

Arkansas Supreme Court Project
Arkansas Supreme Court Historical Society

Interview with Cliff Hoofman

Enola, Arkansas

January 10, 2017

Interviewer: Ernest Dumas

Ernie Dumas: All right, this is Ernest Dumas. This is January 10, 2017, and I'm at the home of former Supreme Court Justice Cliff Hoofman at 166 Marcus Hill Road near Enola. That's in Franklin County.

Cliff Hoofman: . . .Faulkner County.

ED: That's right, Faulkner County. Franklin County was the home of Senator Dale Bumpers.

CH: That's right.

ED: But, Judge, first I need to get your oral permission for the David and Barbara Pryor Center for Oral and Visual History at the University of Arkansas to use these tapes and the transcripts, in whatever form they take, for research or whatever use they'd like to make of them, and also for the Arkansas Supreme Court Historical Society.

CH: Yes. That'll be fine.

ED: All right. Judge, let's start with your birth. You were born June 23, 1943, in Judsonia, in White County, right?

CH: In a little house, in our house . . .

ED: In Judsonia?

CH: In Plainview [north of Judsonia and Searcy].

ED: In your home at Plainview?

CH: Yes.

ED: What is your full name? Clifton Archibald Hoofman?

CH: Clifton Howard Hoofman.

ED: Who were your daddy and your mama?

CH: My mother was Agnes West originally. That was her maiden name. My father's name was Joseph Eli Hoofman.

ED: E-L-I?

CH: E-L-I. I never knew him well.

ED: Did he die early?

CH: No, no. He didn't die until about two weeks ago. He died at just about ninety-nine. But he and my mother separated when I was about two. He was in California. He remarried and had, I think, about five more children. Whatever took place in the relationship he had with my mother I really don't know. They never really had a relationship that allowed me . . .

ED: To have any reaction to him?

CH: I had three brothers. He never—to my knowledge, but he may have—made any effort to support us or to have much to do with us.

ED: Were these older brothers?

CH: Two of them older, and one younger. My mother was pregnant with my youngest brother when she left California. She came back here and I was raised with my grandparents, primarily.

ED: So you were born at Plainview, outside Judsonia, and then when you were an infant the family went to California?

CH: Went to California.

ED: Did he get a job out there?

CH: He was a shoe cobbler and had a shoe store on San Fernando Road, I understand. He repaired shoes and sold shoes. My mother came back here and, the best I remember, I went to be with my grandparents. They were sharecroppers. They didn't have running water, electricity or anything and my grandparents, as it turned out, were not real healthy. My mother, when I was six, remarried to a fine man, Wesley Lewis. He was my stepfather. He was not educated, but he was a good man. He and my mother and me, my youngest brother, and the brother who was just older than me moved to Judsonia for about a year. My oldest brother stayed with my grandparents. He dropped out of school then and went to California before he joined the Army. So someone had to be with my grandparents out there in the country. I was the one who liked the country so I was the one . . .

ED: You were designated to go live with your grandparents?

CH: Uh huh. That was at Honey Hill, west of Searcy, out near where the country club is now west of Searcy.

ED: Let's go back and get the names of your brothers, in birth order.

CH: The oldest one was J.W., Joseph William. Always went by J.W. or Joe. He was nearly seven years older than me. The next was Hardy. He was two years older than me. He had nephritis, lost a kidney, and my youngest brother gave him a kidney in 1972. He lived for nine more years. My youngest brother, who was two years younger, almost three years younger than me, was Michael Eugene. He's the only one who still survives and he lives out here in Conway.

ED: So there were four Hoofman boys?

CH: Uh huh. And there were two more boys and either three or four girls that my father had with his other wife.

ED: But you never knew anything about them?

CH: No, I really didn't.

ED: Let's get your grandparents' names.

CH: Joseph William West and Clara West.

ED: What did he do?

CH: He was a farmer, and I understand he was a successful farmer until the Depression came. When the Depression came, he was one of those who just lost everything. His kids went about trying to survive. He just never was able to make a comeback. We were sharecroppers with a pair of mules. We continued as I was on the farm. I plowed with that pair of mules, even though I was young. I stayed there until I was nearly fifteen.

ED: You stayed there from the age of seven until about fifteen?

CH: From the age of about two. There was only a year or so when I was out of that house. All my life, since I was big enough, I was plowing with a pair of mules. When I was twelve

or thirteen I was more capable than my grandfather. He was not a big person and had poor health.

ED: What did you raise out there?

CH: We raised a little corn, which we fed the mules, and canned corn for ourselves. We raised a garden. For several years we raised a little crop of cotton. I remember when I was six years old it was the first time I went to town. Went to town on a load of cotton behind a pair of mules. I had my first swallow of a Coca Cola. It took my breath away.

ED: It would.

CH: I remember going to town that day and seeing a world I didn't know existed. We raised some peanuts sometimes. We raised peas, which we canned. But the only money crop we raised was cotton. We never had a money crop besides cotton.

ED: You didn't try to sell the vegetables? You just canned them?

CH: We ate most of them. We were subsistence farmers, for all practical purposes. Sharecroppers. On that old poor land out there we never raised more than two bales—at most—in a year.

ED: How much did you get for a bale of cotton, if you remember?

CH: Money was not something that I ever had or saw. But I was of the understanding that prior to the time that I was fourteen we never had as much as five hundred dollars come into the house, for the year. Consequently, I don't know what the cotton sold for. The only money that I knew we had was in a little cloth bag pinned inside my grandmother's dress.

ED: That was the bank?

CH: That was the bank, so far as I knew. Granddad would catch a ride with a neighbor to go into town to get staples, flour, sugar. She would take that little bag out and give him some money.

