Nevada Legislature Oral History Project

JOHN E. (JACK) JEFFREY

Democrat

Assembly, 1974 – 1990

MARCH 29, 2008
HENDERSON, NEVADA

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THE JEFFREY HOME
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PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The 2007 Nevada Legislature approved an appropriation for a project of conducting oral histories with former state legislators, and in the summer following the conclusion of the session, the Research Division of the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) conducted a competitive bid process to identify and obtain a contractor to carry out the project. A committee consisting of LCB and other state personnel with expertise in Nevada history and politics evaluated and ranked the proposals received. In January 2008, a contract was signed between LCB and Get Consensus, LLC, for an 18-month program.

Administered by Donald O. Williams, Research Director, and coordinated by Amber Joiner, Senior Research Analyst, the Nevada Legislature Oral History Project consists of video- and audio-taped interviews, which have been transcribed, edited for readability, and indexed. An initial list of suggested interview subjects had been presented to the Senate Committee on Finance when it considered Senate Bill 373, which proposed an appropriation for the creation of an oral history of the Nevada Legislature. Using that as the starting point, LCB staff considered several factors—such as age, length of legislative tenure, contributions to the State of Nevada, and whether a formal oral history of the individual had been published or was underway—when identifying the former legislators who would be interviewed. The final list provided to the contractor revealed a careful balance of legislative house, political party, and geographic distribution among the interviewees.

After LCB staff acquired the written permission of each subject, the contractor would proceed with scheduling the interview at a time and place convenient for the former legislator. Each interview was simultaneously filmed and audiotaped. The audio recording was transcribed verbatim and then edited by the contractor for readability. Each interviewed legislator was provided the opportunity to review his or her edited document, and any misstatements or errors in the videotape were corrected in the text. The contractor produced three copies of each final product, which includes the text and a DVD of the interview film. Copies were presented to LCB's Research Library and the State Library in Carson City; the subject legislator also received a copy of his or her interview. The repository of record for all digital film and audio files is LCB's Research Library.

Together, these interviews make a significant contribution to the annals of Nevada politics and provide incomparable context to the state's legislative history. The official legislative record outlines the chronology for actions taken by Nevada's lawmaking body; these oral histories vividly portray the background and circumstances in which such actions occurred. Invaluable for understanding Nevada's politics in the latter half of the twentieth century, these interviews present interesting explanations, entertaining stories, and thoughtful observations that might otherwise have been lost.

John E. (Jack) Jeffrey
March 29, 2008

JOHN E. JEFFREY

John E. Jeffrey, known to all as Jack, served for 16 years in the Nevada Legislature. The Democrat was first elected to the Assembly in 1974 to represent Henderson after having served on its City Council. He soon rose to leadership positions, chairing the Assembly Committee on Commerce during four sessions and serving as Assembly Majority Leader during three Sessions. He also chaired the Assembly Committee on Economic Development and Natural Resources; was a member of the Assembly Committees on Government Affairs, Labor and Management, and Ways and Means; and held the post of assistant minority floor leader during the only session of his tenure in which the Democrats were not the majority party. After his 1990 defeat, Mr. Jeffrey returned as a lobbyist for union interests. In all, he has been involved in the Nevada legislative process for well over three decades.

Born in Iowa, Mr. Jeffrey moved to the fledgling town of Henderson with his family in 1941 when he was still a small child. His father had been attracted to the area by the presence of war-time jobs, but did not move away, as so many did, when it appeared that Henderson might vanish when those jobs did. In 1956, Jack Jeffrey married Betty J. Brown; together, they raised their three children in Henderson, where they continue to reside. Like his father, Mr. Jeffrey became active in the Democratic Party, working on campaigns before he was old enough to vote.

This interview was conducted at the dining room table in Mr. Jeffrey's Henderson home on March 29, 2008, at 9 a.m. For 75 minutes, Mr. Jeffrey answered questions about his first campaign for the Assembly, his work as Assembly Majority Leader, important issues of the time, and his personal perspective on key political figures. He remembers the Legislature as being less partisan during the 1970s and 1980s. He talks about the informality of counting votes before caucuses became the norm and reminisces fondly about the other party's leaders, such as Assemblymen Lou Bergevin (R-Douglas) and Virgil Getto (R-Churchill), explaining that they would fight about bills during the day and congenially socialize together in the evenings. He discusses how he used to run his committees and the time he almost became Speaker. Assemblyman Jeffrey also comments on his many campaigns, noting that he had a tough time getting re-elected after having supported the Equal Rights Amendment and that his vote in favor of the controversial legislative retirement bill in 1989 contributed to his loss in 1990.

Mr. Jeffrey was particularly fond of the Assembly Committee on Government Affairs because of its emphasis on local issues. Although taxation issues seemed to dominate the legislative agenda during this time, he did not much enjoy serving on the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means. Mr. Jeffrey remembers being telephoned by Governor Mike O'Callaghan (D) at 5:00 on session mornings and his many positive interactions with news reporters Cy Ryan, Brendan Riley, and Bryn Armstrong. Mr. Jeffrey reminisces about the tiny size of his first office, noting that he preferred to utilize his desk on the floor for work. Of the many people Mr. Jeffrey mentions, Mouryne Landing, long-time Chief Clerk of the Assembly, receives especially high praise. Mr. Jeffrey explains that the Nevada Legislature is a people-oriented business that one either likes or does not. This interview clearly demonstrates that, with his long involvement in as both a legislator and a lobbyist, Mr. Jeffrey is one who has enjoyed the process.

Dana R. Bennett
May 2009

Dana Bennett: Good morning, Assemblyman Jeffrey.

Jack Jeffrey: Good morning, Dana.

Bennett: Think for a minute about your first session in the Nevada Legislature. It's opening day, January 20, 1975, and the weather is nice. Most of the opening ceremonies were conducted outside that day. What were you feeling—what were you thinking about—as you began your legislative career?

Jeffrey: [laughter] I really don't remember. I had a lot of family up there, and several people who supported me here in Henderson made the trip. I think I was probably more concerned about keeping them entertained than I was with what was going on. As a freshman Assemblyman, you don't have a big role to play in the opening. So I spent a lot of time with my family. I wasn't all that awed by it because I had been up there for two previous sessions as a part-time lobbyist. I knew where the restroom was, and that was about all I knew about the legislative process.

Bennett: So you were a little bit ahead of most freshmen?

Jeffrey: A few days maybe. [laughter]

Bennett: Tell me how you got there. Why did you run for the Legislature?

Jeffrey: I'd always had an interest in politics, and I was on the city council in Henderson. Hal Smith, the guy who represented this district was retiring, and several people talked to me about running. I had an interest in running. Various people from the local business community and labor and the local newspaper guy all encouraged me to do it, so I did. It was kind of odd, though, because Hal got so much pressure from the Republican Party that he ended up filing towards the end of filing. [chuckles] It was a very uncomfortable campaign because Hal was a good friend of mine. Luckily, we managed to stay good friends.

Robert Hallock (Hal) Smith (R-Clark) served in the Assembly from 1966 to 1974.

Bennett: That's good. How did you campaign?

Jeffrey: Actually, the campaigns then were not that much different than they are now, except they were smaller. I depended, quite a bit, on trying to gain the support of people who had some influence in the community. If you had six friends, I wanted you to support me. A lot of door-to-door work. Some direct mail. I was big on yard signs. I used a lot of yard signs, a few road signs, mostly door-to-door and direct contact, and a couple of pieces of direct mail. Campaigns were a lot cheaper in those days. Mail was cheaper, too.

