know whether you remember—it was very difficult to get out in four years, because [students had trouble getting into required classes]. Five years was just kind of getting to be the normal [length to graduate]. To this day, that is crazy. If you have a class that there's a lot of demand for, then you make—and so I just told him this has got to be addressed. I don't know how it is now, but it certainly was costing people a lot of money and costing them a year out of their careers. There was no reason not to fix it. If that would've been the private sector, you'd do it now. That was my approach with the agencies. If you were doing something that was wrong, and I was the speaker, "Get on it." I wasn't always a nice guy. I wasn't nasty, but I let them know, because that's what you have to do.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Another area, outside of legislation and dealing with agencies, was dealing with institutional issues. You talked about changing procedures at hearings. Were there other institutional changes that you made?

Mr. Ballard: Well, we tried to streamline things. We tried to make sure that people's voices were heard. We cut the number of employees in the House, a huge number that we cut. We ran more efficiently. Brian Ebersole, I remember—some things you remember vividly—we were working late one night, and I come from business, and I would come in early. When we got ready to go on the floor, I knew what we were going to do. I knew when we were going to do it. There was no question about it. I ran an ambulance service. You get it done.

And Brian Ebersole came up to me on the rostrum, and he said, "I want to tell you

co-Speaker Clyde Ballard and co-Speaker Frank Chopp.

what"—I don't know the terms he used, but—"how much I appreciate that when we come in, in the morning, we know exactly what we're going to do." ["We" meaning] their caucus because they're in the minority, and before, the whole issue was, you don't let the minority know anything. Keep them in the dark. And he says, "We know what we're going to do. We know what bills. You used to think that we were keeping you late and doing things just to punish you. Clyde, we just didn't know where we were going." That's from a guy who had been the speaker and who was a minority leader. Good guy.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Can talk about the events that led up to the '98 election, and how things changed after that?

Mr. Ballard: Ok, let's see. So you've got '95, '96, '97—'98 when we lost, and went into the tie?

Mr. Schleitwiler: Yes.

Mr. Ballard: Ok. We just lost some seats and ended up in a tie. It was the second time [that happened] in the state of Washington. That was a very tough thing, to be. Frank [Chopp, the co-speaker] and I probably got along less than most everybody else I worked with. That was unfortunate. We had a couple of issues to start with. I sat out with Frank and I said, "Hey, Allen Hayward, who is my attorney, he had been through that. We had a blueprint of how to do it."

Mr. Schleitwiler: Allen was a staff lawyer in 1979, during the previous tie.

Mr. Ballard: Stop and think of this—two parties that are like this and have got to work together.

I said to Frank, "Frank"—we had a condo out on East Bay Drive, and we had people there a lot—"Why don't you bring your leadership team. I'll bring my leadership team. Let's sit down together now, before we start, and let's establish a way to make this work." I was deadly serious because to make it work, you have to give, and you have to take. Otherwise, it does not work. It's like a marriage if, you know—[sees Ruth Ballard, his wife, and laughs] Don't say it!

Mrs. Ruth Ballard: You need a cookie break or something?

Mr. Ballard: I don't.

Mr. Schleitwiler: I'm all right. Thank you.

Mr. Ballard: Sorry about that. [Laughter.]

[Chopp] refused to. We had some incidents that happened that disappointed me. We had a transportation issue that we negotiated hard. We came to an agreement. We put a press release out: "This is what we agreed to."

The next day, Frank said, "Oh, I need an additional two or three million dollars."

I'm from business. "Frank, we have an agreement. We sent out a press release."

He said, "I've got a member—I just need—"

I said, "No." And because I want to get along, I want to be friendly, but don't screw me over. If you give me your word, you'd better darn well keep it. We did not have the best of relationships. That's too bad, but that's what happened.

We set it up so we were equal on everything. He would preside one day. I would preside the next, or our assistant would preside. We weren't there all the time. The committee chairs are the exact same numbers. One Republican would run the committee one day, a Democrat the next day. We divided everything up so that no one had an advantage. You had to be fair because you weren't going to get anything done [otherwise]. Now was it easy? No, it was hard. There were times it got pretty sparky. I ended up, in the last year, I had one of my members who was a day trader. He would trade anything he had. It put us into a disadvantage because he would trade his vote for anything. Yet I still had the veto power. If he would trade his vote for something that I disagreed with, I could say, "No, the bills aren't coming up." The committees got along reasonably well. You know, a lot of smart people, a lot of people who just knew that they had a difficult situation, they made it work.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Is there anybody who stands out in your memory, who made that work?

Mr. Ballard: Barb Lisk, I mentioned before, she was a good moderator. Jim Honeyford was in the Senate at this time, but he was another good one. Let me just stop and think because we had some really outstanding members. The problem is they blend together. John Pennington was the speaker pro tem. Jim Buck was a real interesting guy from over on the coast. If you can give me a trigger, I can try to give you some more names.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Let's stick with that initial period of becoming co-speaker. There was a precedent because this had happened in 1979.

Mr. Ballard: Yes.

Mr. Vince Schleitwiler You mentioned Allen Hayward.

Mr. Clyde Ballard Yes, exactly. Some states—this is really unusual—would say, OK, you take the speakership and we'll take the committee chairs. Or there are different variations on it. I wasn't comfortable with that, because if you get a day trader, like I had, then you could suddenly have things going through that you had no way to control. I just felt that was the way to do it. And with Allen Hayward having been through that [in 1979], he had a good relationship with [Cathy Maynard], who was Frank's attorney, and they worked well

together. Now there were plenty of sparks, [but] it worked reasonably well. The last year, I had this individual, and another woman, that wanted things quite badly. Sometimes you want too much. I think from our conversation, you can tell I didn't appreciate that very much.

Mr. Schleitwiler: It's sounds like there was a fair amount of frustration.

Mr. Ballard: Yes. I think on both sides.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Not just that the relationship in this situation was difficult, but because of some of the ways of working with the other party that you had been used to.

Mr. Ballard: Yes, it was, and you have to adjust to that. When you adjust to that, you get ready to say "No."

"And why not?"

"The answer is no." You build that up. I remember their caucus used to get loud, and I'd say, "Frank, what are you guys doing over there?"

He'd say, "You have to whip them up, get them whipped up." These are adults. You just had to tough it out. It wasn't the best of times.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Could you say a bit more about your impressions of Frank Chopp?

Mr. Ballard: It was hard to get—I don't want to use the term "close" to him, but it was hard to have a relationship with him. Just really hard. When it was his turn to preside, a lot of times he wouldn't preside. He stayed in his office. We had photos in my office of all kinds of people. I have where grade school kids colored on paper, and I've got those in my office. You've got all these big people in your office.

There was a conflict to start with. I'd been speaker. I was in the speaker's office.

One of Frank's people walked in and said, "Well, you're moving."

I said, "I'm not."

"You're moving. Frank's moving in here."

I said, "No, Frank's not moving in here." In the first place—you walk in my office, and you tell me, "You're moving"? I'm from Arkansas. Don't threaten me. I mean, I don't mean that lightly. I mean, in business and dealing with the agencies, dealing with people, if you threaten me, then I may pay a price, but I will do everything I can to oppose you. That was kind of the problem we had.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Do you think they were more aggressive because you had already been speaker?

Mr. Ballard: Yeah. And what they did, they ended up taking Frank's office and spending a hundred and some thousand dollars making it into a second speaker's office. Ask me for something and I will maybe give it to you. Tell me you're going to do something, and it's not going to be a good time.

Mr. Schleitwiler: I've read some accounts that suggest that in the first term of the co-speakership you were able to accomplish more. Do you think that's true?

Mr. Ballard: I think we accomplished a surprising amount, to be fair. Yeah, I think we did. A part of that goes not to Frank and I, necessarily. Part of that goes to the committees, because if you have a committee of twenty-four people and they come to you and they've got twenty-four votes for it, Frank or I—either one—might say, "I don't like that." But at that point, it really wasn't our call. If they took the testimony, they did that. We worked with transportation. Ruth Fisher, she was one of my heroes, she is a Democrat from Tacoma. She's hardcore, crusty. I mean, I really liked her. We could sit down with Karen Schmidt—who was our lead—we could sit down and work out some things that were really thorny to work out. Now, Frank didn't attend those, he wasn't a part of those, not that I remember.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Should we get into the transportation issue? That seems like it's a big thing. How would you characterize it? How do you remember that, broadly speaking—the big debates during that period?

Mr. Ballard: I voted for a couple of tax increases and probably the biggest transportation issue was between Gary Locke and myself. That broke our friendship. Let me kind of set the stage for you. There was obviously a push to get a transportation increase. My position was, "OK, but stop making the Transportation Department jump through hoops costing hundreds of millions of dollars that accomplish nothing. If you want a transportation increase, then you change the rules in the transportation departments."

We spent six million dollars doing this study on whatever. It was really bad. 405 was one of the issues. Part of the reason that I really felt this way, one of the reasons, is we had an earthquake. The bridge in Olympia, between West Olympia and [downtown] Olympia had to be redone. Now, if they would have done it the same way they treated the Department of Transportation, within six or eight years, they would have had the permits and they would have done it.

They said, "These requirements are all off—build the bridge."

To this day, I feel strongly about that. That was my issue. If you're going to do it, then you change some things—I'm not talking about doing away with protections, and all that kind of stuff. And it was no.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You wanted to make the agencies work more efficiently.

Mr. Ballard: Make them do things that made common sense. Just common sense. And they said there was no interest in that. Gary said no. We really like Gary. [Someone who would] come to your house and eat your food. We like Mona [his then-wife].