ED: That was common.

CH: That was common. At least that's what happened in our place.

ED: That was kind of common down in Union County, in that same era where I grew up. So your folks didn't have a car?

CH: My mother had a little car. But, see, when she married my stepdad the car was gone. Because my granddad couldn't drive anyway.

ED: So there was no car out on the farm.

CH: Oh, no.

ED: So you had to hitch a ride into town, or your mama . . .

CH: Mama would come occasionally, but we just didn't go to town very often. Granddad didn't go. I caught a school bus into school.

ED: When you speak about "town" you're talking about . . .?

CH: Searcy. I was raised this side of Searcy, on Honey Hill Lane. My father's folks—and there were lots of them—were over in the Judsonia area, not more than twenty miles away, but it might as well have been across the continent.

ED: So your father was from that area?

CH: His parents, I think, had eleven children. There was an article that appeared in the paper, about '60 or '61 . . . They had a reunion about every year. I never went. There was an article in the paper that there were nearly two hundred descendants from my father's

family and there had never been but one death in the family, as of that time. My brother who was just older than me had a baby who died when it was three days old. That was the only death in the family out of eleven children, and both of them were alive—that is, my father's parents. There are a lot of them over there, but I never knew any of them.

ED: There were some pretty good genes in that family.

CH: Apparently. I understand that my grandmother lived with one of her children in Vilonia. She lived to be a hundred and one. The reason I knew this was that when I was in the state Senate I had a person, Bill, who was either my uncle or my cousin who had some property in Vilonia when the Highway Department was planning that bypass. He wanted to talk to me about how they were bypassing his property. In the course of that conversation I learned that my grandmother had lived there and had recently passed away. She got up one morning, put on her clothes, fixed herself some breakfast and later in the day expired. I didn't get anything else from my father, but maybe I got some of those genes and maybe I'll be able to enjoy this farm for a while.

ED: Until you're a hundred and one, or more. Tell me a little about your grandmother you lived with. Was she a hard woman, sweet . . .? Did she whip you a little?

CH: Yes. With a peach-tree limb.

ED: She cracked a whip.

CH: Well, they were both very good Christian people, and they were poor. But, looking back, I like to think that I lived a life of pretty good quality. And I'm sure I got whatever that was from them. Granddad took a plow line to me a couple of times or took a cotton stalk to me. One time, I remember, my brother and I learned that Mr. Ronsey, who lived not far from us, had some clamps that if your well rope broke you could get it down in the well somehow, grab the well bucket and pull it out. Now we couldn't imagine how that would be possible. The only piece of machinery we had on the whole farm was a pea thrasher, and you turned it by hand. The idea that something could go down in there and get that bucket was foreign to us. So we decided to cut the well rope in two, and that would necessitate Mr. Ronsey coming over and we'd see how that worked.

ED: A scientific approach to the subject.

CH: Right, well, I remember quite clearly that, for some reason, we got a big round piece of stovewood, got it split and moved it over there. We got the axe and my brother went in the house for some reason. I'm sure that if I knew the truth he'd chickened out. He didn't come back in time and I got tired of waiting. So I whacked it. Then, looking at that, I realized that I was in trouble. I went around and got under the Number Two washtub that was over on the side of the outbuilding.

ED: The washtub was probably where you took a bath.

CH: Uh huh. I got under it. I guess I was five or six. I got under there, curled up and was just fine. I remember Mother was there. I could hear them out there hollering about what was happening. "Where'd he go?" "Did he run off down there in the woods?" What happened then—I've heard my mother tell this story—was that the sun managed to move around. I was in the shade to start with, but when the sun came around and got on that tub it wasn't long until I had to lift it up a little bit and get some air. When that tub moved, somebody saw it and turned it over. So Granddad took me over there to the well, took that well rope

and that axe and cut off a piece about three feet long. When he got through with it, it was well frayed. I remember that.

ED: I bet you would.

CH: Mr. Ronsey lived about a mile and a half away and we had to go get him. They brought him over there with his equipment, and they wouldn't let me watch. And that was what it was all about.

ED: So your scientific experiment didn't work?

CH: It didn't work. But my brother told me that it was sort of like a frog clamp, and I knew what a frog clamp was.

ED: As soon as it touched something it would grab. It would release and grab the top of the well bucket. There's a little hoop at the top of the well bucket that it would clamp on.

CH: Yeah. It was simple. There was a string tied to it and the weight of it made it open up. When you let the weight down, it would close. So you would let it would drop down there until you got on it, and then it would close and you could pull it up. But I didn't get to see it.

ED: You lived out there on the farm until you were about fifteen?

CH: Between fourteen and fifteen.

ED: So where did you go to school?

CH: Searcy.

ED: You started to school at Searcy? You never went to school at Judsonia?

CH: I did go one year. The year the storm came, in '54.

ED: The tornado. The Judsonia tornado.

CH: Yes, I think it was either '53 or '54. [Actually, it was March 21, 1952.] Mama still lived at Judsonia at that time. For whatever reason, I happened to be with Mother and we headed back to my grandparents' house—me, Hardy and Michael. We stopped at the Delta Station there at the edge of Searcy when the storm came. It blew all the signs down off that station.

ED: It was a famous tornado.

CH: That night, we went out to Grandpa's house. Mama picked up my granddad, left us there, and they went back over there. We had a shotgun house that Mama lived in. As it turned out, from the porch of that house, it was the only house that was left standing, but it was leaning over so far that you couldn't close the door, I'm told. I went back there and we lived in that house for the rest of that school year. That was in the spring, I think, and it wasn't very long. At that time, I moved back to the farm.

