

during the period of the '70s, it was an interesting time. A lot was happening. I was serving on the Board of Regents from 1967 to 1976 and that was of course, the body that was really the consolidated governing board for all the state universities, the state university system then. It has been much in the public eye of late. Governor Bush saw fit to recommend Legislature abolish it and brought out Amendment Number 11 that was supposed to provide another b

M: Now, I think we can switch back to the aftermath of the election of Lawton Chiles. Did his family move to Washington or did they keep their house here in Lakeland? How does that work?

Maryland, and people that he knew would take him or sometimes he would go by himself, turkey hunting and during the turkey/gobbler season, he would oft times do that and he would always -- prided himself on a gobbler that he called up. The killing of the gobbler didn't matter to him nearly as much as the fact that he would get the gobbler to come up so that he could see him and I think sometime he deliberately would not shoot him because he did not want to clean the turkey. He wanted another chance

M: Can you tell us who Lawton would have enjoyed hunting with during those years and if you would like to reflect on some of the earlier hunting partners that he would have had maybe, back in earlier years.

B: Well, Wilbur Boyd was always one of his favorite hunting partners. I hunted with him a good bit with him in the Senate years. I think that Sam Nunn was someone that he enjoyed hunting with. He mentioned Fritz Hollings. I'm not sure that he hunted actually with Fritz Hollings, but you could just go through just the list of those in the Senate and

years ago, was a close friend of Lawton and he at one time was IMC, then International Mineral and Chemical Company, but one of the largest of the phosphate producers in Florida, he was there, Vice President in charge of their Florida operation for a period of time and they all and some of the other companies did had hunting facilities and they would invite Lawton as a guest and they brought down, I remember, Sam Nunn and Lloyd Bentsen came down and Sam Nunn came down and hunted a couple of times on my property with Lawton and Wilbur Boyd.

M: Did he ever mention to you, his thoughts on or his opinions of Jimmy Carter? Jimmy Carter was elected in 1976. Did he know Carter before the election or -- of course that would have been running for reelection I guess that year.

B: Lawton was a good Democrat and he certainly was supportive of Carter in his election after -- I don't think Lawton knew Carter par

pleasure, tied in with the ability to help and do things. Lawton was a very effective senator in getting people to agree on things. He was not a powerful speaker. He was not someone who got a great deal of publicity throughout the country, but he was thought of as being stable and sound and someone that you could trust. So, Lawton became, well into his first term, before he got too far into his first term; these relationships I mentioned, he was one that was able to on difficult matters, bring the differing groups together. He had a great ability there and he was always interested in the fiscal aspects of things and he was a finalist to be Budget Committee Chairman and he did achieve that. I may have mentioned earlier that that was his, in some ways, his biggest disappointment when he discovered that he was unable to do that which he hoped could be done and I think that may have contributed to disappointment, that he just couldn't get it moving and when he decided, he was completing his third term and he just up and decided that he was not going to run for reelection. He announced that he would and everybody expected him to and were getting things in order and it wouldn't have been difficult. He didn't really have any meaningful opposition, in my judgment. I think he was somewhat frustrated and he was going through some difficulties then. Lawton had some depression and it was well publicized in the paper that he took Prozac at one time.

M: Now by his second term, he was pretty much, I would imagine understood, people of Florida could be for certain things and against certain things; what kind of reputation, I guess who would have been his greatest suppo

candidate in the Democratic primary, I can't remember who the others were and *Florida Trend* had written an article calling him an empty suit. No, no, Bill Nelson. I think that was on the cover.

M: It would have been quite a thing, then, for him, I would imagine, for him to pull together, to pull together a campaign staff, and did he use any of the people that he had had for the senate? Do you remember if Charlie Canady was brought back into that staff to campaign for the governor's race? You remember some of the prominent people in that?

B: Well, in the early stages, I think Charlie was. He, uh..

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which is going on in the public arena that Rhea does, and Rhea is a...but they, they're different people. They both, but, I don't know how to describe it, but I sense that and this is, as I say, sometime, but Charlie was a very important part of Lawton's political success and career. And when I, and when, in the gubernatorial campaign, he was, he was involved but he wasn't really, he didn't have the dominant role that he had had previously, the, I'm trying to think of some of the ones who really, I need to go back and review some of the people that were heavily involved in the gubernatorial campaign. That was, that was a big, you know, many thought that was a big upset, when Lawton came back and defeated an incumbent governor. Though as I recall, the margin was not that close. I don't have the books and I don't remember those things, but it was, uh..

M: Did he attempt to, um, to pull together any of his Polk County base, or did he have much of a base in Polk County, rather than..

B: Oh yeah..

M: ..even though he didn't live here anymore?