Gary said that the discussion had been, "Is there going to be a public vote on this?" Because that had entered into it. Gary made a speech and said, "We will have a public vote on this issue. We will put it to the public." I'm all for that.

Then all of a sudden, that's gone. Gary didn't come to me and say, "Hey, Clyde, this thing is"—whatever, you know—"we can't do it." It gets to be a contentious thing. He had two staff people. Marty Brown, who I

really liked, his staff director. Marty Brown, I don't know what he would tell you, but I'll tell you that Marty Brown's a good friend. He had another guy [Fred Kiga] that had worked for the big investment company in Tacoma. He was Asian, if I remember, and man, if I would have become governor, I would have hired him instantly as one of my key staff people. I mean, that was what I thought of him. They would come over, kind of trying to get communications [going] between us, and it got pretty thorny.

Then Gary went on the radio and said, statewide, "Clyde Ballard just screwed the citizens of the state of Washington."

I was on the radio, saying, "Gary Locke lied." Big mistake. Should have never done that, but the emotions were screaming high. So we got into this and it just deteriorated. Then they roll out the long knives.

I got a call saying, "We want you." This isn't a big-time business guy, one of the insiders.

Let me back up a minute. Gary and I are over in the Senate one evening and we're talking with the senators. "How do we do this?" It was a general conversation. We walked out, it was night, and there was nobody in the chamber.

Gary said, "Come on, let's go out and sit down." We went out and sat at the Senate chamber, no lights on. I mean, you can see.

He said, "Clyde, what do you want?"

I said, "Gary"—this is the other part of the problem—"Gary, I don't want anything. Gary, we don't have the votes." Which we didn't have. "And Gary, if you don't believe me, you say so. I will call everybody back in and we will have a vote because we have counted. There are not the votes for it."

They kept saying, "Well, support it. Pull it up."

Cut to the chase: "Do you have the votes? If you've got the votes, then you're going to override me. If you don't have the votes, don't keep harassing me on this." In other words, do some of these things I've suggested.

We get this call from a guy, who is a big business guy, gives a lot of money. We got it from his lobbyist—his lobbyist called me and said, "So-and-so wants to talk to you."

I said, "OK." Ruth and I are over on the west side.

We went to his office and the lobbyist is with us and he said, "As a lobbyist, you stay outside." He said—this is a paraphrase—"I've been meeting with a bunch of bankers and a bunch of people, and they're so mad at you they're ready to hang you."

I said, "You tell him anytime. And screw you." Excuse me for saying that. You don't threaten me in front of my wife.

It got so bad. Gary and I were at the Mariners. I walked right by him. He wouldn't speak to me. He was really angry.

His guys came over and said, "The governor is really concerned about you saying on the media that he's not telling the truth."

I said, "You tell him, when he stops saying to the citizens of the state of Washington,

'Clyde Ballard just screwed the citizens of the state of Washington'." We had a situation that was probably one of the most unfortunate situations.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You've known each other back to 1982?

Mr. Ballard: Yeah. We came in [to the House] the same year. We would have debates on the floor. We'd been good friends. My second son was down there with their new baby, and Mona just had a baby. We were all up on the rostrum together, and Gary would come over. I got a couple of pictures here. They're interesting pictures. He and I are sitting up on the rostrum and debating. Just good friends. The votes weren't there, that was the issue.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Do you think there was a bigger shift in the way politics operate? You talk about how politics are very different now and about a lot of the things that you all were able to do back then. Was that a point where things were shifting, or was it just an isolated issue?

Mr. Ballard: I think it was just an issue. We still had good friends across the aisle, and across the rotunda. Not all of them. Some were mine, some were theirs, some of theirs were not lovable. That was an isolated issue. What I didn't understand was how some of these big dogs wanted that transportation money. Because it was a lot of money. A lot of money, for a lot of businesses. A lot of money. That was the most overt action that I'd ever had. I'd had people say to me, "We don't like you." Yeah, some days I don't like myself, but to bring us in and say, "A coalition of big dogs are going to get you"—in front of my wife. And he's still a big dog.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You said there was a lot of frustration, a lot of sparks, during that period. When you got into the 2000 elections, how did that change?

Mr. Ballard: It was bad. The first two years, we were co-speakers. In the second two years, we were co-speakers until a midterm election. Renee Radcliff [Sinclair], who is head of TVW now—they're just coming over to do an interview on TVW, which is interesting—she called Ruth and me. We met her in Seattle and had lunch.

She said, "I really hate to do this to you, but I've got to resign."

And so, we had a candidate, Joe Marine, from Snohomish County—can't remember the town [Mukilteo]. Anyway, he got beat. All of a sudden, I'm back in the minority.

I would suggest to you—this was a real interesting thing. I had agreed to speak in a church in Spokane. The pastor's wife had been in our youth group. They said, "We want you to come and speak."

It was the week after the election. I don't know what I'm going to be. All of a sudden, I'm back to being the minority leader. A lot of people are saying, "You should resign. You shouldn't have run this time." You know, you should have this-and-this. I've got to go speak inspirational things to a congregation and I've just had my world blown up.

So what do you do? You go and speak. I mean, was it hard? Oh, yeah. It was hard. It was. And it was hard because of the things that were going on which I no longer had the ability to affect. Positions come and go, but having the influence was a big deal.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Was that contact, being with the congregation, something that helped you?

Mr. Ballard: No. It was hard. It didn't help me at all. It was just plain hard. You hate to fail.

Mr. Schleitwiler: In the face of that kind of difficulty, are there lessons you take away, things you wish you'd done better? Or, looking back, are you a little prouder of what you did do?

Mr. Ballard: I wouldn't change what I did. I think we missed a golden opportunity. I mean, I really do. I got a call from New Jersey during that period of time. They had just gone into a tie in the Senate, so they flew me back to New Jersey to talk to them. I talked to them about maintaining co-power, because if you don't, somebody will get really angry. The disappointment is, we could have set the bar higher. I'm not blaming Frank. I mean, that's life. That's his personality. I've got a different personality.

Mr. Schleitwiler: When you think about the entire course of your speakership, do you think the role of the speaker changed? Do you think there were changes in the way the government operated?

Mr. Ballard: We changed things. Oh, yes, we changed things. We really did change things. The second two years we accomplished a ton of stuff, and just good stuff and good for people. We invited the people in and went back to opening it up. There is an award, I don't know if you're aware of it or not.

Mr. Schleitwiler: The [Washington Coalition for Open Government's Ballard/Thompson] Open Government Award?

Mr. Ballard: Yeah. For Alan Thompson and Clyde Ballard. If there's somebody [who receives it] one year, that's a big deal. Oh, they've got a bust of you down at the park? Yeah, and you get pooped on every day! That award is a great thing.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Are there other lessons you draw from your experience that you think people should hear? Obviously, it's a very different time politically. There are a lot of people who remember how things were before and are frustrated.

Mr. Ballard: There's a number of life lessons I believe were important then, and I believe they're important now. One is respect. I don't care if it's a guy on the street—you respect them. I don't care if he's a governor. You respect them, whoever they are, even if you're of the opposite party. The second thing is, you tell the truth. Even when it hurts, you tell the truth. I don't believe half of what I hear on the TV anymore. It just helped me in not watching so much news. With some of this stuff I know to not be true. The terrible tragedy is the public is being mistreated.

We got to be—this is a side note—but just kind of in working with people, we got to be good friends with Newt Gingrich [the speaker of the US House of Representatives from 1995-99]. We brought Newt Gingrich and a delegation from Congress, took him to four Western states, spent a week with him in a bus. Two years later, we brought Newt and Dick Armey [the Republican US House majority leader under Gingrich] and a delegation, Republicans and Democrats.

We had him at our place on Lake Chelan. We took him to Alaska; we spent a week with him. We had good relationships. So you build relationships—not only in your state.

But you build relationships. Now, how do you do that? Well, number one, make sure they believe you when you tell them. Number two, obviously, you've got to treat the speaker and Congress with respect. There's something beyond just respect. They have to believe that you are really genuine in what you tell them. If you ever lie to them once, and I had some people that I dealt with, Republican and Democrat—or if they do something, I had one of them try, one of my own members, tried to sell me his vote. Right now, they have poured so much concrete between them that I don't know how—it's going to take something really unusual. I'm genuinely worried about our country.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Is there more that you want to say about what you think makes a particularly effective speaker? What characteristics, beyond what you've said already?

Mr. Ballard: Things I believe? Ruth Fisher, she'd be out there with one of the members, and no matter what, you'd treat her with respect. Now, that guy, the name of—I had to hammer him down all the time. He was from up the Everett area [Snohomish]—Dunshee. [Hans] Dunshee was his name. He was always creating problems. I had a gavel that I could whack in a hurry. If they kept going, I could remove people from the floor. They knew that, and I would have. I would have.

I think people in power have such an opportunity to do great things. Don't burn it. A pastor has great opportunities to change lives. A governor. Governors have—I almost ran for governor. The reality was, I could have probably raised one and a half to two million. The two parties, Gregoire and Rossi, they both spent about eight million dollars. I would love to have been governor. Not to be, not to sound hokey, not to be the governor—but you could have done so much stuff. Surrounded yourself with some really good people. You could have just done positive things for the state of Washington.

It's real people—when you do things—it's somebody driving by in a car, or somebody walking down the street, or somebody who is on welfare, or somebody who is worth a gazillion dollars? Treat them all [with respect]. It gets me stirred.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Being speaker, I imagine, must have led to a lot of interesting experiences. Are there any other good stories you want to share about that time?