ED: So you went one year to school in Judsonia?

CH: Yes.

ED: First grade?

CH: No, I think I was about nine years old when the storm came.

ED: Third or fourth grade.

CH: Somewhere about that. I remember the first grade at Searcy, but I don't remember much about Judsonia, but I know I went to school over there. I remember coming home from school when Hardy came home and he was so ill. We took him to the doctor and ultimately we discovered that he had nephritis. Right after that is when I went back to my grandparents' house.

ED: Out there on the farm, were there other kids in the neighborhood?

CH: No.

ED: So you were pretty much alone as for playmates?

CH: Right. We lived in that house until I was about eleven. We moved to what we called the Whittaker place. There was another place we went to where my grandparents were sharecroppers, but we were only there for less than a year. One of the mules died and we weren't able to produce anything, so there was a vacant house that was owned by Ed Lightle.

ED: Ed Lightle. James Ed Lightle?

CH: From Searcy. J.E. Lightle.

ED: He was in the state Senate for a number of years. He was a Harvard-educated lawyer.

CH: He was the one who chose Beebe, hired Beebe right after Beebe and I took the bar exam. He owned that piece of property. There was no one living in it, and we didn't have any other place to go. Back when I was a kid . . . The population of Arkansas evaporated in the 'thirties. I was surprised when people in the legislature in 1983 or '84 said the population got back where it was back in the 'thirties. There were several vacant houses around in the country that I was aware of back then. This was one of them. We moved in, because it was a matter of survival.

ED: Were these painted houses you lived in?

CH: The brown house is the one we referred to the first time. It was brown and at one time was painted, but it was pretty rugged. It had no underpinnings. It was set up on rock pillars. You could see the dogs and chickens underneath the house.

ED: You didn't have electricity.

CH: Huh uh. I remember just before we moved from the brown house, when I was twelve years old, I was ill one day, had the flu or whatever, and they cut a square hole in the ceiling and dropped down an electric cord. That was February or March of that year and then when school was out we moved to the Whittaker place, so I had electricity for a couple of months.

ED: But ordinarily you didn't have electricity.

CH: No. We were at the Whittaker place for only less than a year and then we moved to Mr. Lightle's property, and we didn't have electricity out there either.

ED: Did you have gas, butane?

CH: No. We cooked and heated by a wood stove.

ED: And probably your lighting was kerosene lamps.

CH: I still have the lamps here that I grew up with.

ED: I learned to read by kerosene lamps. We probably got electricity where I lived in Union County about the time you got it. I think I was in about the eighth grade when we got electricity on Champagnolle Road. We finally got butane. The butane dealer would come out and fill the butane tank. But you didn't have any playmates?

CH: No. At the brown house, the closest neighbor was Charles and Robert Ronsey and they lived about a mile and a half away in a much nicer place. There was a boy named Paul Wayne Rascoe. He taught me how to ride a bicycle. He lived about three miles away.

ED: Did you have a bicycle?

CH: Yes, I had a bicycle. It was a hand-me-down. My brothers, in their attempt to show me how to ride it, when I was in the vicinity of ten or eleven, would just put me on it and get me going off down this hill out in front of the house, and I'd run off in the ditch.

ED: Run off into the blackberry briars?

CH: Yeah. I even lost interest in it, and Paul Wayne Rascoe one day, six months after I got that bicycle, coached me, and it was not very long that I was thinking: "I can ride this all the way to Searcy and never touch the handlebars." I could really ride the thing. My brothers really didn't or couldn't teach me how to ride it.

ED: So your playmates, such as you had, were . . .

CH: Animals. I love animals. That's one reason I love being out here. I love animals and I love the outdoors. I was interested in every creature there was. We had four or five milk cows that I milked. I would go down in the pasture to get the cows, jump up on the back of one of them and ride back to the barn.

ED: You could ride the cows? I didn't know cows would let you ride them.

CH: Oh, yeah. It's not real comfortable, but you can get up there . . .

ED: The cows didn't mind?

CH: No. I worked with animals, and I always had a way with them. I could make them be comfortable with me. I've always enjoyed my animals. I've got *beaucoup*s of cows. I don't have any that I ride today.

ED: Did you raise hogs, too?

CH: We raised hogs. It was really sad that when my grandparents got where they could not stay out by themselves anymore and we didn't have the money to buy hogs. We were pouring out four or five gallons of milk a day because we didn't have the money to buy hogs to feed it to. That was the last couple of years that we lived out on Mr. Lightle's place. We still had cows and we milked them. When we sat down at the table, we had sweet milk, blinky milk, buttermilk, and clabbered milk.

ED: How did you keep all that milk cold?

CH: Those were the stages of milk breaking down, and we didn't have any way of keeping it cold.

ED: We had a little creek, a little spring, across the road from the house and we would take the bottled milk and keep it in the spring, which was very cold. We'd keep the butter down there. We finally got an icebox and Daddy would go into town once or twice a week and get a fifty-pound block of ice for the icebox.

CH: We had an icebox one time, but we didn't have ice often enough to keep it from smelling mildewed. You know how that icebox smells when the ice runs out. We didn't really use it. It was something somebody gave us. We would put the milk in a tub of water to cool it. We would drink sweet milk and we'd have blinky milk, which would begin to break down . . .

ED: Blinky milk was milk that was getting to be a little bit sour?

CH: It had a little bite to it, but it was OK. Then we'd have buttermilk, which is clabbered milk stirred up. I liked clabbered milk, which was chunky like Jello.

ED: You had a churn to make butter.

