

M: Do you remember what you said that day about Senator Smathers and why you were supporting him?

D: I suggested that he was a man who would listen, a man who was interested in serving not himself but the public, and that I told them how I became acquainted with him, a man of good character. This was the message that I presented.

M: That was a famous, memorable election, an election that was pretty nasty. It was an election that was extensively covered nationally. Claude Pepper had been in the senate for about 15 years by that time. He was a major national figure. And he had a challenger who was very dynamic, very young. Were you able to speak anywhere else for George Smathers?

D: No, that was it.

M: Were you part of a campaign team? Was there any significant campaign organization that you were a part? How did it come that you spoke for him?

D: They knew that I was supporting George, and of course I wanted to help any way that I could, so some of the folks in DeSoto County asked me to come.

M: Did he make any appearances in DeSoto?

D: I don't recall that he did.

M: Up until that time, did you have any interaction with Senator Pepper?

D: Nothing negative.

M: Did you ever meet Senator Pepper?

D: I met him later, but my only purpose was the fact that I had become acquainted with George and he and I were good friends, and I knew that he was a good person. I had nothing against Senator Pepper; I was just supporting my good friend.

M: So within two years after that you were thinking about running yourself for something. What was the first thing that you ever ran for?

D: I ran for the State Senate.

M: Did you ever run for local or county office before that?

D: No. There were four counties – Highlands, Hardee, DeSoto, and Glades. So I campaign0 1 90.024 178.5PD:

their names. I went to see Amy Collier and I said, "Amy, I thought I'd better come back over and check with you." She said, "Mr. Carlton, I can't believe you've done that. I sure will vote for you." Well, she taught me a lesson. Make yourself available and accessible. And ten days after the election when I was elected, I went back to see her and I would listen, and I made a point to see her at least once a year and the other people in the community. So she taught me a good lesson.

M: Can you walk me through your thought process. How was it that you first made the decision and then what was the process like as far as letting people know. Were people urging you to run for example?

D: Not really, because I was young and I thought well, I'm going to run and serve and vote on issues the way I think I should vote, and I will make myself accessible to the people and so I ran.

M: Fuller Warren I believe was elected in 1948.

D: I believe Dan McCarty was governor, so he was governor when I was in the senate.

M: And Dan McCarty was from Tallahassee, correct?

D: No, he was from down

M: Oh, yes, around Melbourne and Cocoa Beach, Daytona Beach?

D: Right, yes.

M: Do you remember working with him at all?

D: Yes, and I was always impressed with him.

M: He died in office, correct, he died really soon.

D: Yes, and then Charley Johns became governor.

M: Because he was President of the Senate?

D: Yes.

M: You would have been certainly associated with Charlie Johns. What was your opinion of him?

D: Charlie was aZ ! as

some were harassed. Another thing that was going on about that time were the Kefauver Hearings, which took place in Tampa and also in Miami, which were run by Senator Estes Kefauver. Do you have any memory of that?

D: I don't have any clear memories of that.

M: They had hearings about organized crime, police corruption, county sheriff corruption and so forth in Miami, Fort Lauderdale, and also Tampa. You don't have any memories of that?

D: No.

M: So in the U. S. Senate

M: Did you move your family up there?

D: No I didn't.

M: That would have been 1953. You would have been married how many years?

D: I got married in 1943 or 1944. I had little ones.

M: So let's go through them. Who were your kids? How old were they when you first entered the senate?

D: Oh, they were quite young. We were married in 1943 and our first child came in 1944, second one in 1947, and last one in 1950.

M: And their names?) - 3 (y) 3 : (a) - 4 (o u) 3 i t e w m o n y e a a t i t c e D v

D: Susan was my oldest daughter. Then Doyle III was my son. Then Jane was my youngest daughter. They were three years apart. My wife Mildred and I were visiting with my mother, and we didn't know exactly what we were going to name my boy, and my mother was so funny, because she said, "I wish you'd not name him anything but

the time, and this time I took one position and he gets up and takes the other, and he said, "Usually I agree with Senator Carlton, but this time I don't and this is why ..." and so forth. He couldn't have been any nicer than he was. So when he sat down, I got back up and said, "I just have to tell the Senate, Senator Barron and members of the Senate, that he's got just as much right to be wrong as I have to be right." That brought the house down. But he and I became such good friends.

M: He was still in office when I was in college up at FSU and he was quite a strong force. Was his personality very strong? Plus he had a real mean streak.

D: Well, he was gutsy. Another thing in the Senate, we all had differences of opinion. And I made up my mind early that I was going to like the Senator whether I agreed with what he said or not. And so many times there might be four or five of us eating together, and there was some on one team and some on the other. But I always made a point to know how to rationalize and discuss with the senators, but then I would take the stand that I thought I needed to take on issues.

M: And he became leader of the Senate later on and almost became like a dictator? Would that be fair to say?

D: Oh, he was powerful.

M: So were there any other figures like Dempsey Barron that you remember vividly as far as who you worked with in the Senate?

D: Well, you know, when I was in the Senate early, you know who was in there? Leroy Collins. Leroy was always a real gentleman. He sat on the other side of the Senate from me. And he didn't get up all the time to say a whole lot, but when he did he always dealt very sincerely with the issues. He didn't get involved in personality differences. I was really impressed with his character quality.

M: I want to get into that, particularly that election when he ran against Mr. Johns. That would have been in 1956, correct; two years after the Brown Decision which was the Supreme Court decision which outlawed separate but equal schools, and two years later nowhere was there any desegregation effort. There was kind of a lull and people were just letting it sink in. What was it like in that campaign? Was the segregation issue brought up, and how did that play in the state of Florida?

D: I remember very vividly when I ran for governor that issue.

M: That issue was still a major issue?

D: Yes, and Farris Bryant defeated me in the run-off. And Farris made a good governor. He had been the Speaker of the House of Representatives and he was a good man. But when he and I had a television discussion, television

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Well, his answer was just the opposite. He said he would withdraw them from the public schools and put them in private schools. So I had some of my friends tell me, "I knew that if you answered the question the way you did you weren't going to get elected." My oldest daughter told her mother that she was sure glad her daddy answered the question the way he did. The one thing about Farris, after he was elected he enforced the law.

D: Not really, because I knew that he and Farris were good friends. In fact, he and I were good friends. So I never did ask him. But one thing, his daddy Judge Smathers, was for me.

M: He probably pulled a lot of clout and was probably pretty influential down in Miami?

D: Yes.

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