Bennett: How big was your district then?

Jeffrey: Actually, it covered a lot of area. I couldn't tell you offhand how many residents—probably around 10,000 is just a guess. I had pretty much all the small areas south of I-15 from the California state line to the Arizona state line. I had Overton, Logandale, Mesquite, Jean, Goodsprings, Boulder City, and Laughlin, so it was a lot of travel time.

In 1974, the average Assembly district in Clark County had 12,422 residents. In 2001, the average Assembly district had 47,578 residents.

Bennett: Those are some diverse communities. Were there any particular challenges to campaigning there?

Jeffrey: They had diverse interests, but not any real particular challenge. The biggest challenge for me was Hal Smith. He was a popular guy. The Mesquite area had several dairy farms. Laughlin didn't really amount to much then. Searchlight didn't amount to much. There were a couple of casino-owners there who supported me, and that's about all it took for Searchlight. I got acquainted with the dairy farmers in Mesquite and that area. There was just that kind of campaign. There were diversified interests, but there weren't any real challenges.

Bennett: Was there a particular reason you ran as a member of the Democratic Party?

Jeffrey: I've been a lifelong Democrat. My dad was a Democrat. He would have killed me if I'd been a Republican. [laughter] I was active in Democratic Party politics before I ran. I think I

worked in my first campaign when I wasn't old enough to vote yet. I worked for a guy running for Mayor here in Henderson when I was about 18, and the voting age then was 21. I did a lot of door-to-door work for him. My family had a lot of friends here, too, so he wanted me to do that for him, and I did.

Bennett: So back to that first session in 1975, the Reno newspaper reported that it was expected to be very contentious, with the ERA [Equal Rights Amendment] and Clark County consolidation and a lot of major issues. What do you remember about that session?

Jeffrey: Well, they were right. Consolidation was seen as a panacea by the business community, particularly in Las Vegas. I was opposed to it. In fact, I put in a couple of bills that said Henderson or Boulder City couldn't be consolidated without a vote of the people. Neither one of them made it. [laughter] Actually, the consolidation measures did pass; the courts threw it out.

ERA was another problem. It was very contentious. I had a problem with it personally during the campaign. I really had not heard anything much about ERA. Some supporters I had who were supporting ERA talked to me about it, and I told them I'd check it out and let them know. I did. Frankly, I didn't see any big

deal there. That's how naïve I was. I told them I'd support it. Well then, this district was fairly strongly opposed to it. The valleys were heavy LDS [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints]; Henderson was probably about 30 percent LDS. They really pulled out all the stops. The people who were in favor of it weren't nearly as well organized, but I did tell them I'd vote for it, and I did. So that was what my second campaign was about. [laughter]

Bennett: Did you have a tough reelection campaign?

Jeffrey: Yes, I did. In fact, an LDS guy, Ace Robison, ran against me. Ace and Paul Seidler have a public relations firm in Vegas; I don't remember the name of it now. It was a tough campaign. The campaigns didn't get as nasty then as they do now. It wasn't too long after the campaign was over that I got acquainted with Ace, and we became friends, too. But that's the way it was then. It wasn't nearly as partisan as it is now. In fact, I had a fair amount of Republican support in this district. This district actually turned Republican by about 1,500 votes over the period of time that I served, and I had some fairly strong support there.

Ace Robison was Chief of Staff for U.S. Senator Paul Laxalt of Nevada and is currently a member of the Colorado River Commission. He is Chairman of Robison/Seidler, Inc., a government affairs firm with offices in Las Vegas and Alamo.

Bennett: Is there any particular campaign that stands out as tougher than any of the others?

Jeffrey: The first two. The one Gene Segerblom ran against me was a different kind of campaign.

Gene Wines Segerblom (D-Clark) served in the Assembly from 1992 to 2000. She was a third-generation Nevada legislator.

She's such a sweetheart. We'd be at some public gathering, especially in Boulder City where she lives, and she'd take me around and introduce me to people there. [laughter] It was a little bit uncomfortable because we had a lot of the same friends. But we've always maintained our friendship, too.

Segerblom was not elected to the Assembly seat held by Jeffrey until he had been out of office for two years.

Bennett: You were elected Majority Leader fairly late in your legislative tenure. You were elected in 1974, so it was about ten years later.

Jeffrey: Yes, but later, it became quicker for other people. Richard Perkins was just, I think, in his second term. I was in my—what—third or fourth?

Richard D. Perkins (D-Clark) served in the Assembly from 1992 to 2006. He was the Democratic Floor Leader from 1995 to 1999 and Speaker from 2001 to 2005.

Bennett: You were a little bit farther along.

Jeffrey: Oh, I wasn't all that popular with the leadership when I was first elected.

Bennett: Why not?

Jeffrey: Actually, I was a little bit surprised, but they were so pro-business that they were suspicious of me being a guy from labor, I think. Also, the Speaker, Keith Ashworth, was running for election, and he wanted me to commit to him. He didn't talk to me until later. See, my election actually finished on January 7.

Keith Ashworth (D-Clark) served in the Assembly from 1966 to 1976. He was Speaker in 1973 and 1975.

Bennett: Why so late?

Jeffrey: There was a re-vote in this precinct. For a period of time, they had the wrong ballot in the

punchcard machine, and a number of people objected to the fact that they couldn't vote. It was really kind of funny because two or three of them were objecting because they didn't have the opportunity to vote for me. Well, I'd won the election by a whole six votes, so Hal contested the election. [laughter]

Then there was a guy in county management who was lobbying the County Commission to not certify the election. There were four Democrats and three Republicans on the Commission. The County Commissioner for this district was Bob Broadbent. Bob was a Republican, and he was supporting me in that campaign. Anyway, this guy who was making that move was a pretty strong LDS leader, and he was trying to get Myron Leavitt to go for Hal. Myron was on the County Commission. Bob got wind of it, and he told them that if they talked Myron into going for Hal, he was going for me. Bob said that they should just make it clean and go down party lines to certify the election. That's how that happened. We ended up going to court, and it went to the Supreme Court, which ordered a re-vote in this precinct on January 7.

Robert Broadbent (R) served on the Clark County Commission from 1968 to 1980. He was the Commissioner for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation from 1980 to 1986 and the Clark County Director of Aviation from 1986 to 1997. He passed away in 2003.

Myron Leavitt (D) was a Clark County Commissioner from 1971 to 1974. He was Lt. Governor from 1979 to 1982 and served on the Nevada Supreme Court from 1998 until his demise in 2004.

Anyway, I got the call on the 8th, and I knew that Ashworth was supporting Hal Smith. I didn't know that much about the organization of the house. I never really paid any attention to

it. Ashworth called and asked for my support, and I told him I'd think about it. That made him mad, and he buried me. But it was a mistake on his part because he gave me a lot of time to do some things that he didn't like. So it was a fun session.

Bennett: What do you mean that he buried you?

Jeffrey: I had two committees: Agriculture and Environment.

Bennett: How often did they meet?

Jeffrey: They both met at the call of the chair. [laughter] So that gave me a lot of time to get acquainted with all the freshmen. I had a lot of support from those guys as well as from some of the sophomore class because I used to be president of the Clark County Young Democrats, and I knew a lot of those people. I helped some of them in their campaigns before I ever ran. It was interesting.