CH: Yeah, my grandmother made butter, and we always had butter on the table.

ED: But you didn't have any bacon.

CH: Well, back early on we raised some hogs and we generally, up until I was about ten or eleven, killed a hog every year. That was the only meat we had besides squirrels and rabbits. I'd catch a possum and we would put it in a wire chicken coop. My grandmother would feed it table scraps for six or eight weeks and then she would cook that possum. Boy, it's good.

ED: Possum is good?

CH: Oh, yeah. With sweet potatoes. We ate chicken sometimes.

ED: You raised chickens?

CH: We had chickens out in the yard. We ate eggs. We had plenty of eggs. We didn't eat too many of our chickens. In the spring, the hens would lay and we would set a hen or two. In the fall, or the late summer, when the chickens were reaching maturity, you could pick out the roosters from the hens and we would fry the roosters. Other than those fryers we'd keep the hens.

ED: We always had laying hens. My brother, who is older than me and became a historian, by the way, a professor of history, named a lot of our hens after the wives of presidents. So they became pets. Martha Washington, Abigail Adams, Martha Jefferson, Dolly Madison . . . When Daddy would wring the neck of one of those hens and cook it, Wayne wouldn't eat any. He won't eat chicken until this day. He's eighty-one. He says it's not because of Abigail, Martha and Dolly, but I know he was horrified that Daddy would kill Dolly Madison and put her on the table. So you didn't try to name the chickens?

CH: Your story reminds me. All of our animals I had a great way with. My grandmother somehow came across about four Rhode Island Reds. She traded for them probably, with Mr. Ronsey. One of those hens I had trained. She would ride around on my shoulder and peck grains of corn out of my shirt pocket. I got her started by letting her jump up and get corn. I'd put my hand down and she would jump up on my arm. She found out that corn was in my pocket. I'd let her peck it and I'd put her on my shoulder. I got her to ride around on my shoulder any time I wanted her to. One time we were going to cook a hen. I told Grandad, just remember that my Rhode Island Red has still got her tail. They moult in the fall and they lose their tailfeathers, but mine hadn't. That evening when I got home we had dinner, chicken and dumplings, and my chicken was gone. So apparently my granddaddy went out there and the fattest Rhode Island Red without a tail was mine. She must have moulted during the night and he killed my chicken. Needless to say, I didn't eat any chicken. That chicken. It didn't turn me against eating chicken, but I didn't eat that one. I was heartbroken.

ED: I bet. But you hunted squirrels and rabbits, and ate a lot of rabbit.

CH: Uh huh. I used a carbide light.

ED: We should explain what a carbide lamp is. It's . . .

CH: It's pellets of carbide and when you put a few drops of water in it, it turns into gas.

ED: The gas spews out the front, lights and a reflector sends the light into the woods.

CH: It's the same kind of gas and light that early coal miners used.

ED: You make a spark to light the gas and put the lamp on your cap to hunt with.

CH: Of course, it's against the law, but I didn't think anything about it. I would go out with my .410 shotgun. There was not a lot of game in the 'fifties. We didn't have a lot of deer. People hunted and ate them in the 'thirties. I think the Game and Fish Commission

reported that we had fewer than five hundred in 1933, because they were eaten during the Depression. And all the other game was, too. The reason I hunted them at night . . . We had hounds . . .

ED: What did you hunt at night?

CH: I hunted rabbits with that spotlight.

ED: Was that illegal?

CH: Sure, but I didn't know it at the time.

ED: I didn't either. I didn't know you couldn't hunt rabbits at night.

CH: It was against the law to headlight them. It's against the law today.

ED: When that light hits their eyes at night, whether it's a rabbit or a chicken, or a snake, it mesmerizes them and freezes them.

CH: The light is blinding.

ED: Then you can shoot them, gig them or whatever.

CH: Of course, the glow of the eyes help you find them. At any rate, rabbit and squirrel were probably the meat that we ate the most of. Occasionally, we'd have possum.

ED: To me, none of that was good eating because there was so little flesh on those tiny bones. It was tricky to eat.

CH: It was tricky, but I was always excited to have it.

ED: Let's go back to school. You go to school in Searcy. You go to elementary school there. Any classmates there that you're still friends with today?

CH: Yes. I have a group and one classmate, Willard Smith, and three others that were a year behind me and we have brunch about once a month. I was close to only two of the group when I was in school. We reconnected later on and for the last ten years or so and regularly share time together. I wasn't very close to very many people in high school.

ED: Did you ride a bus?

CH: Yes.

ED: How much of a bus ride was it?

CH: I imagine it was twelve to fifteen miles. Maybe it was a little farther than that. There weren't any neighbors, just people you saw on the bus. I never was close to anybody on the bus.

ED: Did you have any fights on the bus?

CH: I had some fights in school. Lots of them. I didn't pick any fights but . . .

ED: You finished them.

CH: I finished them. I say lots of them, a few. I dropped out of school in the eleventh grade and went to work at a gas station, pumping gas. Midterm of the eleventh grade. My grades were poor. I never was interested in school. I was just trying to get a diploma. No one in my family had ever graduated from high school. They had the program, DE and DO. You go to school half a day and work half a day.

ED: What is DE and DO?

CH: Diversified Education and . . . DE and DO.

ED: Whatever DO stands for.