B: Oh yeah. He always kept a contact here, like for instance, uh, Dean Saunders, who was, had been on his staff in his last year in the senate, as I remember, and then Dean

M: Okay. Um. So, I, obviously, when I got into this project full dose, I'll be looking internally into his, all of the things that he was doing in the senate as well as the governor, but I'm just asking you some of your memories now, of course. Um. As, as the first term began to come to an end and Florida became more and more republican, and the Bush power, from the national level and of course the, you know, the pressure on the State of Florida as well, and Jeb Bush's advent, I guess, I guess people, what was the feeling among Lawton's supporters about, about the challenge from Jeb Bush in 1994?

B: Well, they were, it was..

M: Worried?

B: Well, yeah. Yeah. I mean, Jeb was very attractive and he really had been working really, ever since Martinez was beaten, when he, I guess when he was Secretary of Commerce or something like that under Martinez, and though Jeb went down to Miami and worked with oh, it was Cuban I know, a really fine man, uh, in business, but he, but he really was full-time preparing himself to run for governor, and he had all the access to..

M: Even in the late eighties..

B: ..yeah, yeah.

M: As late as that.

B: Yeah. He, this was my sense of it, and he would come to speaking appearances in

tonight. We'd be sitting around cooking mullet around the campfire and all". And we fussed at him a little bit and chatted, and he was talking about, well, you know, getting down the next time we can get together, but we, we, because he'd planned on being there. And then we went out hunting the next morning and when we came in from hunting, it was, well I say we went out in the morning, and then we, but it was after, and then we usually would go out in the morning and then come back at noon, and then we went out in the afternoon. And then we came back that afternoon in the evening, uh, Wilbur's son-in-law and daughter were out there, the one, it was, I guess, he had three girls, Brenda, and she's married to an ex-major league baseball player. I'll think of the name for you in a minute, but, and they were there to tell us that Lawton had died. They had discovered him near the middle of the afternoon I guess, you know, he went in to exercise in the morning and they didn't, he didn't like to be bothered, and it was one of those things that has never been satisfactorily explained to me, that here, the folks that were worrying about it, Rhea was, had gone somewhere, I think she was in Tallahassee, but she had other things to do, and I think she kept asking and maybe they finally went and they looked in and saw him on the floor, and he had apparently died when, on the exercise bike or one of the, in his little gym he had there, and uh, he had been dead for 4-5 hours, I think, when they found him. And they came and, but I remember that so vividly, they said that Lawton, he's gone, but we had no inkling of it. You know, it may have been that his last physical showed something. I don't know. I never heard there was anything. But I don't think anything could've been done, apparently, you know, it was one of those instant attacks.

M: Can you, while we're on the subject, can you just kind of go ahead and reflect a little bit about what it was like, the funeral, and some of the things that you remember about the funeral? Did you have a chance to go to the funeral?

B: Oh yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

M: And what was it..

B: ..you ought to look at that and you can see the schedule of those that were there, but it was a, and then they had, the graveside services were very were very well done. And it was, uh, but it was, you know, as I say the only State funeral I've ever been to..

M: And he was buried in Tallahassee?

B: He was buried in Tallahassee.

M: At the City cemetery?

B: It was, you know, it was..

M: Is it, maybe it was the cemetery between the mansion and uh..

B: No, no. It was a good bit out, the cemetery, but, but what they did, I'm pretty sure this is, Lawton has a piece of some land there where, remember the stories about his cook shack and everything?

M: The big cook shack, yeah, all the cooks..

B: Chemonie was part of that, was the name of the plantation..

M: Chemonie? Yeah.

B: ..was there, and Jim Smith, I think bought into it, and there was, some other couple of plantations, it was right in the heart of it, maybe 160 acres or something like that, it was a real big piece of property, but I think they moved the body and he's buried out there now.

M: Okay.

B: But this, this was one of the older cemeteries. There are three or four. This was out north of Tallahassee, and I cannot think of the name of it.

M: Okay.

M: Anything we haven't covered?

B: I'm trying to think. You know, there's so much we haven't covered, but yet, uh, to make it meaningful, those that we've, the omissions, I need to go back and try to review. Lawton was one of my very closest friends. We spent a major part of my adult life being good friends, and he was, uh, a remarkable person. He was unassuming. He loved public life. He had the facility to connect with people and he had a remarkable ability in recalling what people did. He had a marvelous sense of humor. He would, and Lawton was, he was just, uh, such an unusual person, and had some of the qualities that you'd like for all people to have, but he wasn't the, the person that was overwhelming in any way, but he was just a good, great person, and he had this ambition that he wanted to serve, and he did and he did it wonderfully well.

M: Great.