Bennett: What are some of the things that stand out in your memory about that session?

Jeffrey: You already mentioned the big things—consolidation and ERA—but I had kind of a different attitude when it came to some of these so-called reform things. Coming out of local government, I never liked those things because I felt we were telling the voters that we were a bunch of crooks and we had to do something to

stop that. That wasn't the case, but our county got wrapped up in some of that stuff. In fact, there was a Senate bill that came over that had to do with campaign financing and all that. It was thrown out by the courts, by the way. When it got to the floor, I had the votes to stop it. I couldn't stop it in committee. [chuckles] The sponsor of the bill came over and asked me what it would take for me to support it, and I said, "There's really nothing you can do. I just don't like it." So he got the Speaker and the Majority Leader and Minority Leader all together. They passed it. I got a friend of mine to serve notice of reconsideration. The next day, we reconsidered and killed it again. They probably put on the pressure: they passed the bill. [chuckles] But that was an education. It was fun.

It was after that, by the way, that Speaker Ashworth came to me and decided he wanted to talk to me. It was the first time, I think, he talked to me all session. He said to come by his office and talk to him. Well, in those days, see, we didn't have offices. We did all our work right on the floor. Of course, I was kind of hard-headed, and when we told me that, I told him, "You know where I am. You can find me easier than I can find you. If you want to talk to me, I'm right here." I don't think I

talked to him again the rest of the session. [laughter]

Bennett: At that time, the Speaker changed almost every session?

Jeffrey: Yes, it was kind of an unwritten rule that Speakers served no more than two terms. Dini was the first.

Bennett: Was there a particular reason why Joe Dini was the one who transcended the unwritten rule?

Joseph E. Dini, Jr., (D-Yerington) served in the Assembly from 1966 to 2002. He was Speaker a record eight regular sessions and named Speaker Emeritus in 2001.

Jeffrey: Yes. Everybody liked Joe. Joe was an extremely fair guy. In fact, Dini offered to support me for Speaker, but I told him I was satisfied with where I was. I supported him; he supported me. I said, "You be Speaker, and I'll be Majority Leader." I won't tell you some of the other things [chuckles], but I had pretty much what I wanted. Frankly, I thought Dini did a better job than I would have done. He knew the process. He got along with everybody in the state. I had some detractors, but I think we made a good team. I would have never run against Joe: we were too good of friends. But it wasn't that important to me.

Bennett: Tell me what you did as Majority Leader.

Jeffrey: That was a lot different, too. We didn't do many caucuses. The only time I did a caucus was when I was in trouble. If I couldn't line up the votes any other way, I'd get them in the

caucus. But I don't think we had more than two or three a session. It was informal. We didn't try to hold anybody to a particular line. Our philosophy was that you don't need everybody; you need the majority. If they had a problem philosophically or in their district with a bill, we'd let them do whatever they wanted to do without any kind of repercussions as long as we had the votes. It was a lot more relaxed than it is now.

Bennett: Do you remember any of the issues that caused you to call a caucus?

Jeffrey: Mostly taxes. I called a caucus one time because we started the process that particular session to require that any bills affecting prisons had to go to Ways and Means because everybody was bringing "tough-on-crime" bills without money to pay for them. Ways and Means wasn't looking at it. When we did that, there was a little bit of a revolt and some suspicion that these bills would die in Ways and Means. So nobody really knew what to expect. An Assemblyman who had two or three bills that were sent to Ways and Means wasn't happy about it. One of the attorneys in the Assembly told him that it was no big deal; just pull it out of committee. Well, we don't do that. By the time I found out what they were doing, they had the votes. That's when I called a caucus. When we finished the caucus, they

didn't have the votes. To me, the process was very important, and you have to be able to trust those committees. I felt it was an insult to the committee to pull a bill out of committee. So we just didn't allow it. It never happened during the time I was there.

Bennett: Who was Chairman of Ways and Means at the time?

Jeffrey: Marvin Sedway. He didn't give them much comfort. [laughter]

Marvin M. Sedway (D-Clark) served in the Assembly from 1982 until his death in 1990. He chaired the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means in 1987 and 1989.

Bennett: He did have a particular reputation as a chair, didn't he?

Jeffrey: Yes, he was a great guy.

Bennett: Tell me about some of the Minority Leaders you worked with, like Bill Brady and Lou Bergevin.

William D. (Bill) Brady (R-Clark) served in the Assembly from 1978 to 1984. He was Minority Leader in 1983.

Louis W. Bergevin (R-Douglas) served in the Assembly from 1978 to 1992. He was Assembly Minority Leader in 1987 and 1989. He passed away in 1998.

Jeffrey: The one I had the most respect for was Lou Bergevin. He was a great guy. His word was as good as gold, and he was a very practical man and a sharp guy. He was quite a bit of help to us when we had tax problems because he understood that if you needed programs, you needed to pay for them. That wasn't always the case. Brady was friendly enough; we didn't do that much together.

Virgil Getto and I used to fight every day [chuckles], particularly on the labor stuff. He was a rancher from Fallon and didn't know

what a union was, except that he didn't like them. We'd fight on the floor over those kinds of bills, and not just labor bills, but worker's comp bills, which were also labor bills. Anyway, we'd fight it out on the floor, and then we'd go across the street and have a drink. He'd have his moose milk, which was scotch and milk. I don't know how he could handle it. [laughter] I couldn't.

But it just wasn't that partisan. There were very seldom any grudges held. There were times that people felt like they had to get even, but generally when they did, it was over.

Bennett: Where were the places that you would go after session? You said "across the street."

Jeffrey: Jack's Bar. The Corner Bar at the Ormsby House. The press got after us for spending all this time in bars, but people don't understand how that process works and the work that's involved in it. I worked probably a minimum of 10 hours a day, usually 12. But if I wanted to talk to anybody, I had to go to a bar. I had to go to one of those bars where everybody gathered and talked about what happened that day, and then they'd go home. Anyway, when the press started getting at us, a county lobbyist suggested a numbering system. We'd number the bars, like, "I'll meet you at five at six." [laughter] We never did that, but it was funny.

Bennett: You also were a chairman. You chaired Commerce. [**Jeffrey:** Yes.] How were those duties different from Majority Leader duties?

Jeffrey: There's actually a lot of difference in the duties. If you're as fortunate as I was to have the kind of members I had, the Majority Leader's duties didn't take a lot of work. I would go down to the floor before the session started and take a look at the bills to see where to refer them, send them to committee, and pretty much forgot about them until they came out. Like I said, we only had two or three caucuses, so I did the procedural things on the floor that a Majority Leader does. It didn't really take any more time than it would have if a member had just sat there and watched. As far as chairmanship was concerned, why, the chairman actually kind of holds life or death over the bills.

I served as Chairman of Commerce because I was on the Labor Committee. After I did my number on the Labor Committee, if you were a businessman, you had to come and talk to me. [chuckles] I kept communications open. I didn't know a lot about business; I'm an electrician. But I was fortunate. I always had a good committee that could back me up, people like Matt Callister, Jean Ford, Jim Spinello, or Sedway. It was a strong committee and a lot of good ability there that I didn't have, so it

Jean E. Ford (Clark) served in the Assembly from 1972 to 1976 as a Republican and in the Senate from 1978 to 1982 as a Democrat.