CH: Anyway, I dropped out of school and Mr. Luther Hardin—Lu Hardin's father—and Mr. Cecil Morgan came to see me. Mr. Morgan ran the DE and DO program in Searcy and Mr. Hardin was the FFA [Future Farmers of America] teacher. I remember I had been out

of school only about two weeks. Mr. Hardin put a hand on my shoulder. Mr. Morgan told me he had found a place at C.R. Anthony's on the square. [C.R. Anthony Company was a chain of department stores branded as Anthony's.] It was a store much like J.C. Penney. He said they had a spot that he wanted me to go interview for and I should come back to school. Mr. Hardin told me—I remember his words—"Don't be less than what you can be. Listen to Mr. Morgan and go back to school." I owe him so much.

ED: Luther Hardin later became associate state commissioner of education under Arch Ford.

CH: Not education, but for vocational-technical education.

ED: He was the top man over vocational-technical education for the state.

CH: Mr. Morgan was in charge of vocational education at Searcy and he was also over the DE and DO program. I went and applied for the job at C.R. Anthony, and that was the thing that turned my whole life around, because Mr. Richmond told me that I could have the job. It paid fifty-five cents an hour. I had to wear a tie to work. I didn't have a tie. My stepdad was the drayman for the Missouri Pacific Railroad. He delivered freight and he would come to the school. I was delivering freight when I was thirteen years old. He would come to school and tell me he had to haul a load of chickens to St. Louis or Memphis tomorrow, and he needed me to haul the freight. I would get on that bicycle and I would ride into town, go down to the depot and I had the keys to the truck that was parked there. I would deliver the freight around town.

ED: On your bicycle or the truck?

CH: With the truck. I drove the truck. The police knew that I wasn't eligible. But I never got but one ticket. At any rate, I knew Mr. Bill Palmer, who was the manager for many years of J.C. Penney. So when I got that job that day and I had to wear leather shoes, slacks, and a tie, I didn't have anything but tennis shoes, blue jeans and sweatshirts and T-shirts. That's all I had ever worn in my life. So I went around to J.C. Penney, because I didn't want to admit to Mr. Richmond that I didn't have any. Mr. Palmer sold me a pair of shoes, two pair of slacks, two shirts and a bowtie, on credit. I paid him with my money. So I went back to school and I began to realize that there was stuff on those books that you could learn, and I really turned around and developed an interest in learning.

ED: That would have been your last two years.

CH: Two years.

ED: So your education essentially consisted of two years.

CH: Well, there was another great story. I was called into the principal's office in my last year. Mr. [James] Ahlf and Mr. Yarborough said, "You don't plan to go to college, do you?" Back in those days—and you probably know this—if you had money you went to college and if you didn't have money you didn't go to college. You went down to the shoe factory or some other place and went to work. So I was going to make a career out of this work for C.R. Anthony's. They said, "We accept part of the responsibility. We have allowed you to get to this point without ever having had a course in mathematics, but we're going to let you matriculate with your classmates."

ED: You had not had algebra, geometry, none of that stuff?

CH: That plays into a wonderful, unbelievable story. I went to graduation with my class and I went to work for the store. Immediately, I went into the National Guard and went on active duty when I got out of high school. Went to the Army, came back and went to

work at the store. Two months later, I was making two hundred fifty a month and I was really only able to make a car payment and rent payment for a little room, and that was it. But I was planning on being the manager of one of those stores. Mr. Richmond took me to Oklahoma, where the home office of C.R. Anthony was. He took me out there in, I'm going to say, the summer of '62. At this time, I was the assistant manager. All the other assistant managers either had a college education, were working on one, or had quite a bit of education. So I knew that when a store opened up it wasn't going to be me. So I set out to, in some way, go to college. A lady named Eileen Coward had the drycleaners where we took our clothes that were to be altered. I carried them down there. In the winter of '62, I went in there. I would visit with Mrs. Coward when I went in to pick up something. There was a man in there. She turned to him and said, "Bert, this boy wants to go to college. Why can't you give him a job on that pipeline?" His name was Bert Rodden. He was the foreman for the Rivers Construction Company, a pipeline company. He asked me what kind of work I had done. I told him I grew up on a farm and that I had delivered freight all over town. He said, "Are you strong enough?" and I said yes. So he took my phone number and, lo and behold, in April of the next spring the phone rang and it was Bert Rodden. He said, "Do you still want to go to college?" I did. "Two weeks from today, which will be a Monday, you be at Calera, Alabama. Find Rivers Construction Company. I don't know how to spell it. I can't find it on the map. It may no longer exist. But at the time I could find it. I had never driven a car outside the state. I gave my two weeks notice to Mr. Richmond and he threw a fit. Everybody encouraged me not to do it. "Always when you go off looking for work, it's always a little further down the road." That's what my stepfather told me. That summer I worked in several states. They didn't have big, long jobs. I saved my money. I never knew anything about colleges. I wanted to go to ASTC.

ED: Arkansas State Teachers College, which is now University of Central Arkansas at Conway.

CH: I never knew anything about applying, applications or anything. You just go to college. I found out what day school started and worked up until the day before. I left Sioux City, Iowa, and I drove straight to ASTC and began to try to get into school. I finally got caught up on my paperwork and I didn't have enough credits to get into school. I couldn't get in. I knew that Mr. Ahlf was on the board.

ED: Ahlf?