Mr. Ballard: We got to meet a lot of people. When you travel around the state all the time, you meet people, just ordinary people, and they tell you stories. I had people come up to me—not as many as used to, but it's not unusual. Ruth and I were sitting in a restaurant in Manson and Manson's not a very big town. We were in a little pizza place. There were some people over here, the lady kept looking at me, and I knew she was looking at me. I'm old, but she just kept looking. Finally, they moved over and she said something, she asked me a question.

I said, "My name is Clyde Ballard."

She said, "I knew it. I knew it." They say really kind things to you. I have people, a lot of people, just come and say thank you, just thank you. You don't get much in life, and life is short. I'm eighty-three years old, and I have been able to do impossible things. I think becoming Speaker of the House—and I don't mean to dwell on it, from a kid who had no background, right? My mom was a sixth grader. My dad was a fourth grader. We were the lowest of the low. And how do you take that, and get to be speaker?

Mr. Schleitwiler: You know, when I asked that question, I was thinking you might tell a story about meeting some famous person, or someone who did some amazing thing, but hearing about being thanked by somebody—that tells a lot about your character.

Mr. Ballard: That is a story. And if you think you're important, you're in trouble. I'm serious.

Now, Wayne Ehlers, in reading his [memoirs]—he has got a history. I mean, it's amazing. And Alan Thompson, if you've read his, I don't know whether you've read his—oh, my goodness, a guy has done things that are totally impossible. I mean, I had no idea that this gentle, friendly guy, that Ruth and I really liked, that we got a Christmas card from every year, could have this kind of a powerful background. And you'd never know it talking to him. Never. Now, that is a mark.

Mr. Schleitwiler: So the last question I have is this. As speaker and as leader for so long, a lot of things were written about you. Is there anything more that you want to say about your legacy that you think people might not realize?

Mr. Ballard: I guess, well, the legacy—that I cared about people. That over the years I had a willingness to pay a price—which we did, Ruth and I did a number of times—to stand up for what we believe. My legacy is—it would make me very happy [if]—they believed I was honest. They believed I respected everyone. I think our country, our state is a wonderful place. I was honored to have a tiny little bit of history in that.

Tuesday, January 12, 1999
The Spokesman-Review
Spokane, Wash./Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

Lawmakers pals as session opens

By David Ammons
Associated Press

OLYMPIA — Washington lawmakers opened the 1999 session Monday gingerly looking for ways to deal with a 49-49 tie in the state House and resolve clashes over spending, tax cuts and education.

A swing choir from the State School for the Blind crooned "Someone to Watch Over Me" at upbeat ceremonies in the House. For the first day, at least, there were no potshots and little partisanship.

1999 LEGISLATURE

Humor, compliments, and pledges of friendship and cooperation were the order of the day. The new Democratic co-speaker, Frank Chopp of Seattle, called it "hands across the aisle," and actually had members cross the 6-foot patch of pale green carpet that separates the Democrats from the Republicans on the House floor.

Continued: **Session/B6**

Associated Press

Rep. Frank Chopp, D-Seattle, left, and Rep. Clyde Ballard, R-East Wenatchee, sort through paperwork Monday on the first day of the 1999 legislative session. The two are co-speakers of the House.

Session: Use 2-handled gavel

Continued from B1

Lawmakers hugged for the cameras. The galleries were jammed, and extra chairs were brought in so members' families could watch from just off the main House floor.

There was so much applause and cheering that Rep. John Pennington, R-Battle Ground, the co-speaker pro tem, observed, "I wonder if we're at our constitutional limit for standing ovations?"

The Republican co-speaker, Clyde Ballard of East Wenatchee, produced a two-handled gavel, which he and Chopp tried to use together. The joke drew applause, but they quickly reverted to their plan to alternate presiding chores.

This year's session is limited to 105 days, although 30-day special sessions may be called if needed.

Washington is the only state with a tied-majority chamber, the National Conference of State Legislatures said Monday.

The Senate, with a new Democratic majority, was far more staid than the rambunctious party atmosphere in the House. While the House did a mass swearing in, followed by endless speeches, the Senate swore in new members individually and speeches were brief.

The two houses will meet in joint session at 5 p.m. today for Gov. Gary Locke's State of the State Address.

Spokesman David Chai said Locke plans to give "a strong challenge to the Legislature to work in a bipartisan fashion" on big-ticket items like hiring more teachers, making college scholarships available for middle-class families, tackling the traffic problem and saving salmon.

Supreme Court Chief Justice Richard Guy, installed in the top judicial position in separate ceremonies Monday, will give a State of the Judiciary Address on Wednesday.

Most of the attention on Day One was riveted on the House, where all went according to plan — literally each step had been agreed upon in pre-session negotiations.

Legislators marched into the chamber two by two, with the Republicans peeling off to the left and the Democrats to the right as they reached their desks and fancy new leather chairs.

Rep. Karen Schmidt, R-Bainbridge Island, and others said the forced cooperation comes at a good time, since so many voters are turned off with partisan nastiness.

"As the political bickering continues in the Other Washington, the citizens back here have given us the opportunity to demonstrate that we can move beyond partisanship . . . to find common ground to solve common problems that face each of us in this state," she said.

"People are absolutely sick of Washington, D.C., and this is an opportunity to prove we can make it work, to take care of things that actually matter in your life," said Rep. Hans Dunshee, D-Snohomish. "Washington, D.C., will continue to check for dress stains and ask a Valley Girl, Monica, to come in and say 'Whatever. I still love him and he loves me and that's all that matters.' "

Dunshee said the session probably will produce only "Cheez Whiz, with only really homogenized stuff getting passed," and the controversial or the partisan doomed to failure.

"It will take time, lots of time" to keep the session on track, said Rep. Ed Murray, D-Seattle.

The Democratic co-majority leader, Lynn Kessler of Hoquiam, said the "general optimism and great expectations" should get the session off to a good start. "It's like any marriage or business partnership: We have to work together or it will be miserable," she said.

In the Senate, the mood — and the noise — were muted.

Thick velvet draperies had been installed along the sides of the chamber to muffle the sound from the wings. Lt. Gov. Brad Owen, a Democrat, ordered the change as part of his campaign to bring more decorum to the Senate.

But even Owen strayed from the decorous on a day that saw his party back in power after two years of Republican rule.

He introduced newly elected Senate President Pro Tem Lorraine Wojahn, D-Tacoma, as not only a fine choice but as "the Norse Goddess of Terror," a nickname conferred on her years ago by now-Supreme Court Justice Phil Talmadge.

As it happened, it was Talmadge who swore in Wojahn, who accepted the introduction with a quiet smile.

About 25 percent of the Senate gallery was occupied by friends and family of newly elected Sen. Paull Shin, D-Mukilteo, the first Korean-American elected to the state Senate.

At a glance

A quick look at Washington's new legislative session:

Length: 15 weeks, with 30-day overtime sessions if needed.

Cost: $130,000 per day, including $79 expense money per legislator.

Key issues: Operating, transportation and construction budgets; education and higher education; health care; salmon restoration; rural economic development and housing.

Political control: House has a 49-49 tie. The Senate has 27 Democratic members and 22 Republicans. Gov. Gary Locke is a Democrat.

Speeches: Locke will deliver his State of the State Address before a joint session at 5 p.m. today. Chief Justice Richard Guy will address a joint session at 10 a.m. Wednesday on the state of the justice system.

Coming up: The two houses will meet in joint session at 5 p.m. today for Gov. Gary Locke's State of the State Address.

Legislative hotline: 1-800-562-6000 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m.

On the Internet: http://access.wa.gov for the state of Washington's home page. http://www.leg.wa.gov/ for the Legislature's home page, which features the text of bills, roll calls, committee schedules and more.

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THE DAILY NEWS

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STATE POLITICS

GOP leader Clyde Ballard to retire

By David Ammons
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

OLYMPIA — Former House Speaker Clyde Ballard, a dominant Republican force in the Legislature for the past 20 years, announced his retirement Tuesday.

"It's the right time," he said in an interview in his Capitol office.

"There were a whole lot of things that went into this decision. It was a very difficult decision. Ruth (his wife) and I spent a lot of time in prayer and discussion and in the end, we just felt it was the right decision."

He was mostly upbeat in a later news conference, but cried at one point when he talked about "betraying" rural Washington by retiring as its advocate. He also said he'll have some more pithy comments later about the Legislature and politics, but didn't want to throw any stones Tuesday.

"I walk out of here with my integrity," he said. "When I look back over 20 years, I can honestly tell you I have no regrets. None."

Ballard, 65, a wealthy retired businessman who grew up in a migrant family

See Ballard, Page A8

Rep. Clyde Ballard

Ballard: Leaving hole atop party

From Page A1

from Arkansas, has represented the 12th District in the Wenatchee Valley since his election in 1982. A fellow freshman that year: Gary Locke, now the governor.

"Clyde and I have teamed up on a whole host of issues over the years," Locke said. "While we had our policy differences, I always knew he was working for the people of his district and we really did work together whenever we could. He and Ruth are neat people and I wish them well in retirement."

Kudos rolled in from both backers and political adversaries for the longest-serving caucus leader in the Legislature's history — 16 years, some in the minority, four years as speaker, and three years as co-speaker.

"It's a sad day for us," said House GOP Caucus Chairman Jim Buck. "His 20-year service was exceptional. He made a contribution to this state that few have matched."

