



that you try and probably usually don't immediately succeed, but I was impressed with him, and that was the summer before I entered law school. That fall, a couple of months

school. He practiced with Snow Martin, it was the two of them. There weren't big law firms then. Carver and Langston was probably the largest firm and they may have had three or possibly four lawyers. There just mostly were individual practices or partnerships of two. That was the first I knew that he was interested in having me come with him. I perhaps had assumed that he would have wanted me. Mr. Bryant was in his late 50s. It is easy to remember because he was born in 1890, so in 1949 we would have been 59 years old. He lived for 102 years and was very alert and very bright up

decision.

M: What was the first time you ever went into a courtroom? Do you remember your first court case?

B: Yes, it was a jury trial. I got out in September and this was in November, I think, because Mr. Bryant was a great football fan and he invited me to go, and I think Nell, to a football game down in Miami. I can't remember who it was. He was a Gator fan but he just liked football. I remember this because I was trying the case with Snow Martin, who was an experienced, seasoned trial lawyer and God knows, I had never been in a courtroom before. I was there carrying his books, but I did some of the cross examination and, I guess, we had a couple of expert witnesses and I had them testify. Back then the technology was not as good as it is today. They had old Dictaphone systems and this one court reporter; Judge Gil Rogers was the judge and each judge had their own

expected to represent your client in court. So, you ended up in doing all of this, you ended up becoming a lawyer who practiced many disciplines. You would, of course,

B: Well, Chesterfield and I knew each other in law school. We were in the same legal fraternity, Phi Delta Phi. The legal fraternities were kind of honorary fraternities. There were maybe three of them; I'm not sure. Then they had a serious side to them, but mostly they had parties and there were social occasions. A couple of times a semester there would be a party and I guess through that I became more acquainted with Chesterfield. He had joined my social fraternity, Alpha Tau Omega, during that period. Chesterfield had been at the University of Florida back in the 30s and during the depression. I was a freshman in 1941, but I didn't know him during that period. After the war when he came back, he joined the ATO fraternity. I played intramural sports when I came back because I was a pretty good handball player, tennis player and ping-pong player. Those were the three sports that would ask me to play for them, but I was married then and did not get involved in the social life at a fraternity. I don't think Chesterfield did either. I didn't know he was in ATO until, I believe we were all out of school or maybe in law school. Chesterfield and I had a pleasant relationship during school and then he went to Arcadia after graduation and practiced law there for a few years. Then he came up to Bartow to Senator Holland's office and that is when we became reacquainted as I had kind of lost track of him during the time he was in Arcadia. Chesterfield was a very motivated, dynamic sort of person. He had only been out of law school, he was older, three or four years and he was basically running the Holland, Bevis and McRae law firm. He became managing partner with just the four of them. They had representation for most of the phosphate companies and Chesterfield kind of organized a group, originally Bill McRae did, a fine, fine lawyer and a Rhodes Scholar. He was the first federal judicial appointment that Jack Kennedy made. He and

dead.

M: He was pretty ill when he retired, wasn't he?

B: I don't know. He obviously had some heart problems, but I really never heard that he



and more trial work and then he got into politics and sort of abandoned the law. Lawton moved on Cambridge Avenue. He had a house up there about a block or so down on Cambridge. I say Cambridge, it was Coventry. I'm sorry. I live on Fairmount.

M: Near Juanita and Jim Black's house.

run for the state house and the circumstances there? Do you know him?

B: Oh yeah. We talked about

M: Did he talk to you about politics before?

B: Yeah.

M: Before he ever decTj ET.24 0 0 0.24 108 6-4 (11 (h) j ET. 11(r) 10 (e) 5 yo) 11(k) 11?.

partners then, but we had arguments about Lawton. Chesterfield probably would remember this differently now, but Roy was someone he could rely upon. Chesterfield was a lobbyist for the industry and Roy, he could count on his influence, and Roy had been there for three or four terms, and seniority was quite important then. Roy was that bridge between the old absolute pork chopper and the new breed, but Roy was basically a business-interest representative, more so than Lawton ever was.

firm.

M: And their office was where?