CH: James Ahlf, who was the superintendent of schools at Searcy. I had worked seven days a week, fourteen and sixteen hours a day, and saved every dime. I went to see Mr. Ahlf, and the idea that I wasn't going to go to college . . . I don't know what the exchange was, but he went to see Dr. [Silas D.] Snow [president of Arkansas State Teachers College] and I understand the discussion was, "Look at his high school transcript. He won't make it. But if you can find room for him in four classes for one semester he'll flunk out and that will be the end of it. If you don't let him go, he's made such an effort that everybody in Searcy knows about it. It will be a real calamity." That's the conversation that they had. I didn't know what it was, but I knew that when I went back over there they let me enter. This shows you what a pure trainable mind I had. The lady said, "What are you going to major in?" This is two weeks later when I'm back over there. I didn't know what

"majoring" meant. That shows you what a blank mind I had. She said it's going to be what you study primarily. I thought that the reason I had so much trouble getting into school was that I had no math. "I'm going to major in math." [laughs] True story. I learned later on—I didn't go talk to the dean of students until years later—that he said the only measurable score I made on the entrance exam was in analytical thought, which is necessary in mathematics. As it turned out, I graduated with a 3.6 in mathematics. I started in intermediate algebra and then I went to college algebra. That summer I took a correspondence course in geometry so I could take trigonometry. I was so determined and disciplined that I got a job at J.C. Penney in Conway and I worked from noon to the end of the day plus Saturdays over there. My regimen was get up, go to class, go to work, come back and do nothing but study. I made a 2.5 my first semester.

ED: So you worked at J.C. Penney and went to school at the same time?

CH: When I was in college, I worked at J.C. Penney. After my first year, I went back on the pipeline. Then I worked at a pea cannery in Rochelle, Illinois, my second summer. Then the next year I got a job on the railroad in Little Rock. But I worked for J.C. Penney all the way through college.

ED: Were you a clerk?

CH: I sold clothes.

ED: So you took only morning classes.

CH: Until noon, all the way through college. It took me five years. I was floor counselor in my dorm. That was fifty dollars a month. I worked for Penney's and the summertime for the railroad and for Red Ball Motor Freight. I had been a truck driver in the Army so I had a commercial license. I hauled freight. I worked primarily on the docks for Red Ball Motor Freight, but I did drive the trucks some to go pick up.

ED: I don't have any idea now what the tuition would have been at ASTC then. I was at Henderson State Teachers College [HSTC] a few years earlier, the mid- and late '50s, and it was probably about the same.

CH: About the same. I think it was nearly eight hundred dollars a semester.

ED: That sounds about right.

CH: And then room and board. I don't remember what it was. I lived in the dormitory and I was eating breakfast in the cafeteria. I would eat lunch in the cafeteria. I rarely got off work in time to get the evening meal in the cafeteria. In my freshman year I came in several times and the door would be closed. One time I came running up there on the steps and Miss Mary—I don't remember her last name, but she ran the cafeteria—set into me. "You athletes are not going to run over this cafeteria. You think you can show up any time you want to and we're supposed to feed you. I see you coming in here late every day." I said, "Ma'am, I'm not an athlete. I work and I don't get off until late." You know, that lady for the rest of that year and the next year every day had a sack on the front porch of that cafeteria ready for me to pick up. I think about all the ugly things people said about Miss Mary, but she did that. I don't know if I ever knew her last name.

ED: All right, so you majored in math. Did you get a degree in math?

CH: I got a degree in math and history, a double major. When I got to college I learned that when you go to college you're not going to get a passing grade to get a degree. I learned that there was stuff to learn. And when I learned that you could learn, I had such a blank

slate for a mind that I really enjoyed studying. We had our class reunion here last summer and several of my classmates just wondered what happened to me. There I was a judge, had been a state senator, a lawyer . . .

ED: What happened?

CH: Yes, what happened? I told them that I learned that learning was fun.

ED: So you didn't participate in athletics in high school or college?

CH: I had no way of doing that.

ED: Did you have any interest in it? Did you even play a little baseball or softball as a kid?

CH: If you go back, there weren't any kids. When you get to be fifteen years old before you wind up in town, you don't know anything about any of the sports. Now, I played in the Army. We played football in the Army. I played on the company team. I enjoyed it.

ED: Where did you do basic training?

CH: Fort Jackson.

ED: Where's Fort Jackson?

CH: South Carolina. And then I went to Fort Gordon, Georgia. In high school, I had hardly ever seen a typewriter. We were in a communications company, and I don't know why but I decided I wanted to be a Teletype operator. When I got out of basic training, I went to Fort Gordon, Georgia, and they put us through a six-week program both for training about Teletype operations and a typing program. I learned to type in that period of time.

ED: When did you graduate from college?

CH: 'Sixty-eight.

ED: With a BS or BA?

CH: BS.

ED: Did you have any idea then what you wanted to do?

CH: Yes, I set out, after I began to get a feel for the world, to be a civil engineer. In the summer of 'sixty-six I had a college friend who had graduated the year before, and he had become acquainted with Milas Hale . . .

ED: A lawyer in Little Rock.

CH: A lawyer in Little Rock. And he at that time was running for prosecuting attorney against Dick Adkisson [Richard B. Adkisson]. Adkisson later became chief justice of the Supreme Court. I was working for the railroad and Larry Griffin had become acquainted with Milas and got me involved in his campaign with the workers on the railroad. I got acquainted with Milas and learned that David, his brother, who later got into a lot of problems, had gone to night [law] school there in Little Rock. Then, in 1966, the whole concept of practicing law just captured me. I asked Milas, "If I graduate from college and come down here and go to night law school and I graduate, can I practice law with you?" He said that I could. From that day, I knew what I was going to do. I came out of college and I went to law school. The last year, I worked in the law office with Milas Hale. I did legal research and whatever.

ED: So you graduated from ASTC in 1966 . . .

CH: 1968.

ED: And then you moved to Little Rock?

CH: I lived in the summer in North Little Rock every year that I worked for the railroad. I moved from the apartment in Conway. I got married in 1965. My wife was a

schoolteacher. She was a senior my freshman year and we got married after my sophomore year.

ED: What was her name?