Ballard, relaxed and wearing a yellow turtleneck, jeans and running shoes, said he and his wife made their joint decision on Friday, told their family on Sunday and staff members on Monday night.

"It has been a great honor serving the district and serving as speaker," he said.

The former Senate majority leader, Dan McDonald of Bellevue, also is retiring after a long legislative career, leaving Republicans without two of their veteran captains.

Ballard, along with McDonald and other GOP leaders, helped engineer a stunning comeback for the party in the 1994 "Republican Revolution." Ballard's GOP caucus went from 33 members in the 98-member House to 60 in just one election. Dave Mastin of Walla Walla and Tom Campbell of Spanaway switched from the Democrats and the GOP majority swelled to 62.

Ballard and his party held the majority during the 1996 election, this time joined by a GOP majority in McDonald's Senate. But in 1998, Republicans lost the Senate and dropped into a 49-49 tie in the House — a rarity that continued for three years until Democrats won a special election last fall.

Ballard was visibly frustrated by the tie and losing the majority and forged his caucus into a conservative beachhead that could block some of the Democrats' agenda. He frequently sparred with Locke.

Ballard said his departure shouldn't be seen as a sign that he expects the Democrats to hang onto their majority in the next election.

Ballard said he'll serve out the rest of his term, which expires in January, and won't step down this year as Republican leader.

Allen Hayward

Attorney Allen Hayward with then-Minority Leader Clyde Ballard in 1987. (Courtesy of the Washington State Archives)

Allen "Dog Bite" Hayward retired in January 2013 from a thirty-four-year career as an attorney with the House of Representatives. Born and raised near Olympia, Washington, Hayward attended Willamette University in Salem, Oregon and received his law degree from the University of Puget Sound in 1977. Hired as a session attorney for the 1979 legislative term, Hayward expected to continue in the position for sixty days before returning to private practice.

Instead, following the departure of John Fattorini, counsel to Republican co-speaker Duane Berentson, Hayward found himself in the temporary role of speaker's attorney. As he is fond of pointing out, he had reached the pinnacle of his career in about two weeks, settling into a plateau that lasted over three decades. What's more, he was tasked with advising Berentson within a delicate power-sharing arrangement with co-speaker John Bagnariol, during a highly unusual forty-nine/forty-nine tie between Democrats and Republicans in the House. Hayward's temporary position became permanent and he alternated between stints as speaker's attorney and as minority leader's counsel, depending on which party was in power. Early in his career, under Speaker Bill Polk, Hayward was asked to rewrite the rules of the House and much of his reorganization remains in place today. Later, after another tie in the 1998 elections, he helped then-speaker Clyde Ballard adjust to another power-sharing arrangement with Frank Chopp, which lasted until Chopp became sole speaker after a special election in 2001.

An affable man with a deep appreciation for the institution he served, Hayward was held in high esteem and developed deep friendships on both sides of the aisle. His long experience makes him uniquely suited to share observations on the various speakers he worked with over the decades and he has recorded further recollections in My Ride, his engaging 2014 memoir of his career.

Vince Schleitwiler: So, Mr. Hayward, I thought we could begin by talking about your background generally, and scope of your career.

Allen Hayward: Sure. I'd be happy to do that. OK. I went to undergraduate school at Willamette University down in Salem, Oregon, even though I was born and raised in the Olympia area, and then went to University of Puget Sound Law School, graduating in 1977. I started a sole practice in Olympia in '78. Common for attorneys who particularly like politics, I also got engaged in the local political scene in 1978 and came to the attention of people up on the hill, the capitol, in Olympia.

And so, in 1979, when they had the first-ever tie in the state Legislature, forty-nine Rs and forty-nine Ds, I was invited to apply for a session job up there with the Republicans in the House. I did that intending to work for sixty days and then return to my practice. But, I got hired as a session attorney, and about two weeks into that first session, John Fattorini—the attorney for Duane Berentson, one of the two co-speakers—left to go to the Washington State Bar Association as one of their lobbyists, in effect, and I became the temporary speaker's attorney to Duane Berentson. Which was odd, because I didn't even know where the bathrooms were in the building, much less how to advise a speaker on the intricate parliamentary processes in a tie situation where everything is contested, everything is negotiated. But anyway, there I was in the temporary role, and as I always tell people, I just forgot to leave. It took them a while to realize I wasn't going to leave, so they might as well put me on the permanent payroll.

And I worked with Berentson and Baggie [co-Speaker John Bagnariol] through that, most of that two-year term. Before it was over, Bagnariol had resigned the speakership, because he got embroiled in that whole GamScam thing, of legislators trying to work, supposedly, with mafia—but they actually were FBI agents—on bringing gambling into the state. So anyway, through all of that, I was working with Duane Berentson as his counsel, trying to learn the rules as I was advising him on what he should be doing with the rules. He had a far better knowledge of the rules and the process than I did.

But as we went into the 1980 elections, Duane was running for governor. First, he had to win the Republican primary, which he was unable to do, against the much better-known John Spellman, the King County Executive who went on to be elected governor—the last Republican governor elected in the state, 1980-84.

But while that was happening, in the legislative arena it was pretty obvious that the Republicans were going to gain an outright majority because of Jimmy Carter's failed presidency and, frankly, the failed governorship of Dixy Lee Ray. All the polls were showing that Republicans were going to do very well. Bill Polk, who had been the caucus chairman and, simultaneously, the Republican caucus majority leader—something very rare, for one individual to hold two plum positions, but that's how powerful he was within the caucus—was going to be the next speaker.

And they asked me to rewrite the rules of the House, mostly not to change them, but to put them in a different form, put them in a different place, make them look differently. When I started, there were like eighty-nine rules in the House and I reduced them to thirty-five, by merging them, and subtly changing some words. The idea was that for years the Democrats had been in control of the Legislature, and all of these rules had kind of taken on their judicial gloss, if you will—the way they interpreted it, the way they ran it. So, by changing all the rules and moving them around, and changing a few key words, we would be able to put new gloss on the rules. Much of what I did still remains. You know, all these years later, if you go look at the rules of the House, they're still grouped the way they were. I tried to put them by subject matter,

instead of just random rules, as they had been.

So anyway, Bill asked me to do that, and I did. Bill Polk was the first Speaker of the House that I worked with who was the speaker—as opposed to, with Berentson and Baggie, where everything was negotiated, and nothing too dramatic could happen without the consent of both—Bill Polk was the speaker and without a doubt, the speaker, so a lot could happen, which was his opinion. He was very, very smooth. He was from Mercer Island. He looked the part. He looked like *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*. Great, great speaker. He's an architect by trade. He was very, very organized, smooth.

One day, we were on the rostrum, and we were going through all of these old motions that had been around for more than a hundred years. And it takes forever, just to get to something that's already agreed to. And I was being a young whippersnapper, saying, you know, "We can do this faster," you know, "There's got to be a better way. There's got to be a more efficient way."

And I remember that Speaker Polk kind of looked at me, and he said, "Efficiency is not everything it's cracked up to be." There's a reason we go through this very laborious process. It's to help calm things down, to impress upon the members that they're part of something bigger than themselves, that there have been hundreds of people that came before them that have gone through these same words and these same processes. There'll be hundreds of people after them that will go through these same words and these same processes. So it isn't the particular bill that's in front of you or the issue of the day that matters. It's the whole process. And I got it, because basically he was telling me, no, shut up, we're not going to make it faster.

So I appreciated that, and I appreciated it more in later years, when—and I'll talk about that later—when I was largely responsible for speeding the process up, more the way it is today. And I kind of look back at the way it used to be and think, they had it right—that it was right to go more slowly, that all the urgent things of today are not nearly as urgent as the people that are there think it is. The state's going to survive, the country is going to survive, whether you do this today, or you do it next week, or you do it next year.

So anyway, Polk was very, very good. I told the story in my book [*My Ride*, 2014] about how we were running a bill where one of the members [Paul Sanders] wanted to make the Roosevelt elk the state animal. And so we were running the bill on the floor and they started to open the back doors of the chamber, and that member was going to have a stuffed Roosevelt elk rolled down the center aisle while the bill was passing. And it was the funniest thing in the world to see Bill Polk's expression—that somebody thought they were going to roll a stuffed elk down the center aisle of the statehouse! Needless to say, it didn't happen. It was sad that we didn't have TVW at that time, so we didn't actually end up getting any pictures of Bill's face when the chief clerk [Vito Chiechi] told him that, "Well, yeah—Representative Sanders wants to roll an elk down the center aisle." Anyway, it didn't happen. That was fun.

Mr. Schleitwiler: That's right. You know, I think having spoken to a number of speakers, it's interesting to imagine which

would be horrified and which would be—excited, perhaps?

Mr. Hayward: The only, the only speaker that, I don't know, the only speaker that might have thought it was fun to do—well, there's two of them. Wayne Ehlers might have thought it was fun and Joe King might have thought it was fun. But I think Clyde Ballard would have been kind of tight on it and I think Brian Ebersole would probably not appreciate it. I don't know that even Ehlers, or any of them would have—Ebersole—would have actually allowed it. First of all, there's a rule—no props in the House.

But after Polk left, we were in a recession, in 1982. And so, the House switched to the Democrats, and Wayne Ehlers replaced—Democrat Wayne Ehlers replaced Republican Bill Polk. So I moved from being the majority, you know, the speaker's counsel, to being the minority's lead counsel on parliamentary procedure. I did have the advantage of—the rules they adopted were essentially all rules written by me and I knew some of the things I had put into those rules, some of which we had actually used during the two-year reign of Bill Polk, and others that were kind of just sitting there, latently, waiting for later use. So I had a good time as a minority counsel.