James J. (Jim) Spinello (D-Clark) served in the Assembly from 1986 to 1990.

worked well. I was the traffic director. [chuckles]

Bennett: Now it seems almost common that the Majority Leader also serves as Chair of Commerce. Did that begin with you?

Jeffrey: It did. But I don't think it's necessarily always going to be the case. It kind of worked out that way.

Bennett: You chaired one other committee, Economic Development and Natural Resources.

Jeffrey: That was a punishment, I think.

Bennett: Was it? [laughter]

Jeffrey: No, not really. I think it was probably my first chairmanship. That worked well for me because of the rural areas that I represented, and the bills that affected those areas went to that committee. That was the only reason I wasn't kicking and screaming.

Bennett: That makes sense. When I saw that you chaired that committee, I could not figure out the connection, but knowing how big your district was and how rural it really was, that makes sense.

Jeffrey: It was pretty rural because in those days Henderson was a lot smaller, but I only had a third of Henderson. The other district was the district that Danny Thompson ended up representing.

Danny L. Thompson (D-Clark) served in the Assembly from 1980 to 1990.

Bennett: Which was more urban?

Jeffrey: Yes, he had a better deal than I did because he had more of Henderson. I was stronger in Henderson than I was anywhere in the district. I grew up here and had a lot of friends here, most of them not in my district. [laughter]

Bennett: So were you involved in redistricting in 1981? [**Jeffrey:** Yes.] How did your district change?

Jeffrey: I gave Overton, Logandale, Mesquite, Glendale, and Alamo to Danny. [laughter]

Bennett: And that was agreeable?

Jeffrey: Well, he was a freshman.

Bennett: Ah. There you go.

Jeffrey: This district had to be reduced. Jean and Goodsprings went to a different district, but I don't remember the number. The only rural areas I kept—they were rural, but not agricultural—were Searchlight and Laughlin.

Bennett: Which committee did you enjoy serving on the most?

Jeffrey: Government Affairs.

Bennett: Why was that?

Jeffrey: It dealt a lot with local government and a broader range of issues. I had more experience there than I did in others, and I just enjoyed the committee. I served several times on Ways and Means, but I didn't like it. I used to say that

you'd have to subpoena me to get me to sit on that committee. I put Danny on the committee when we organized the house, but he hated it and didn't want to go back. I figured somebody from this area needed to be there, so I made the sacrifice.

Thompson served on Ways and Means in 1983. Jeffrey was a member of that committee from 1985 to 1989.

Bennett: What was a regular day like?

Jeffrey: Probably not a lot different. The big difference, I think, between now and then is the staff. We've always had an excellent staff, but it was much smaller. Nobody had a secretary except the committee chairman. In fact, it took a major committee to have a secretary. Minor committees would share a secretary. All the rest of us went to the steno pool. As I said, there were no offices. I think in my second or third session, we finally had offices, but I didn't use mine for quite a long time. I'd continue to do my work on the floor. I liked it better that way. In the first place, I didn't get claustrophobic because the office was just about big enough for a two-by-three table and a chair. [laughter]

Bennett: Where was your first office?

Jeffrey: It was on the third floor behind the Coke machine. [laughter] Actually, I'd rather sit on the floor for two reasons. First of all, I was more comfortable there. Second, I was available to anybody who had anything they wanted to talk to me about. People were more

available, and there weren't near as many lobbyists.

The committee chairmen had to do their own floor statements, and sometimes that got a little hairy, especially for a guy like me who wasn't all that great in commerce. [chuckles] So I always made sure I had Callister or one of those guys to back me up. I would assign a bill to somebody, and then everybody would kind of get together and help them. We didn't have near the researchers that they have now. I think the research staff was three or four people. They used to post a note on the bulletin board for the committees: "Don't ask for an attorney unless you have to have one because these attorneys were all busy drafting bills." No committee had an attorney. I'm not sure even Judiciary did. So that was much different.

Matthew Q. Callister (D-Clark) served in the Assembly from 1986 to 1992.

I think that it was better in a way because you had to educate yourself about what was going on. You didn't have a lot of help. When you got in trouble on the floor, you weren't looking around for some staffer to bail you out. You had to be able to handle it.

Bennett: The Assembly seems to have a tradition where something is said about every bill before it's voted on.

Jeffrey: It's always been that way, and I can't really even tell you why.

Virgil Getto used to do this quite often. If he was assigned a bill, he'd get up, say it's a good bill, and sit down. [laughter] Nobody ever lost a bill by saying it's a good bill.

Virgil M. Getto (R-Churchill) served in the Assembly from 1966 to 1976, from 1978 to 1980, and again from 1982 to 1988.

But I don't know why it's that way because so much of that stuff is pretty routine. If you can read, you ought to be able to understand what it's about. You shouldn't have to explain every bill. But they do.

Bennett: With staff so small, then, where did you go for additional information about bills when you had questions or you needed to know more?

Jeffrey: Sometimes to other legislators or lobbyists or the people affected by the bill if they weren't represented by anybody. If it affected a particular area of business, I'd try to get hold of somebody and find out how it affected them. You do depend on the lobbyists quite a bit. One thing that hasn't really changed—well, it has—but you used to be able to absolutely trust a lobbyist. If they ever lied to you, they were out of business. They had to tell you the truth. Now they might not always tell you all of the other side, but if you asked them a direct question, they gave you an honest answer. If they didn't, you wouldn't talk to them again. So they were trustworthy.

Bennett: Tell me about some of those lobbyists.

Jeffrey: There weren't that many. I don't remember the guy's name who represented the AGC up north, but he was fairly influential. Wallie Warren used to represent banking. Lou Paley used to represent the AFL-CIO. There were probably no more than a dozen really influential lobbyists. John Gianotti from Harrah's. I don't think any hotel down here had any lobbyists. George Ullom represented the Resort Association down here. He was up there, but he represented all the hotels. Their structure has changed. In those days, most if not all the hotels belonged to that association; they don't any more, so the Resort Association doesn't speak for that many people any more. I'm not sure they ever really did because—well, it's natural in the gaming industry with all those egos involved—it's pretty tough to get a consensus anyway.

The clock above the main elevator in the Legislative Building honors public relations executive and longtime lobbyist Wallace D. (Wallie) Warren.

The Nevada Resort Association was organized in 1965.

I was never bothered by the gamers. I worked with them, but for the first couple sessions, they kind of ignored me. They didn't pay any attention to you until they thought that people listened to you, then they'd come talk to you. [chuckles] But if there was a major issue, you could just about bet there were as many against it as for it, so it was hard for them to get you in trouble.

I remember one time when a couple of guys from the industry were going to pull the whole industry together and get them organized

so that that didn't happen. I found out about it. I was Majority Leader then. I had never really gone after gaming money. I called this guy who represented MGM and asked for a contribution, not expecting anything. He said that they were getting organized this time, so I was going to have to come and talk to them. I said, "That's fine. Set me up." He said, "You really want to talk to us?" I said, "Yeah." I wanted to find out what they were asking so I could tell everybody else. Then I called a guy who represented Circus Circus, and he gave me the same song and dance. I went in and talked to him; he was a guy I knew well. He told me he'd let me know what they were going to do, and I said, "Well, let me tell you something. If you don't give me a contribution, that's fine. Support my opponent—no problem. See you in Carson City." I got a check in the mail a couple days later. [chuckles]

They were never able to get organized in those days. But it wasn't because of what I did. It was because they had a lot of diverse personalities and egos involved in that organization, and I think that's what finally split them up.