CH: Carole Merritt. She was from North Little Rock. A lot of us wind up where our wives tell us we're going to wind up. She lived and taught school in North Little Rock. Her father was an engineer for the railroad and told me that they were hiring some summer employees. I went down there and applied and happened to get hired. So I was working for the railroad after my second year in college. I worked for the railroad each summer after that. I lived in the summers in North Little Rock and moved back to Conway and worked at Penney's during the school year.

ED: Did she stay in North Little Rock.

CH: No, she lived in Conway and drove back to North Little Rock where she taught.

ED: Did she continue to teach in North Little Rock.

CH: She continued to teach in North Little Rock until 1972. We had our only child in 'seventy-two, which was the same year I got out of law school. She taught for three more years and then quit teaching. She later became the administrator of the Pulaski County Municipal Court. In those years you are talking about she would drive from Conway to North Little Rock to teach. We did that because there simply was not time enough for me to drive back and forth to school and to work. I couldn't do it, so she did.

ED: You went to night law school at Little Rock, which was called . . .

CH: It was called the Little Rock Law School. The University of Arkansas at Little Rock had already taken it over. It was downtown at Third and Broadway. It had blinking lights and an automobile window . . .

ED: A auto window shop on the ground floor at the corner of Third and the law school was upstairs. So you graduated from law school in 1972?

CH: Yes, but I didn't graduate there. I graduated from the law school at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. It came to my attention in the spring of 'seventy-two that I'm going to lack one course graduating at the end of this semester, which means I've got to go to summer school. If I go to summer school at Little Rock I graduate two weeks after the summer bar exams, which means I've got to wait until next spring to take it. But if I go to Fayetteville, where the classes meet five days a week you graduate in time to take the bar exam, which was just right. I commuted to Fayetteville and I found an instructor who taught a course—I don't even know what it was—and it met Monday through Friday and twice on Friday. I met with that instructor—I don't remember his name—and I asked him, "If I miss every Monday and I make all the rest of the classes and can pass the final, can I pass?" He said if you miss every Monday but make every other class and can pass, yes. Every Tuesday morning, I got up before daylight, drove to Fayetteville, drove to class, checked into a little hotel up there and stayed in that hotel Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Friday I would check out and go to class and drive back home. My regimen was that when I got out of class on Tuesday I had divided the hours between now and the bar exam and I allotted so many hours for contracts, so many to constitutional law, et cetera. When I got out of that class I went straight to my hotel room and I started studying. The next morning, I would get up, do my calisthenics and study the course I was taking before I would go to class. That was my regimen. It didn't fail.

When my wife had that baby, on Father's Day, June 21 . . . When I came home on Friday she told me she had been to the doctor and he said the baby wasn't going to be born until Tuesday. I said I can't miss that course. We've got everything planned and I can't miss a day. And I can't be up there and you have the baby down here. Good woman that she was, she went into labor Saturday night and she had that baby.

ED: The baby was . . .

CH: A girl, Ragan. The light of my life. I remember my wife's mother being so disappointed and frustrated with me. We were at St. Vincent and I got those nurses to give me a little room. I sat in that little room while everyone else was walking the floor out there. I sat in there and studied contracts. My wife's mother came in there and said, "I wish you would take those books and throw them somewhere." She was concerned because my wife had been in labor a long time. But I didn't have time to concern myself with that. I had to study. I took my final exam on Thursday. I found out I passed on Saturday, and I started the bar exam on Monday. They probably got my paper mixed up with some other deserving kid, and I got to practice law and someone else had to take it over.

ED: So you passed the bar and got your license?

CH: And started to work with Milas Hale. We were in the Union Bank Building at that time.

ED: Was it just you and Milas Hale?

CH: No, it was Milas Hale, David Hale, Eugene Hale and John Fincher. It was Hale, Hale, Fincher and Hale.

ED: Gene was from Prescott.

CH: He was related to the other Hales.

ED: Gene was in [Governor] Orval Faubus's office in Faubus's last year in office.

CH: I learned that was a fact. Gene left the office and it became Hale, Hale, Fincher and Hoofman, and we moved to North Little Rock. I stayed with them until '76. Jim Holsted owned his father's insurance company and he was building a new building in North Little Rock. I had begun to represent him. I had a young lawyer in the office who was working for John Thurman. The firm became then Hale, Hoofman, Thurman and Capps. Paul Capps. John Thurman joined us. David [Hale] had pulled out because he had gotten with the Jaycees back then.

ED: I think he was state president.

CH: He became the national president, back when the Jaycees amounted to something. At any rate, when John Thurman and Paul Capps joined the firm, there was a young man named John Biscoe Bingham with them, and when Jim [Holsted] came down and asked me to put my office in his building to handle the business of the insurance company, Biscoe asked if he could go with me. We formed a partnership that lasted for eighteen years, and it was a great relationship that we shared for all those years. John Biscoe Bingham. His grandfather was the man for whom Biscoe, Arkansas, was named.

ED: What happened to John Biscoe Bingham?

CH: He passed away several years ago. I started doing a lot of work for Jay DeHaven when he owned . . .

ED: Jay DeHaven, the developer?

CH: Yes, he really was the one who developed Maumelle into the city that it is today. I was doing a lot of work for him. My compensation was in some part taking interest in some

land out there. My partnership with Biscoe dissolved, but we remained very close and referred cases back and forth and worked on cases together. And then after several years, George Pike, who was with the Friday firm for years and years—he was head of their commercial law division—retired from the Friday firm and he and I were partners for a few years until [Mike] Beebe was elected attorney general [in 2002] and wanted me to go with him there to be his legislative liaison.