Wayne Ehlers was a librarian [in his career as an educator, before he became a legislator]. When we ran the House, in '81 through '82, it was a very conservative House with a very moderate Republican governor—lots of conflicts and lots of lots of angst.

And so, when Wayne was talking to his caucus, he would say, "Many of you are saying that, in 1982, we need to get even. And I'm going to tell you that even is not good enough!" In his first year, in 1983, he tried to make good on that pledge—that even wasn't good enough. He used to brutalize us with long hours, which, we had brutalized them with long hours as well. But he was, in his first term, '83-'84, he was pretty hardcore, partisan—not caring much about, you know, trying to do long-term stuff. He just wanted to be hardcore. Your second term was a very different guy and a much better speaker.

He was perhaps one of the most significant speakers, in terms of long-term impacts. Wayne shepherded through the bill that created a Salary Commission for state legislators, as opposed to them having to pass their own pay raises which was very, very controversial and had resulted in a huge referendum that had overturned a salary increase a few years before. Wayne shepherded through the Salary Commission, which was very consequential in terms of who can run and who can't run for the Legislature, as far as being able to afford it.

And he also shepherded through the Redistricting Commission, which was actually kind of funny because liberal organizations and the Democratic Party were pushing, for years, for having a commission do the redistricting rather than the evil legislators doing it themselves. Republicans initially opposed that idea and actually sincerely opposed it, but later it was more of a "Oh, don't throw me into that briar patch, don't throw me into that briar patch." Because the reality is, what was created, and what exists to this day is a commission with two Democrats, two Republicans, and a non-voting chair chosen

by those four people. It means that even when the state is overwhelmingly Democratic, and you would expect to have the Democrats control a bunch of the seats and control the entire redistricting project by having the governor's office, the Republicans in the redistricting process actually have a veto power. And it results in Republicans having a much better map than they would get under any normal political circumstance where the lines were being drawn by the legislators themselves. Because in the Legislature, the minority does not have a veto power, but they do on the commission. So anyway, those two changes—the constitutional change to create a Redistricting Commission, the constitutional change to create a Salary Commission—both were projects for Wayne Ehlers.

Mr. Schleitwiler: And moving forward from Wayne Ehlers—

Mr. Hayward: Well, after Wayne Ehlers did not seek reelection, Democrats maintained control and Joe King became Speaker of the House. Joe was a very dynamic, tall speaker—very, very bright, very, very aggressive, but I really like Joe. Other than my immense respect for Clyde Ballard and the men that I served for many years, Joe was probably my favorite speaker. He was very bright. He was willing to promote a lot of people within his caucus. He had a lot to do with empowering more women. And I don't think that, necessarily—I've never been one that says you have to promote somebody because they're a woman or not. But I think that he broke down some barriers, letting women be chairs. He did a lot of stuff, the Growth Management Act—for better or worse.

Probably his biggest claim to fame was that he was the one that tried to keep the murals up, the very controversial murals [Michael Spafford's *Twelve Labors of Hercules*] in the chambers when most of the members, both R and D, wanted them gone. And ultimately, they now sit down in Lewis County down at the Centralia College in their [Corbet Theatre]. But they were, the Spafford murals, very, very controversial. Those went up under Bill Polk and Polk had a whole lot of problems with his very conservative caucus who did not like them. And they were very liberal women on the Democratic side who didn't like them as well. But anyway, Polk was from Mercer Island, like I said, and he ran in, very, you know, wine-and-cheese circles, and so he had to be aware of that. So he couldn't be the Republican speaker that took the murals down. The murals did end up being covered.

It was Joe King, during his term, that said, "No, we're going to uncover those murals and we're going to show them to the public." And the public wasn't any more enamored with them the second time they saw them than the first time they had in the '80s. But the fact of the matter is, King was wanting to run for—and did—run for governor, and it was important to him, for part of the constituency groups that he was talking with, to show that he was a defender of the arts and that he would take the heat. And he did take considerable heat within his own Democratic caucus, from the women who thought that they were obscene. Others just thought that were there were probably fine, but not in that setting. So anyway, he did that.

Joe—he was absolutely ruthless as a speaker, but I never had any problem with

that. If you've got the votes, and you've got a program you want to institute, put the pedal to the metal and institute it. And that's kind of where he was at. So I enjoyed working with him, even though usually it was the result that I knew was going to happen before it started, because of the way the votes are.

After Joe was Brian Ebersole. Speakers are often remembered for the biggest bills or events that happened during their tenure. While it is not his fault, the biggest event that happened while Brian was speaker was the huge investigation into legislative staffers working on campaigns while on state time and with state resources. It did not start under Ebersole's speakership, but it came to light then and probably was the dominant factor of his time as speaker. He did go on to have a successful career outside of the Legislature and later served as Mayor of Tacoma.

Then Clyde Ballard—wonderful, wonderful man. His parents brought him to Washington, and they were migrants—migrant farmers. They had been from Arkansas, and they picked fruit and stuff like that. He started out dirt poor and worked himself up to being a very successful entrepreneur over in the Wenatchee area. He ran an ambulance service and created the first air ambulance in the state of Washington. And just a wonderful, hardworking man. He and his wife, Ruth, who was our favorite Ballard. She'd bring cookies in for the Democrats and the Republicans. She'd go over to the Democrat door, in the middle of a big contentious argument. There'd be Ruth, knocking on the door, saying, "Cookies?" It was really fun.

But Clyde was the first speaker, I believe, in state history to be unanimously elected. Because what had happened was, when they moved to nominate Brian Ebersole for reelection, he declined to have the vote taken. So we just simply unanimously elected Clyde Ballard Speaker of the House. And I served with him—I had been serving with him as minority counsel, he'd been minority leader. So I served with him as Speaker of the House for, I think, five years. He had been—the first time we took the speakership was in 1995-'96, after the '94 elections. We had the House and the Senate still had—the Ds controlled the Senate. '97-'98, the Rs controlled both chambers, but we were dealing with a Democrat, Mike Lowry, as governor. So we had to work around that. But one of the ways we did that was to put a lot of things on the ballot, because you don't have to have the governor's approval to put a referendum on the ballot. So that was one way that a Republican House and Republican Senate can work around a Democrat governor. But most of the time, we had to work with the governor. Most things—you can't send everything to the ballot.

I will say this. My governors that I worked with, all the governors—I had probably the most admiration for Booth Gardner, but the most fun to work with was probably Mike Lowry. He was just an unabashed ultra-liberal. Never played games. He would tell you in advance what he was going to do and that's what he would do. We really appreciated him because there were never hidden agendas and there were never side games. Everything was just right up front.

I worked with Ballard, like I said, in '95-'96 as a speaker with a Democrat [Senate]

chamber. In '97-'98, we worked with a Republican [Senate] chamber. In '99-2000, we were tied again, forty-nine to forty-nine, with Frank Chopp being the Democrat [co-] speaker. And I was very, very engaged at that point, and had by far the most experience of any staff person on putting together the rules for that new tie, which by necessity pulled heavily from what had happened before [in '79-'80], because a tie is a tie. They were not the same rules. But the key element that we did, that Speaker Ballard was very much supportive of me doing, was create a situation where it was like a safety deposit box, in that anything that was going to happen would require two keys. Each [co-] speaker would have to use their key to open the—no motion could pass, nothing could go forward, unless both [co-] speakers put their key in the box and opened it.

While the Democrats were chafing at that, because they controlled the Senate and they controlled the governorship, we had an absolute, total veto power in the House—except for those bills that the Constitution requires that the Legislature pass, which of course is always the biggest bill. And that's the budget. At some point—and they knew this, and we knew this—at some point a budget has to pass. And so, they knew that our key, at some point, had to be put in the box, and we had to allow them to have it. So it was a tie, but it wasn't a tie on the single most important bill, which is the budget. We could do a lot, but we couldn't do everything.

And then, after '99-2000, we had another election, and we were tied again, forty-nine, forty-nine. So we went into that, and the Democrats were even more insistent. The first time they caught us, they were surprised and so were we. The second time, they fully expected to be the majority and we thought they would get a majority too, so we were kind of surprised that we had actually maintained a tie.

That being the case, though, we did a lot of negotiating, and made some cosmetic changes. We made some physical changes in the facility, so that— We wouldn't give the Democrats the speaker's office, the traditional speaker's office, we were going to continue to hold that. But we did some changes in the building itself to make the Democrat co-speaker's office just as nice and just as well appointed as the Republican speaker's office. Which in later years was good for me because when we lost a special election in 2001 and Clyde Ballard again became minority leader, we had to move down to the chambers that Frank Chopp had had, and they were really nice. Probably the nicest minority leader suites that—I know the nicest we'd ever had in Washington and I can't imagine many other states had a nicer minority suite than we did. So that's my quick run-though on the speakers.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Do you want to say a little bit more about the scope of your career beyond the 2001 election?

Mr. Hayward: Yeah. After the 2001 election, Frank Chopp became speaker, and of course, Frank Chopp was speaker until just this January. He was longest-serving speaker in history. Very, very talented man. And surely there'll be books written about Frank Chopp, whether he's on this oral history or not. A very consequential speaker. He is a very nice guy. The more you know him personally, the more you like him. He comes across as aloof a little bit,

you know, in public and in a larger group. But in a one-on-one situation or in a small group, he's just delightful and very, very bright. And he always was someone that wanted to know everything he could about everyone, because he's smart. He knows that the more he knows about you and what your buttons are, where to push them and what will make you happy and what will pressure you, then the more tools he has to use. And he used them brilliantly. Which is why he stayed speaker for 20 years.