B: The office originally was in the basement of the old Thelma Hotel. It had been a Kibler Hotel. It was my grandfather's hotel. I can show you a post card of that hotel.

M: Juanita Black told me that your family had some interest in that hotel.

B: It was the Kibler. It was owned by my grandfather and his twin brother and he sold it to an H. B. Carter in about 1919 or 1920. Carter named it for one of his daughter's, Thelma. So, it went from the Kibler to the Thelma. This postcard is when it was the Kibler, and right down here, the front of it, the corner of Kentucky and Orange.

M: This would be close to Lake Morton.

B: No, this is the corner - right across the street is the Arcade Building. It is the corner of Lemon, the northeast quadrant of the intersection of Lemon and Kentucky Ave. That would be north that way and that way is down towards Lake Mirror. On the other side of the street is the Regency and then the New Florida Hotel. There were some steps that went down to sort of a sub-basement. There was a restaurant in there at one time, a tearoom. During World War II they had a USO place, I think. Any way, it was unoccupied, and this was right before the hotel was torn down. I don't remember the year it was torn down. The Watson Clinic expanded from the Arcade across the street and then there was an annex built on the hotel, which was on the north there. They moved from the Arcade, they stayed in the Arcade but had 10 or 12 doctors in the annex until they built their clinic out there. Then, Holland and Knight, we moved some of our offices there until we built the building we are in now.

M: Now, his two law partners, Ellsworth and Carr.

B: George Carr.

M: Were they well known to you at the time?

B: Yeah, yeah. I knew George Carr, he became a federal judge. He had a mali . rnerTJ ETQ0(rn) (i

Ellsworth did through his investments. They had several of these leases through Red Lobster.

M: Now, did he continue to practice with the Legislature not being a full-time job?

B: Lawton continued to practice until he went into the United States Senate, but he was consumed with Florida politics and he did not really, running and planning. He did some trial work. They merged with another group, it was Bentley, Miller and Sinder; Tommy Miller, the city attorney, Ed Bentley who built Polk Federal, I think, right across from the Polk Theatre. A lawyer bought the building. It was originally Polk Federal's downtown office. With that firm, there were six of them there, Bentley, Miller, Sinder, Carr, Chiles and Ellsworth. They combined all of the names. That was done, I think, just in the late 60s. Then, when Lawton went into the Senate, he withdrew from the firm. They didn't keep his name, I don't think. He had no law firm association after he went into the Senate. He was a practicing lawyer all during the time he was in the state legislature.

M: So, who would you say, during those years, would have been his closest associates or friends outside of the legislature, here in Lakeland? Besides, obviously, Carr and Ellsworth.

B: He developed a relationship with Wilbur Boyd and, I would say, Wilbur became his closest friend of all the people.

M: Did he meet Wilbur in the legislature?

B: Wilbur was a member of the legislature when Lawton was first elected, that would have been the late 50s or middle 50s. Lawton did two or three terms in the house and then a couple of terms in the Senate. So, I would guess he was there 12-14 years in the state legislature and senate before he ran for United States Senate. Probably in the first or second term he was there in the house, he and Wilbur met and they became very close friends. This was a period of great change in the Florida Legislature. Lawton was part of that group that made these changes. They went to an annual session, had a professional staff and they really upgraded the quality of the legislature, although I personally think that sometimes more legislature is bad and less is good. You couldn't argue with the fact that they had a very good legislature then. There were a lot of reforms needed. The lobbyists were the wrong sense of the word. Lobbyists o1 (hng ) 6 ed.ostTJ ET

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B: S-c-h-u-l-t-z.

M: He wouldn't be kin to, no;

system for phosphate similar to what they have in Canada. They called it the Phosphate Conservation Act and the prices had gone down so and it became apparent that this was a way of controlling production and, of course, individual companies couldn't do it and antitrust laws prohibited it, but in Canada, to conserve the resource and boost the economy, they took over control of the industry, that is the amount of production that was allowable. That was talked about here. It was very controversial, and some of the phosphate companies supported such and others were vehemently opposed to it. Lawton was caught up in that and it turned out on two different occasions that the phosphate conservation act, maybe not both times, but the last time, it probably would have passed as it had the backing of the governor, who I think was Reuben Askew at