But we didn't raise the kind of money they raise now. I think my first campaign cost less than $10,000. A campaign for the city council here probably cost less than $500.

[laughter] My first campaign for the Assembly, I think, was somewhere in the neighborhood of $7,500. It was printing material and a lot of shoe leather.

Bennett: What were some of the major gaming issues in the late 1970s, early 1980s?

Jeffrey: Always money. Taxes. They had lobbyists on things that affected their employees—worker's comp, unemployment compensation—and I fought them on all those. I used to tell them, "I don't mind helping with your business, and I'll do that where I can. But if you're going to give your employees a tough time in the process, I'm on the other side." So they knew what to talk to me about and what not to talk to me about. I was always hustling the votes against them on the other issues and generally beat them. It got to the point, when I was Majority Leader, where if there was something in that area they wanted passed, they'd come and talk to me first. If I told them no, they didn't put it in because they knew I'd kill it.

Bennett: Did they ever try to defeat you?

Jeffrey: If they did, they didn't make it very public. It was funny because one of the owners of a hotel, a smaller place, called me and asked me to come over and pick up a check. I'd never talked to him about campaign contributions. He said, "I've tried to beat you in the last three

elections, and I haven't been able to do it, so I want to support you." [laughter] But I had some support. Steve Wynn supported me from the first time. Circus Circus did because Governor O'Callaghan asked them to. Otherwise, they probably wouldn't have. I didn't blame them. I didn't ask. I raised what it took to win that $10,000 campaign, and I didn't worry about the rest of it.

Bennett: What was your relationship like with Governor O'Callaghan?

Donal N. (Mike) O'Callaghan (D) was Governor from 1971 to 1979.

Jeffrey: It was good. I worked in his first campaign. He was a good governor. He was a good administrator and could be tough to deal with. I had the five o'clock in the morning phone calls, too. He didn't like to be argued with, but there were times I did. But he also didn't like yes-men, so we got along pretty well. [chuckles]

Bennett: Tell me about some of the other Governors during your legislative tenure.

Jeffrey: I didn't deal much with Bob List, of course; he was from the opposition party. He dealt more with Brady and those guys. I did deal with him on the Henderson Community College, and he signed the bill when it came over. That was a collective effort in which several people in that community were involved. But that's really the only involvement I had with him. He never

Robert F. List (R) was Governor from 1979 to 1983.

spent much time with the Legislature—didn't get too involved in the process.

I think probably the most hands-on Governor we had was O'Callaghan. Dick Bryan was, too, but a little different. Bryan was a policy-maker; O'Callaghan was an administrator. O'Callaghan was a little tougher to say "no" to. [laughter] I got along fine with Bob Miller, but I didn't have a lot to do with him, either, though.

Richard H. Bryan (D) was Governor from 1983 to 1989.

Robert J. (Bob) Miller (D) was Governor from 1989 to 1999.

I met regularly with all of them on their programs in the budget. But O'Callaghan was probably the different personality. Bryan had a great personality, but a lot different than O'Callaghan. O'Callaghan was known to punch you out if you had too much trouble with him.

Bennett: Literally?

Jeffrey: Literally. [laughter] In fact, I even remember when that happened in the Legislature, but not with him. Brendan Riley was interviewing Floyd Lamb. Floyd was Chairman of Senate Finance. Apparently, Floyd didn't like the answer that Brendan gave him, and he pushed him out of the office and kicked him in the seat of the pants on the way out. [laughter] It wasn't unusual for Floyd Lamb and Don Mello to go to fisticuffs over the budget.

Floyd R. Lamb (D-Clark) served in the Senate from 1956 to 1983. He chaired Finance from 1965 to 1983.

Bennett: Literally?

Jeffrey: Literally. I remember one session when Mello came in early in the morning, and he had a bruise on his face. I said it looked like the Senate budget was going to pass. [laughter]

Donald R. Mello (D-Washoe) served in the Assembly from 1963 to 1982. He chaired Assembly Ways and Means from 1973 to 1979.

Bennett: Would this happen in the Legislative Building?

Jeffrey: Oh, yeah. The reporters who were around then were a lot different, too. There were some regular reporters who were there all the time; Brendan Riley was probably a cub then. Cy Ryan had been around forever. Bryn Armstrong was there then. A whole lot of things happened that would never make the papers. Although I do think that when Floyd kicked Brendan, that made the paper. [chuckles] But everybody kind of thought, "Well, so what?" Nevada's a little bit different when it comes to those things.

Bennett: What was your interaction with the Senate?

Jeffrey: Mostly I had to negotiate with them at the end. Randolph Townsend wanted to have joint hearings with the Commerce Committees, and I'd never do it.

Randolph J. Townsend (R-Washoe) began serving in the Senate in 1986. He chaired the Senate Committee on Commerce from 1987 to 2007, except 1991.

Bennett: Did you have a particular philosophy when you were a committee chairman on how meetings should take place?

Jeffrey: Not really. I made everybody stick to a point. I didn't allow them to stray very far. I didn't allow any demonstrations from the audience at all. They were there to listen. I didn't allow any

applause. In fact, I cancelled a couple of meetings because the second time they applauded, we all walked out.

Bennett: What was the issue?

Jeffrey: It was a mobile home issue in the Old Assembly Chamber. They brought a big crowd up. It was on rent control, and they were cheering the speaker on. The first time when I rapped the gavel, I said, "We don't do that here. If it happens again, I'm going to adjourn the meeting." It happened again, and I adjourned the meeting. About two weeks later, we had another hearing, and they weren't there. [laughter]

But our rules were pretty relaxed. The only rule that I was never really able to get around was the number it took to overrule the chairman. I never had a problem with it, but the first time I chaired Commerce, there was a fairly close count on the committee between the parties. I was going to put in a rule that it took two-thirds to override the chairman, and Frank Daykin told me that wasn't legal. I could have gotten it done, but he said it was not legal. He said that the majority established the rules, so the majority can change them or set them aside. You can't overrule a majority. They never had the majority on anything.

Frank Daykin became Legal Counsel in 1977, serving until his retirement in 1985.

But there weren't that many contentious things anyway. The only time I can remember was on a prevailing wage bill, but I wasn't Chairman then. In fact, it was in Government Affairs, and it was a close vote. There was a reporting bill on prevailing wage, I think, my first time as chairman, and I had to adjourn the meeting a couple times to avoid the vote. So they quit bringing it up. But there was a time they had the majority, but they couldn't vote [laughter] until we got things straightened out.

Bennett: There are so many nuances to the legislative process. Was there anyone who helped you learn those and understand those?

Jeffrey: A lot of it was by experience, but I'll tell you who was really great was Mouryne Landing who was Chief Clerk of the Assembly the whole time I was there. If you ever had a question, she knew every rule in the book. She helped write it, so she was a great help.

Mouryne B. Landing was the Assembly Chief Clerk from 1973 to 1995.

I don't remember what the bill was, but there was a bill that we had to call back from the Governor's Office. It was one that was a little contentious. She gave me six or eight motions to make, and nobody understood what I was saying, I don't think, but we got the bill back. [laughter] She was great—just a great woman, a delightful woman. I think she retired about the time I lost that last election.

Bennett: I think so. So tell me about losing that last election. What happened?