Mr. Schleitwiler: I'd like to ask you a little bit more about your position, how your job was defined, and how it changed over the years. Obviously, it changed depending on who is in control, but also perhaps how the role changed. And I know you talked a lot about writing the rules, and, in your book, about being a bit of a nerd for the legislative details. Could talk about your position, then and how it changed?

Mr. Hayward: Sure. It changed, it changed a lot. When I first started, the custom was that the speaker's attorney always sat next to the speaker during session. And that was in part because it was much more a process where senior members all knew the rules and everything. And as I said, they went through this litany of procedural motions to do various things and members kind of knew their rights and their rules, and they were not afraid to use those, except for junior members. The freshman members were expected to be seen, not heard. Women were there, a few of them, and they were expected to be seen and not heard, mostly. And so the speaker's attorney would always be there with the speaker, as you went to session.

But over the years, I was able to convince them that, if I can get it so that we don't have to spend so much time on all these little basic motions, that, ninety-nine-point-nine percent of the time, are just routine—and when they're not routine, it's because something has happened, somebody has made a motion that we were not expecting. And so that's why you want the person on the rostrum. So we worked a deal, kind of, with the Democrats, that we would do a short form. And that is, saying, "All the bills and memorials and resolutions printed on today's agenda be considered first reading and are to be referred to the committee so designated, hearing no objection, so ordered" would work, instead of having to go through and having motions from the floor. We would have all the motions made at the rostrum, and we would short-form it to the point that we would, in a matter of two minutes do something that used to take fifteen. To have the bill we actually wanted to have on the floor debated there so that we could have more time to actually enjoy debate. If somebody really wanted to debate a bill, we debated. But if there was not, we would then go to a final passage.

Which is one thing different. It used to be, the process was, a bill would come out, it would go through second reading, which is where amendments are allowed, and then it would be returned to the Rules Committee and scheduled later for return to the floor for final passage. There was always a process whereby the rules could be suspended with a two-thirds vote, and you could avoid sending the bill back to Rules and just simply immediately advance it to third reading and final passage, but that was a rare exception. Today, it is almost unheard of to not send a bill directly to third reading after second reading.

Completely a different process—it's much, much faster, which is why they pass so many more bills through each chamber. It's not that they pass that many more bills through the governor's office, but more bills pass through each chamber, giving—you know, they might be identical, or nearly identical bills on the House side and the Senate side. But it allows more members to say they passed a bill through their chamber that did thus-and-so. And no matter which bill becomes the law, the other side can say, "Well, we had the same bill on the Senate side or the House side"—bragging rights.

As far as my job, the way it evolved over the years, I spent more and more time back in the office, particularly after TVW came, and I was able to sit in my office and watch the floor while I was working on bills that were in Rules, or bills that were controversial that were in committee, that I might need to talk with the chairs about—what to watch for and what issues were coming up. I met with lobbyists, particularly lobbyists, that the speaker didn't really want to—he wanted to give them the courtesy, to allow them to have whatever their concern was heard, but he didn't want to have to take the time to hear it himself necessarily.

I met with a lot of lobbyists on legislation, particularly if their legislation was likely to raise some kind of a parliamentary question, or they felt there might be an amendment, good or bad, that was going to raise questions about whether it was properly before us. We have rules that—we have in the Constitution a thing that says that all amendments have to be within the scope and object of the bill, which is really kind of a germane-ness argument, that you might have a really fine bill and you might have a really fine amendment, but that bill might not be the right vehicle for that amendment. And so, I've worked on a lot of that kind of stuff.

Worked some on—working with the Senate, certainly the Senate staff, when it came to be that a bill working over there was either similar to what we were working on, so we tried to get it as similar as possible, before we crossed, and then we had to figure out whose bill it was going to be, the Senate's or the House's. A lot of it was scheduling legislation, meeting with disappointed members when they didn't get their bill, or getting a call that said, "There's a problem in State Government Committee."

And so then, I'd walk over to the State Government Committee, and when I walked in the room, they were—all the members were pretty sure I wasn't there because I had a sudden new interest in this bill. But I was there representing the speaker, at that point, and as often as not, I was there to calm down my Republican majority and ensure that the minority was being heard. Simply because, it's better to let them be heard in committee, and get the issue resolved, and get their amendment voted on, or whatever, than it is to have it all blow up in committee, and then end up on a House floor fight where ninety-eight members need to hear it all and get involved in the conflict. And the speaker has to use political capital in order to solve that issue, when a smarter care taken in the committee would have reduced or eliminated that problem.
So we always basically—I said, "You know, if we're going to have a really ugly food fight, I'd prefer to have it in committee."

So, over the years, I will say too, that as society has changed, so has the Legislature. It's not at all the way it used to be, in that freshmen are expected to be seen but not heard—I mean, freshmen can come in now, fully expecting to be fully engaged and participating members on the Rules Committee, on the Ways and Means Committee—and they are. Women expect to be fully engaged and equally powerful. And indeed, we now have a female speaker [Laurie Jinkins]. All of that has changed over time. And it's more a reflection of the changes in society then being reflected by the Legislature then it is the Legislature leading society to these things.

But I loved my career, too. I meet with people all the time and say, I had a lot of really bright young people come through, and serve there one or two years in the process, just to see what it was like, and learn what the Legislature is, and then go on, and have very successful careers doing lots of things. Very few of us stay there thirty-four years! I did, just because, like I say, I started and within two weeks I was at the pinnacle of the position that I could ever want to hold, which was to be the counsel, the lead counsel to the Speaker of the House, which is considered the second most powerful position in the state. And the bad thing is, I was there for thirty-four years and had no career advancement! I never moved beyond being the counsel to the second most powerful person in the state.

Mr. Schleitwiler: One thing that all the time you spent there meant was that you saw the two ties, the two co-speakerships, and you had institutional knowledge of that. Could you say more about what you were able to do because of that, and how you understood that situation—the co-speakership?

Mr. Hayward: Like I said, when I first came in, as counsel to the speaker, it was during the tie and the agreements about how they were going to run the place had all been made before I became counsel to Berentson. And I was just trying to learn what they were and kind of catch up. Then I rewrote the rules for Polk, but I was still operating in the old system. And so, new rules, but still old, normal conventions, and Speaker Polk made the point that going slow was a good thing. But when we took the majority, in the '94 elections, and in 1995 I was Clyde Ballard's counsel. He was very open to any new processes that would, you know, would make it work better, faster. And so, I then went ahead and said, let's do all the motions from the—

Mr. Schleitwiler: You rewrote the rules for Polk, and then you were operating under new rules, but things were still—?

Mr. Hayward: Yes, under Polk all the customs and all the practices remained the same. And I didn't really have—even though I had been there for two years, under Berentson and Baggie [John Bagnariol], that was a very unique tie situation where really nobody was the speaker. You really had two almost-speakers with equal power. The first time I was working for a speaker was Bill Polk, somebody that was without doubt the absolute authority. And so we had these new rules, and I was working with Polk, but I was still brand-new to the process. I'd never worked under a true speaker before. And now that I was, we ran it the old-fashioned way, the way they always had. But in 1994, when the Republicans took it

back, after they had lost it in 1982, Ballard became speaker. And he was very open to any ideas I have because I'm the only one, the only staff person, who had been there during a majority. And there were only three members who had ever been there, Republican members, who had ever been there during a majority and all of them had been freshmen at the time.

So I convinced Ballard that we should go to a system that would be more efficient, and call the minor motions and stuff out of the way, by simply having the—usually it's not the speaker, it's somebody else, some member that the speaker has designated to be in the chair, while the speaker's back in his office working with lobbyists and others.

So anyway, I would go to the minority counsel and say, "We're not trying to take away your rights to make any objections. You can fully debate anything you need to debate and take any roll call vote you want, but we are trying to get rid of a bunch of time-wasting so that we can spend more time on actual debate, on actual legislation." So something like, in the morning, when we're sending all bills to the committees that are so designated, rather than having to make all these motions, what we would do is just have the speaker get up and say, you know, "All the bills, memorials, and resolutions printed on today's introductory sheet will be referred to the committee so designated, and hearing no objection, so ordered."

But if there had been an objection, I would know that the night before, and we would have said, "All bills, memorials, and resolutions printed on today's introductory sheet, except House Bill 1881, will be referred to committees so designated, hearing no objections, so ordered. Next House Bill 1881. Remarks." And then they would call on the Democrat, and they would make a motion to send it to some other committee, or advance the bill, or whatever it was they wanted to do, we could do. So we could get rid of what I considered time-wasting stuff, and move directly to the conflicts, and get those done.

In hindsight, as I think I said in my book, I tend to agree with Polk that probably it would be better to go more slowly. And it was funny, because when the Democrats got the tie, back in 1999-2000, one of the first things that they did was say, "We want to go back to the old way." Well, at that point, my members didn't want to because they liked the nice fast way, but the Democrats wanted to do theirs. And so Speaker Ballard said, "OK, on the days that they"—we alternated, which day, who was presiding—"on the days that Republicans are presiding, we're going to run it our way, and on the days that you are presiding, you run it your way." Because it's just procedurally, it doesn't change what bills pass.

And so that's what we did, for about, oh, almost a month. And then the Ds started running our way again, because their own members were complaining to them. When you run it the old way, the speaker does not make motions. The speaker simply accepts motions from the floor, which means somebody on the floor has to have their act together to get up and make a motion. And then it's been moved and seconded, that the bills and motions, all their remarks, dot, dot, dot, dot, and you go through this. Now, understand that these are all voice votes, unanimous votes. I mean, ninety-nine percent of the stuff that passes in the

Legislature, whether it passes by an actual motion or an implied motion, passes unanimously, and almost never with recorded votes. And when we went to the way the Republicans ran it, the way I had it set up, it didn't even require them to say yea or nay.

Because the chair would simply say, "If there's no objection, the motion is passed. No objection, so ordered." Boom. So, in the absence of an objection, it all passed.

Their way, you actually had to get up and talk. They would find they needed to substitute bills, and they couldn't find—everybody in the place was agreeing to substitute a bill as it came out of committee, but they couldn't find the right person that was going to be there to make the motion.

So there's all this time on the floor, fluttering around, trying to find somebody to get up and make a motion that is already completely agreed to. No one cares if you have a—put a microphone into a page's face and let them say it. As long as it gets said, it's going to happen. But after about a month, they got embarrassed, because it always, on TVW looks so smooth when the Republicans were running it and such a mess when the Democrats were running it. They went to their own leadership and said, "We don't want to do it that way anymore."

The disadvantage of not doing it that way is that members no longer, for the most part, have any clue what actually is happening. They have no idea how many motions are passing. They have no idea how many opportunities there would have been to make other motions, other motions of higher or equal ranks. With the exception of leadership itself—maybe the speaker, the majority leader, the minority leader—most of the members really do not realize that every day hundreds of motions passed. Hundreds. And almost all of them have some other motion that could have been made or done.

Usually you don't want to. And usually, you don't want some freshman member getting up, and showing the world how smart they are, because you may have had some other deal going on. For example, I mentioned at one point that amendments may or may not be proper. They may or may not be within "scope and object." But if I'm the minority leader, and there is an amendment being offered that is either going to be embarrassing to the majority or going to be helpful to my people because of some subsequent amendment that we want to offer, I don't want the objection raised. If the majority realizes what's going on, they can stop anytime they want. But if they don't recognize that, there's no reason for one of my people to help them.

And so, we used to always tell the membership, if you think there's some really good idea, that we should be making some procedural objection or whatever, you run it through the floor leaders because we may have some other thing going on. We may have made an agreement with the sponsor that we will not object to them making the motion and letting them have their debate. We may not give them the amendment, or we might, but at least we'll let them make the motion. We may have some other game afoot and we can't tell all ninety-eight members, all of the time, everything that's going on.

So it's much more centralized in the House than it is in the Senate and it's much more centralized now than it ever was in the early days. In the early days, you had an awful lot of independent operators, very bright people, that were on the floor. And any time they wanted to they would get up, and they would raise this parliamentary objection or that parliamentary objection. Very rare now. Pretty much objections come from the leaders. And they usually come from the leaders before we ever hit the floor. And they usually get worked out before they ever have to be made.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Looking back at the various speakers you worked with in your career, how would you compare them—the differences in style, as well as differences in substance? Their different personalities, different personal styles, but also different strategies or different approaches to the role?

Mr. Hayward: Yeah, starting first with Bill Polk. Bill Polk, probably of all the speakers I ever worked with, is the one that most looked like Jimmy Stewart up there. You know, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*. He was great. He was smooth. Absolutely smooth. Very, very conservative, but he didn't come across as a bomb thrower. He's one of those ones that, you know, they say, it's OK if you're conservative, if you're likable—if people like you, and respect you, and don't fear you, it's OK if your agenda is conservative. And that would be Bill. Bill was very conservative, far more conservative than the state of Washington was. And his caucus was even more conservative than him. And of course, we had a Democrat Senate, and we had a Democratic governor. At first, we had a Republican governor and then the Senate shifted from Democrat to Republican when PVR [Peter von Reichbauer] became the twenty-fifth Republican—he had been the twenty-fifth Democrat.

Which was the worst thing that ever happened to [Governor] John Spellman, because all of a sudden Spellman was the odd man out with a Republican House and Republican Senate wanting to pass a lot of conservative legislation, and John Spellman saying, "Look, I'm a Republican only because I don't have to pass all this stuff that"—you know—"I don't have to support all this stuff." So anyway, the biggest conflict was then not with the Democrats—because they didn't have the votes to be a problem—the biggest problem was with the governor's office who did have the vote, with the [veto] pen, to be a problem.

Polk really cared about the institution looking good. He wasn't afraid to spend the money. He did an awful lot to upgrade the facilities. The House of Representatives, when I started there, the biggest hearing room was on the fourth floor of the John L.—what would later become the John L. O'Brien building, up on the fourth floor. And he was smart enough to say, "No, we need to move the big meeting rooms that are open to the public down on the first floor." So he did that, and that was probably a consequential thing. Much of the campus today looks like what he had started for, as far as the meeting rooms and things.

After Polk, Wayne Ehlers—I think I talked about his style. He was a librarian and comes across as almost shy, but when you're with him in private groups he's great. He's very engaging. Very, very futuristic thinking. Like I say, he created the Salary Commission, which he knew over time

would change the complexion of the Legislature. He created the Redistricting Commission. Very, very good.

Joe King was, as I said, one of my favorite people. Enjoyed the heck out of him. Absolutely powerful. Personally looks—you know, big strapping guy—looks like a West Virginia coal miner or something, as far as his physical strength and booming voice. He did an awful lot to help bring more and more members into the system that historically hadn't been. But society was changing, too. It was kind of under Joe that you started to see more freshmen actually getting on committees and getting a chance to be players. And it was partially because he wanted them to be and partially because society was—they were demanding that they don't have to do some kind of long two-year, four-year internship before they can be full range players.

And then I would go to Brian Ebersole. It may not be fair, but then fairness is not a part of the job description—Brian Ebersole was the speaker when the investigation about legislative staffers working campaigns on state time became front page news. Caucuses and staffers received large fines. It was the defining story of his time as speaker.

Clyde Ballard's, probably, biggest claim to fame is that he and Alan Thompson—Alan Thompson was the chief clerk at the time, and Alan Thompson was a newspaper guy—he and Alan Thompson have an award named for them about open government [the Washington Coalition for Open Government's Ballard/Thompson Open Government Award]. Clyde's thing was opening the process to the media. He hated the closed meetings. He and I kind of disagreed on some of that because I knew what would happen, but we adopted rules that required that all of the meetings be open. And so, you know, when they would go to conference committees, the press had to be able to be there and stuff.

Well, all that happened, when we did that—which the press loved, with all the conference committees, all the dirt was going to be there. Well, no. What you do is, you just made sure that you never had a conference committee meeting. You're just going to get people shuttling back and forth—staff getting the agreements. And then finally, when you had the agreement and you had all the paperwork prepared, then you would be announcing you're having a conference committee meeting and the press and everyone could come. And then there would be this document, all worked out, and the conferees would all smile and you could take pictures while they signed this document that had all worked out.

Clyde tried to keep open. He also was the one that was responsible for getting—again, not all his credit, it's a lot of technology—but he got computers on the members' desks. You know, that was happening anyway, but he was very much open to it. He is the one that signed the original contract that gave us TVW in the chamber and the Senate, at the same time, was refusing to do it. Your House of Representatives said, "Sure, bring on the cameras. We love it." It didn't take very long for the senators to realize that House members—two House members are in the same district that every single senator is in—and it didn't take them very long to realize, "I've got two potential opponents, whether they're in my own party or the

other party, that are getting all kinds of airtime, and I'm not getting any because of our rules." So the Senate went to TVW and said, "Uh, we've reconsidered, and you can go ahead and broadcast us too."

So that was probably Clyde's biggest claim to fame, opening the process—and insisting on the process be open, and insisting that members have whatever tools that could be made available, made available to them. His personal integrity was never in question. No one ever thought that he was trying to get some bill passed because it was going to benefit him or benefit his big businesses or whatever. Just a very, very straight shooter.

Mr. Schleitwiler: You talked a lot, earlier in the interview and also in your book, about Clyde Ballard's background and his character. I'm wondering, whether for him or for anyone else, about what you observed about these folks that maybe others may not have seen?

Mr. Hayward: Well, I could say one that you're not writing on right now, but it's Frank Chopp. That's one thing, for example. Frank Chopp was—well, everybody thought he was this horrible Democrat, you know, on the Republican side all the members think Frank Chopp is this horrible, horrible guy, horrible Democrat.

"He does mean things to us, and he doesn't give us our bills." And, you know, "He's listening to all those evil interest groups that are an anathema to us," and all that. But any time any member—and I saw this with other speakers, too—but any time any member or, sometimes staff people, when they were aware of it, was having a personal problem or health problem or whatever, they would go out of their way and Frank, particularly, would go out of his way to help them. Reach out to them. Even if it was somebody that, politically, that they didn't share three percent common interests. I mean, I was aware of phone calls that he made to get medical attention and, you know, to get people into the kind of cancer treatment they needed or, you know, that sort of thing that they would not have gotten without intervention by a speaker. He didn't do any of that for any political reasons. He did it because he was a nice human being that cared about another human being, even though he'd just as soon not have that human being be in the Legislature.

I think that that was true with most of these people that are successful, not just because they really know politics and they really know the process and they really are well-connected and all that stuff—which is true with almost all of them or they wouldn't get where they get—it's because they truly care about people. And I think any of them would have, and did, do interventions for poor people, not for any political gain for themselves, but just because they are decent, decent people.