Jeffrey: The pension thing. Actually, I think what happened was this district had gone Republican. Like I said, I'd had quite a bit of Republican support, but after that pension vote, the newspapers here, and particularly O'Callaghan, just would not let it go. There was something in the paper every week, and everybody was mad about it. It wasn't an issue up north like it was down here. In fact, several people lost the election over that. They got me for a couple of reasons. First of all, my heart really wasn't in the campaign that time. I spent a lot of time helping other people. I didn't do a lot of walking. That probably had more to do with me losing than anything because I think I could have overcome it if I'd worked hard enough, but I didn't. [laughter]

A.B. 820 (1989) revised the formula for legislative retirement benefits. Gov. Bob Miller's veto was overridden near the end of the regular session. In November 1989, at a short special session, the legislation was repealed. Several legislators were defeated in the 1990 election, apparently because of their vote on this bill.

Bennett: You'd been in the Assembly a long time by then.

Jeffrey: Sixteen years.

Bennett: What kind of effect did that have on your career and on your family?

Jeffrey: Oh, the family loved it when I got out. Serving in the Legislature is hard on your family. I was gone, jeez, up to six months in those days. You miss a lot of the kids' stuff. So no, they weren't upset. I was. Ego, I guess, more than anything.

But it didn't really change my career much. I was Secretary-Treasurer for the Central Labor Council and the Building Trades Council, which is also an elected job, and of course, I maintained that position. Frankly, I didn't plan on going back to Carson City.

I think the hardest time for me was the day after the election when Joe called me and wanted me to help him organize the house. To go in there and face all those people after losing that election was not easy for me. With the City of Las Vegas and the Trial Lawyers, I'd probably had to go up there for labor anyway to some extent. But several people contacted me, and at first, I told them no. I wasn't going to go back. As time went by, I thought, "Well, I'll give it a try and see what happens. I can always come home." But I was very pleasantly surprised. It was like I'd never gone. You know, so many times when people leave that kind of position, it's "Jack who?" That really didn't happen with me. The Legislature as a group and the staff, especially, treated me very well. It could have been a lot different. [chuckles]

Bennett: So you went back as a lobbyist. What was the biggest difference between being a legislator and being a lobbyist?

Jeffrey: It's more stressful being a lobbyist because, of course, you're trying to deliver for a client. But

it doesn't take near the time as it does to be a legislator. You don't have a lot of personal interest in the bills as a legislator. You have a lot of interest in the bills philosophically and otherwise, but it's not like your career's going to hang in the balance. As I said earlier, I worked 10- and 12-hour days. The biggest problem as a lobbyist is you sit around and wait to be able to talk to somebody. The toughest part, for me, about being a lobbyist is the waiting. I've never had any trouble getting in to see anybody, but it was trying to work around their schedule. And with a 120-day session, that gets tougher and tougher.

Bennett: That's really different. The last unlimited session was when?

Jeffrey: My last session.

Bennett: Actually, it was a little bit later than that.

The constitutional amendment to limit each biennial regular session to 120 days was finally approved by the voters in 1998.

Jeffrey: Yes, because it took them that long to change it. See, I'd always opposed that. I wouldn't pass it in the Assembly.

Bennett: The 120 days?

Jeffrey: I told them that we make enough mistakes with an unlimited session. We don't need to be hampered by a time constraint. I still feel that way. I'm not in favor of all the so-called reforms. I know I wouldn't have supported the term limits. I wouldn't have supported the 120 days.

The crazy thing about the 120 days—I was talking to legislators at the time it passed—none of them thought it would work. But they were all afraid of the media. I told them, "The media is going be after you if you're here a week. You're never going to satisfy them. Don't worry about them."

In all the campaigns I had—I had nine Assembly campaigns—not one time did I hear a complaint from anywhere in this district that we were there too long. Most of them don't know you're there to start with. So it's a thing that the press kind of initiated and carried on for something to write about, I guess, because they'd ask me, on the first day of session, how long we were going to be there. And I'd say, "Until the work's done." I never tried to make any predictions. That was not my problem. I'd work toward a goal to finish by a certain time, but nothing that couldn't be changed.

Between the term limits and the 120-day session, I think it turns too much of the power, or whatever you want to call it, from the legislators to the staff and lobbyists. If somebody's going to be responsible for that process, it ought to be the legislators, not the staff and the lobbyists. Now as a lobbyist, I should love it because I'm out of there in 120 days, and people have to listen to you because they don't

have the time to do the work themselves. But it's just not good for the process.

Bennett: What was your strategy for moving towards the end of a session where the date might be a moving target? Did you have a particular strategy for dealing with those last few weeks?

Jeffrey: Generally, it was budget-driven. When the budget was done, the committees better be getting the work wrapped up. We'd have weekly meetings toward the end and hold the chairmen accountable to get their committees cleaned out. But we knew about how long it would take to get through the budget and that was the date we'd try to shoot for. We were usually done within a couple days after the budget was finished.

Bennett: What was your relationship like with the media?

Jeffrey: It was pretty good. I didn't pay a lot of attention to them. I had friends there. Cy Ryan has been a friend for a long time. And Brendan Riley. And Bryn Armstrong when he was there. I didn't have much of a relationship with the younger reporters who come and go. Some of them got too wrapped up in their own by-lines, and I wasn't crazy about that.

Bennett: Do you think the coverage of the Legislature has changed since the mid-1970s?

Jeffrey: Not a whole lot, I don't think. There's better coverage up north than it is here, especially for a paper the size of the *Nevada Appeal* in Carson. They do a good job. The *Reno Gazette-Journal* does a pretty good job. Down here, I think, they mostly run the stories that can make some kind of a headline. I think the people up north are better served by being closer to the Legislature because they're more involved. They see more of what's going on. I'd be back here in August, and people would ask me what I was doing home. [laughter]

Bennett: When you look back over your career, who stands out in your mind as the most effective legislator?

Jeffrey: Probably Joe Dini. Maybe Bill Raggio. For different reasons. Dini was a diplomat, and we used to call him the Phoenician Trader.

Bennett: Why the Phoenician Trader?

Jeffrey: Because he always had bills in there for his district. If there was a state fund that had any money in it, he was looking in it for something for his district. [laughter]

They're both smart men. Raggio probably depended more on rules and process and so forth than Joe did. Joe was more like me. [chuckles] I wasn't too worried about the rules if I had the votes.

A State Senator since 1972, William J. Raggio (R-Reno) has been the Senate Republican Floor Leader every session since 1977, except in 1981.

Bennett: Who was the most colorful legislator?

Jeffrey: Probably Bob Fay, but it's not colorful-good. [laughter]

Robert W. (Bob) Fay (D-Clark) served in the Assembly from 1982 to 1984 and 1986 to 1990.

Bennett: Do you want to explain that?

Jeffrey: He was an Irishman. He always had some story or something that sometimes was funny, sometimes not. Actually, people didn't take themselves all that seriously. I think they do a little bit more now. As the state's gotten bigger and the districts are bigger with more people and more money is required to run, that's changed some of that. And I think the caucuses have changed things.

After the 1985 session, when the Republicans had control, a few of us got together and decided we were going to start a caucus because we wanted to have some help, especially for newer people running who had trouble finding somebody to handle their campaign and advise them and so forth. We started the caucus, and it did what we wanted it to do.