And as Clyde always said, and he's a very deeply religious man, but he said, you know, "To be a leader, you must be a servant." The idea is not that you're number one, the idea is that you are last. The last to be served should be you. If there's not enough food, it's the leader that doesn't eat. That sort of thing. That's these people.

Mr. Schleitwiler: Can you say more, based on your experience, about what you think makes a good speaker, and a good legislative process?

Mr. Hayward: Well, I think that the thing that makes a good speaker is someone who does want to serve and someone who does want to learn and be a part of a bigger thing. There is, in the Capitol, a big wall of photographs of former speakers, and of course there's also another wall that has the class pictures of all the legislators.

And I always told members that, when you come here and you think you have this huge, huge problem, or if you're speaker and you've got this huge, huge problem, and nobody has ever, ever faced such a huge, huge problem as the one you got—take a little time, and go walk the halls, and look at those former speakers, and look at those former classes of legislators, and ask yourself if what you think is really true. That no one's ever faced such a hard time. No one's ever, ever had to deal with such a big problem. And you will come to realize that that's not true, that you're just a part of a remarkable system of government that's been around for a long time, and it's going to be around for a long time afterwards—we hope—unless you screw it up! So try not to screw it up, and try to realize what you're facing may be hard. And maybe, as a result, you won't be the speaker anymore, and that wouldn't be the end of the world. You're not going to be the speaker, anyway, forever.

And as long as you know that you're going to do the best you can—which is all that happened with all the people that worked for you and all the people that come after you. It's that they're trying to take a system of government—which has got all kinds of problems, but is still the best ever known, and is going to go on for a long time, we hope—and you're going to do the best you can. And then be at peace with the decision you make and go forward with it. And I think the ones that do that, that know that it isn't all about them—in fact, not even a little bit about them. It's about a system of government, and a process, and they're just a cog in that. And they're hopefully going to be one that people, when they're done, say that, "You know, they didn't screw it up too bad. They really didn't screw it up too bad."

Mr. Schleitwiler: You spoke about how the Legislature and politics changed, as a reflection of changes in society. Do you have other reflections on what's changed? You mentioned when you were talking about Joe King, you mentioned how he was ruthless but you never had a problem with that, and I think that's something that a lot of people looking at politics now have a harder time understanding. Do you talk about that or other changes that you've seen?

Mr. Hayward: Yeah. Well, I mean, Joe was very, very partisan, very, very strong—and of course, in fact, his physical appearance actually made it even more effective, because when somebody looks like, you know, a ninety-eight-pound weakling, but they come across as really strong, you have a hard time with that disconnect. But you didn't have a hard time with that disconnect—there was no disconnect with Joe. You actually believed that, yes, he could pound you into the ground.

Joe was ruthlessly efficient, but it doesn't mean that he couldn't go out and have a beer with you. Be fun. It didn't mean that he didn't understand you, and what you were trying to do.

He just simply said, "I don't agree with you, and I have the votes"—so—"You may be

right, I'm not telling you you're wrong, I'm just telling you that my wrong position has the votes. And so, my wrong position is going to prevail." And I absolutely appreciated that.

I always told all members—I think I put in the book—that you don't need to remember all these rules. You don't really need to understand all the intricacies of parliamentary procedure. All you really need to understand is that it is the right of the majority to decide what bills are going to pass. It is the right of the minority to decide how long that's going to take! And there's going to be, at times, a conflict between those two rights because the minority is going to want to consume all the time so that you can't pass what you want to pass.

And that's really where my job came in. And whether I was in the majority—the speaker's attorney's position, or the minority leader's [counsel] position—my job was to facilitate those times when those two rights came into conflict, and negotiate a way to solve it so that we didn't have a complete meltdown. And that's what I know now. That was the fun part and also the hard part of the job, was, obviously, the minority passionately opposes a bill. Well, that's fine. And they have a right to be heard, and they have a right to tell why they oppose the bill. They do not have a right to try and keep the bill from coming to a vote, ever, because they know they don't have the votes, and it will lose. They don't have that right.

So I would just make sure that, if we were the minority, that we had sufficient time to offer amendments, but not so many amendments that it was obvious that they were just simply time-killers. And that we had sufficient time to debate, but not so much time that it was trying to keep the thing from coming to a vote, because ultimately the majority will—must prevail. So that's what I did when we were in the majority.

Many, many times, I would bend over backwards to give the minority a right to offer an amendment that, reasonably, we could have stopped. It would not have been an abuse of power to say that amendment is beyond "scope and object." You're just trying to bring in another subject matter because you can't get it to the floor otherwise, through committee, because you don't have the votes. I would, many times, if I had to defer to somebody, I would defer to somebody in the minority before I would defer to somebody in the majority because the minority's only power is the power to try to persuade, the power to go out and say why they think what it is you're going to do is a horrible thing, and as long as they do in a timely fashion, and let me get to the vote, I'm one-hundred-percent with that—with their right to do that.

And I think Clyde was too. I mean, I used to keep track of the rulings that we would make, just to make sure that it didn't look—I wanted to keep it balanced. I would let members in the majority offer amendments, you know, without going to them in advance and say, "If you offer that, I know that the minority's going to try and 'scope' it. And if they do try and 'scope' it, we're going to rule in their favor." Because I kind of liked it when I was able to let the minority make an objection and we would strike down the majority person's amendment.

That's one thing I taught the minority counsel, over a couple of years. I said, "When you guys were in the majority, you always went to members from the majority in advance and told them how they needed to clean up their amendments so they could offer them—or 'Don't offer it at all, because we'll have to strike it down'—so that, if you go look at your rulings from your speaker, your speaker ninety-nine percent of the time is ruling against the minority—that's just not a good place to be.

Mr. Schleitwiler: I have another question that I definitely have to ask. In speaking with a number of different folks, your nickname came up several times—

Mr. Hayward: Dog Bite!

Mr. Schleitwiler: Yes! And different versions of the story behind it. So I know you tell [the story] in your book, but maybe you can clear up the origin of that nickname?

Mr. Hayward: Sure. When I first started there and I was working in the caucus and then temporarily working with the speaker—which became permanent—there was this bill that dealt with dog-bite liability. It came out of Spokane. Some people had some friends over at their house, and their dog bit these guests' daughter, in the face, and it required some plastic surgery and all that kind of stuff. Well, the homeowners, of course, were aghast that their dog had done that. And they turned it in to their homeowners' insurance, to pay for the medical bills for this little girl.

And the homeowners' insurance company came back, and said, "Well, we'd certainly pay for the dog biting a little girl in the face except that there's no record at all that that dog has ever bitten anyone. And under common law, which is still the law in the state of Washington, all dogs have one free bite. And so, we don't have any legal authority to pay this claim, and if we were to pay this claim, we would be subject to a lawsuit from our shareholders for giving away money that is not legally owed."

So immediately, the insurance industry itself came in and said, "We want to change Washington State law. We want you to put into the law a reversal of the common law. We don't want dogs to have a free bite anymore in a situation where someone is a guest at someone's home and a dog bite occurs."

So this bill gets introduced, and it's bipartisan—it's going to fly out of committee unanimously, and all that good stuff. And so, it's coming to the floor. And a member named Bob Eberle from Vashon Island, a Republican, doesn't like the bill.

And so, he says, "Allen, I want you to draft a whole bunch of amendments that will slow this bill down"—and so—"'We want to make sure that this bill doesn't apply in this case, and in this case, and in this case, and in this case.'"

So I drafted like eighty amendments. And we put them up on the bar of the House. And so that slowed—of course, the whole bill was going to fly through, but it didn't.

And so, one of the members went over to Bob Eberle and said, "My God, where did you come up with all these amendments? What are you doing?"

And he says, “Well, I just had the caucus attorney draft up all these amendments for me.”

So a guy named Sid Flanagan, who was from the Moses Lake area—a really brilliant guy—he was talking to the leadership, and he says, “Well, you know, that guy from the caucus, you know”—later on, he was saying this—“you know, the dog bite guy.” And so, I was “the dog bite guy” and it became Dog Bite. So that’s how I became Dog Bite.

And then, later on in my career, when I was introduced at a press availability in the governor’s office—not by the governor [Mike Lowry], but by Lorraine Hine, who was in his senior staff. And the press was there. And she said, “Well, Dog Bite could probably be better for you.” And then her face got all red, and she said, “Oh, I’m so sorry! I didn’t mean to call you ‘Dog Bite’ at a press conference!”

Mr. Schleitwiler: Well it seems like it’s not a bad nickname for an attorney to have.

Mr. Hayward: Yeah, well that’s what I thought. I think at that point, when that happened, I’d only been there for a month or so. And so, I thought, “Hey, at least they know who I am. That’s great.”

Mr. Schleitwiler: I know you told a lot more stories in your book, *My Ride*. Are there any other final observations about the speakers, or your experience working with them, that you’d like to add?

Mr. Hayward: I think I ended it with—I told you about encouraging all members, including speakers, to do that walk and look at all those former speakers and then look at the pictures of all the former members and stop thinking that they are unique, that somehow they are the first ones that ever faced problems, where any decision you made was going to be the wrong decision—and hopefully the right decision at the same time, because it’s a very complicated society, a very complicated world with very complicated questions. But you’re not the only ones that have ever faced complicated questions, and complicated times. And other people got through it. And there’s no reason you can’t get through it.

And the good speakers are the ones to take it to heart. They do the very best they can, knowing that whatever happens is not going to be, necessarily, the right thing. And even if it is the right thing for them, it isn’t necessarily going to be the right thing for the next year, or the next decade. You just do the best you can and do what you can do. And the good ones get it.

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