But the downside, which we weren't looking at, was that things also started to get more partisan because the Republicans, of course, did the same thing. I don't think they did it that session; I think it was the next. Then it got to the point where there are full-time people up there doing nothing but watching for the other side to do something that could be

used against them in their campaign. We never had that before. It wasn't like people were digging all the time to find something contentious.

Bennett: Thinking back about the legislation that you introduced or that you worked on, are there any particular bills that you're particularly proud of?

Jeffrey: My thing was pretty much to process the work. I was proud of the work we did on fire safety after the Hilton fire. It wasn't something that I dreamed up. I knew about a lot of it, but the Governor put together a blue-ribbon committee to go over all that. After the MGM fire, Joe Neal introduced a bill to require sprinklers, and it didn't get out of the Senate until after the Hilton fire. The Hilton fire happened during the session, and then the bill came over from the Senate.

Joseph M. Neal, Jr., (D-Clark) served in the Senate from 1972 to 2004.

In the meantime, the Governor—and I don't remember whether it was List or Bryan, to tell you the truth—put a blue-ribbon committee together to go over all the issues in fire safety, and they came up with a good bill. It had to do with exits, communications, ventilation, and sprinklers—you name it, it was all there. They gave us the bill in the Assembly. It was after the deadline for individual bill introductions, so it had to be a committee bill. We

Passed in 1981, S.B. 214 requires sprinkler systems for fire protection in hotels and requires fire codes in counties and cities.

introduced the bill, and Joe Dini made me Chairman of the subcommittee that handled it because I was a construction guy.

We worked the bill and got everything down to the final thing, and I told Joe Dini that somebody really ought to get credit for this instead of just having a committee name. Joe Neal's bill was sitting there, so I said we should put it in his bill. I called Joe and asked him if he wanted to put our bill in his. Well, he was a little suspicious. I don't know if he thought I was trying to do something to him or what. I finally had to tell him, "Joe, look, we're going to pass one bill, and it's going to be ours. Do you want your name on it, or not?" And he said, "Yeah, okay." [laughter]

A lot of the bills just had to do with local stuff. I did a lot of work on worker's comp and was happy with what I was able to do there until the 1993 session when it all went south. Basically, I was there to represent the district. I guess my reputation and my philosophy was to take care of the working people. I know the Chamber of Commerce says that what's good for business is good for the world. I agree with them, except I think what's good for workers is good for everybody. That was my philosophy. It hasn't changed. That's the way it's always going to be. [chuckles]

Bennett: Is there any issue that you worked on and you look back now and think maybe you should have done it a little differently?

Jeffrey: Not that I can think of offhand. I'm sure there was. But I can't think of anything.

Bennett: Was there a difference between your personal bills and the bills that were introduced when you were a committee chair? Did you have a particular philosophy in terms of your personal bills?

Jeffrey: I didn't have many bills. A lot of times, I couldn't put my name on the bills I did have because I had a little problem with a couple of Senators. If they saw my name on them, they weren't likely to pass the bills. [laughter] So most of my bills were committee bills. But there was not a lot of pride of authorship there. I don't think I had over six or eight bills a session. I wouldn't introduce a bill to satisfy a campaign promise or anything like that. In those days, it cost $700 to process a bill, and I couldn't see spending $700 if it wasn't going to be passed, so I just wouldn't do it.

Bennett: Did you hear from a lot of constituents who had ideas for bills?

Jeffrey: Some. Not very much. In fact, that's mostly where the few bills I had came from. But I had to tell some people that I didn't think that their

idea was going to go anywhere, so I wasn't going to have the State spend the money on it.

Bennett: What sorts of legislative activities were you involved in between sessions?

Jeffrey: I was on several interim committees—probably more committees than I wanted to be at times, especially when I was Majority Leader. It was mostly interim committee work. A lot of occupational education and vocational education stuff. Anything that had anything to do with injured workers. Then the NCSL [National Conference of State Legislatures] leadership committees and the Labor Committee on the national level. Some of the local stuff—economic development. Those kinds of things.

Bennett: How did the interim change over the time that you were a legislator?

Jeffrey: I don't think it's changed a whole lot. They say they're trying to use more interim committees, but I don't really see the evidence of that. We were always trying to limit them, and I think they still do. Sometimes, people will put in for a study for something that's already been studied two or three times. A lot of people don't understand that there's not a lot of new stuff out there. There are variations of the same problems that are going to take money to correct and that are going to be tough to deal with no matter when. All the things we're look-

ing at right now have to do with money. The State is short of money to staff the agencies properly. Education is short for the same reason. Those are the tough issues.

In fact, that's where most of the partisanship came from during my time because the minority party doesn't really have to take a lot of responsibility. They're not held too accountable because they're not going to win. So they can oppose all the tax increases. They can oppose all the spending. They can push for spending cuts; they know nothing's going to happen. I think that's why I appreciated Lou Bergevin to the extent that I did because he understood all that, and he wouldn't do that. He was probably the most honest, upstanding guy that I knew. He was really a great legislator.

But the only time I remember having much support from the minority party on a tax bill was when we worked out a deal with them because they wouldn't vote for it. So we put it in as an amendment and did it by voice vote. There were no opposing voice votes. [laughter]

It's real easy to be popular—to take the popular position and the hell with the consequences—when you know the problem's going to be taken care of anyway. And that's what happened. I'm also very much against the two-thirds vote for tax increases. As a taxpayer, I

In 1994, the Nevada Constitution was amended to require the approval of two-thirds of the legislators to pass any tax measure.

probably shouldn't be, but as a guy who cares about the process and what government should be doing, I think it's terrible. It provides for minority rule. It's just not hard to get a third against something.

I appreciated John Marvel when he switched his vote. Marvel was another guy like Bergevin. I think it hurt him to vote the way he did in the end, but only because he felt a commitment to support the caucus. I don't think his personal philosophy would have ever called for that. It wasn't the right thing to do, and John does what's right. But sometimes you get tied up in that caucus stuff. That's the trouble with having too many caucuses. [chuckles]

John W. Marvel (R-Battle Mountain) served in the Assembly from 1978 to 2008. In 2003, he provided the final vote needed to approve the tax package.

Bennett: So you had more flexibility before the caucuses were instituted?

Jeffrey: Yes, as long as you did your homework. If you're not going to have a caucus, then you better have the votes without them. But if you have to put that kind of pressure on people, I think there's a limit to how far you can go anyway. I always had 22 votes. That's all I needed.

Bennett: How did you get your votes?

Jeffrey: A lot of personal stuff, personal contact. I'd help them; they'd help me. Whatever they were working on, if they needed help, I'd give them some help. There wasn't much that was conten-

tious enough to get in too many fights with people. There weren't very many times in the session like the one with the guy that I had to call a caucus on over those Ways and Means bills. When it was over, we walked out, and we were alright. I was a little concerned about that because he was a freshman, but he was fine. He understood, and we got along fine. But you can't have a lot of that without having some problems with the group as a whole.

Generally, the Legislature is kind of like the labor movement. Whoever gets up first and speaks the loudest usually wins unless somebody gets up to argue with them, and a lot of people don't like to do that. [laughter]

Bennett: Looking back over your 16 years in the legislature, how had the institution changed from when you first arrived there in the mid-1970s to your last session at the end of the 1980s?

Jeffrey: I think probably the big thing was that it was all more personal then. I think legislators were closer. When people quit gathering after the day's work, they started going this way [gestures in opposite directions], not just physically but as a group. I can remember that there were times when things started getting a little hairy, and Dini and I would throw a little cocktail party and let everybody unwind. Usually by the time it was over, everybody was back

together. We didn't allow people to get cross-ways with each other. But none of that happens now because of the reporting on the meals and that kind of thing.

I never really liked to go out to dinner with a lot of people anyway. There's another thing the public doesn't really understand. You're not doing a legislator any favor when you take him out to dinner. He's doing you a favor because by the time I finished that 12-hour day, the last thing I wanted to do was go to a two-hour dinner with a lobbyist. In fact, the only people I went with, generally, were people like Broadbent or Randy Walker. They both lived in my district; they both had a lot of influence here; and they were both friends. Other than that, I wasn't all that available for dinners. Lunches, maybe. Not breakfast because most lobbyists didn't get up by the time I went to work. [laughter]

Randall H. Walker represented the City of Las Vegas at the Legislature when he was Deputy City Manager from 1984 to 1990.

Bennett: The Building was quiet at that hour of the morning?

Jeffrey: Yes. The one exception was Floyd Lamb. He used to be at breakfast every time I'd go down there. I used to hear some great stories.

Bennett: Where would you go for breakfast?

Jeffrey: At the Ormsby House.

Bennett: So you stayed at the Ormsby House during the session?

Jeffrey: Yes. When I first started going up there, there really wasn't any place. The Ormsby House was built by the time I was elected, but the first time I went up there as a lobbyist, people stayed at the City Center Motel, and they'd eat at the Nugget. There wasn't a place in town that had a hotel room and a restaurant in the same building. Lot of guys lived at the Mapes in Reno.

Bennett: And made that commute?

Jeffrey: Yes. Now it's all different, but basically as a result of size. Town's bigger. Legislature's bigger. Staff's bigger. But as far as the gathering after work, I think the loss of that hurt the process a little bit.

Bennett: Did everyone gather?

Jeffrey: Pretty much. It was pretty much bi-partisan. In fact, in 1985 when the Republicans had control, the Speaker put Jack's Bar off-limits, so Dini and I held a cocktail party there. We were the minority party then. We held a cocktail party there for the press. Of course, the press all showed up for a free drink. But the only Republican was John DuBois. [laughter] That was the best 200 bucks I ever spent. Now see, there's a legislator spending money on the press, right? Never read about that. [laughter]

John B. DuBois (R-Clark) served in the Assembly from 1980 to 1990.

Bennett: What are some of your fondest memories of your tenure?

Jeffrey: Mostly the people. I used to get a kick out of giving Sedway a bad time. He was easy to rile but had a great heart. Of course, Danny and I have been friends from the beginning. Blackie Evans recruited Danny to run to start with, but I worked on Danny's first campaign.

Claude "Blackie" Evans headed the Nevada AFL-CIO from 1978 until his retirement in 1999. He was succeeded by Thompson..

Actually, it's a people-oriented business, so if you enjoy the people you enjoy it; otherwise, you probably wouldn't. My experience with that whole process is that either you like it or you don't. There's not much in between.

Bennett: Thank you very much for your time this morning.

Jeffrey: Oh, you're welcome.

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RELEASE FORM
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Nevada Legislative Counsel Bureau

I, JOHN E. JEFFREY hereby authorize Get Consensus, L.L.C. to
(Interviewee) (Interviewer)

record my oral history for purposes of the Oral History Project of the Nevada Legislature conducted by Get Consensus pursuant to an Agreement between the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) and Get Consensus, L.L.C., signed on January 10, 2008. I understand that the purpose of the Oral History Project is to collect digital audio tapes or video tapes, or both, and written transcripts of my interview. In addition, I understand that I may provide to the interviewer selected related documentary materials, including, without limitation, photographs, manuscripts and other memorabilia. I understand that the audio tapes, video tapes and written transcripts will be deposited and archived in the permanent collections of the Research Library of the LCB or transferred by the LCB to an appropriate entity within the State of Nevada for permanent storage as determined necessary by the LCB. I further understand that any documentary materials provided by me may, as determined necessary by the LCB, be deposited and archived in the permanent collections of the Research Library of the LCB, transferred by the LCB to an appropriate entity within the State of Nevada for permanent storage, or returned to me.

The audio tapes, video tapes, written transcripts and documentary materials produced as a result of my interview, may be used for research, scholarly and educational purposes and may be used by the Nevada Legislature and the LCB in public educational presentations, including, without limitation, books, audio or video documentaries, slide-tape presentations, exhibits, articles or presentations on the Internet or successor technologies. I agree that the LCB may use the audio tapes, video tapes, written transcripts and documentary materials produced as a result

of my interview to compile the oral histories of former Nevada Legislators and that such compilation may be made available for sale by the LCB. I further agree that the LCB may use my name, video or photographic image or likeness, statements, performance and voice reproduction, or other sound effects, for purposes relating to the Oral History Project without further approval on my part. I understand that when the material is used, proper acknowledgment regarding my contribution to the Oral History Project will be made.

By giving permission, I understand that I do not give up any copyright or performance rights that I may hold and that this permission does not preclude any use that I may want to make of the content of the information contained in these recordings. I do not give permission for my oral history and related materials to be used for purposes other than as specified in this Release Form without further written permission.

I herein warrant that I have not granted exclusive use of my oral history or related documentary materials to any other person. The only conditions which I place on the use of my oral history and related materials are as follows:

_____

_____

_____

John E Jeffrey
Signature of Interviewee

2/23/08
Date

Address: 340 E CHAPARRAL DR, HENDERSON 89015

702 564-1444
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Received 3/3/08

Nevada Legislature Oral History Project
Biographical Information Form

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9/15/56

Children: JOHN TERESA PAUL

Religious affiliation: CATHOLIC

Education: HIGH SCHOOL 9 YRS APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING
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'74 ASSEMBLY

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S.N. CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL

Activities and hobbies during legislative service: POLITICS HUNTING FISHING
APPOINTED TO SEVERAL COMMITTEES BY CITY OF HENDERSON
CLARK COUNTY, THE LEGISLATURE, AND THE GOVERNORS

Other elected offices held: S.N. BLDG TRADES S.N. CENTRAL LABOR COUN

Occupations, activities, and hobbies after leaving legislative office: BUILDING TRADES, CENTRAL LABOR LOBBYIST

Personal and professional achievements:

Is there any other information you would like us to know about you before we conduct the interview?

Get Consensus
GROUP FACILITATION
COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING
ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

ABOUT THE PROJECT TEAM

Get Consensus, LLC, is owned by Dale Erquiaga who serves as the project's manager and conducted some of the interviews. Dale is a native Nevadan with an extensive background in Nevada politics, having served as Director of the Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs and Chief Deputy Secretary of State. With both Nevada and Arizona clients, Get Consensus is based in Phoenix.

Dana Bennett is the project's leader and has conducted most of the interviews. Currently a PhD candidate in public history at Arizona State University with a particular interest in the women who served in the Nevada Legislature between 1919 and 1960, she has also conducted oral histories with former Arizona legislators. Prior to returning to school, she was part of the Nevada legislative process for many years.

Gwen Clancy is the project's award-winning videographer. Based in Reno, she hosts and produces the documentary series, "Exploring Nevada," which is seen on local TV throughout the state.

Jean Stoess transcribed and indexed the interviews. A long-time Reno resident, Jean is familiar with Nevada politics in both elected and appointed capacities and has indexed several Nevada history works.