ED: Let's go back to law school. When did you meet Beebe? Was he there at the same time.

CH: It's ironic. Beebe and I took the bar exam together. He had graduated before summer school started.

ED: Did you know him previously?

CH: No. As it turned out, Beebe grew up around Newport, I grew up in Searcy. He moved to Searcy to practice law for the same reason I moved to North Little Rock. When you grow up on the wrong side of the tracks, you are not going to be hired by the local folks to handle their legal matters. So he left Newport to go to Searcy and Ed Lightle hired him. I thought Ed Lightle was next to a deity. As I said earlier, he owned the property that my grandparents lived on.

ED: He was a wonderful man. He was in the Senate when I went out to the Capitol to cover the Senate in 1965 for the *Arkansas Gazette*. Ed Lightle was in some ways the most distinguished man in the Senate. A Harvard graduate, he always wore a three-piece suit, a gold watch fob across his chest. He was elegant, quiet, studious, polished and, unlike most senators, he was super polite, respectful and, I thought, an admirable public servant.

CH: I kept his bird dog on the farm out there.

ED: He didn't strike me as a bird-dog owner.

CH: As a matter of fact, on the farm when I was a kid I kept his bird dog. After I got in college for years I quail hunted all the time, and after I was grown I bird hunted with Mr. Lightle a number of times. This quietness, this astuteness—I just never knew anybody with his demeanor. Out there, we had a radio that played on a battery—the battery was as big as a shoebox—and we didn't play it very often, because we couldn't afford those batteries. I grew up without much exposure to the rest of the world. I pretty much had a blank, trainable mind when I got to college, but Mr. Lightle was such a unique individual . . . and you can understand that as unique as he was to you and others he was like the deity almost to us. I had a great deal of respect for him. But back to taking the bar exam. On the second day of the bar exam, we were taking it out there at the mental hospital. I remember I was leaning up against the building, chewing my fingernails probably, smoking a cigarette and thinking about what's coming, and I hear this guy with the steel taps on his heels, cocky as he could be, smoking a cigarette. I heard him say to a group of people that he had gotten a job and was going to go to work for Mr. Ed Lightle in Searcy. Beebe says he does not remember it, but I ran up to him and told him I grew up on Mr. Lightle's farm and kept his bird dogs for him. Beebe was really impressed with that. Ha. He didn't have the time of day for me. But, on our first case—one of our first cases together—I was representing some poor old people up there at Searcy and he was representing the insurance company. This is true. I figured I was in trouble when [Circuit] Judge Elmo Taylor told Beebe, "Now, don't push your podium toward the witness like that. Stand over there." And he coached him on how he was to ask his witnesses and

everything. Coached him not to do this or that or do this or that. But when I asked a question and he told Beebe, "You ought to object to that," I knew I was in trouble.

ED: Well, you were in trouble if you were in front of Elmo Taylor.

CH: I had a written brief. Beebe was as wrong as he could be on the law in this case, but it wasn't a big case. The whole thing wasn't worth but six hundred and something dollars, but I handed my brief to the judge. While I'm handing it to him, he ruled for Beebe. I said, "Your honor, I would like for you to read my brief." He said: "Briefs are for the Supreme Court. You take it there if you don't like my ruling." So Beebe won. It was about the first case for both of us to try. We then developed a relationship that has been a very big part of my life.

ED: I think the Lightle firm had been founded by Mr. Yingling.

CH: Yes, he became municipal judge. Then it became Lightle, Tedder and Hannah.

ED: Cecil Tedder and Jim Hannah.

CH: Yes, and Tedder became a circuit judge and Hannah became what in those days was the chancery judge up there.

ED: And Hannah later became chief justice.

CH: It became then Lightle, Beebe, Rainey and Bell. Beebe and I became very close friends when I was in the House of Representatives and he was thinking about running for the Senate. We talked lots and lots of times. He was trying that case against the manufacturers of the equipment in that chicken-house case where he won such a big verdict. Nearly every night while that trial went on for more than a week. He had been involved in another case after the chicken-house case—a tractor-trailer case. In the chicken-house case, he had associated a lawyer from, I think, St. Louis, and they won that case. He was then recognized as having won the largest jury verdict in the history of the state. And then he had the tractor-trailer case that went on for nearly two weeks. Watson Bell was his legal scholar and assisted him in that trial. We talked every night, and the last two or three days, for whatever reason, we didn't talk. And he called me and he sounded so forlorn. "My record has been broken," he said. "Who broke it?" I asked. "I did," he said. That's one of the many battles and stories that we've shared. We both went to the Senate at the same time. We were seatmates.

ED: We want to get a lot more into that, but let's go back. Do you remember your first case as a lawyer?

CH: Back in those days when I was with the firm, you could represent people in court if you had the tutelage of a practicing lawyer, a senior law student could. My first case was a DWI case before Judge [William R.] Butler. John Fincher went with me. Of course, he was entertained by it all. He shouldn't have been a lawyer, he's so brilliant. As you can imagine, I was confused about it, scared, all of that. I had my file. John leaned over when the prosecution completed its case and said "ask for a directed verdict." Before I could ask him what the basis of it was, I stood up and asked for a directed verdict. Judge Butler said, "On what grounds?" I had my file and my hand was trembling. I could feel the perspiration all over me. I was so intimidated about speaking in front of anybody. I don't remember what I said. But I was overruled and the guy was convicted. I went outside and I was livid. I said, "John, what were you thinking? I was standing there and not able

to respond to his inquiry." He said, "I was thinking about how embarrassing it was going to be when you dropped that whole file."

ED: So you lost your first case?

CH: I did. When I first got my law license in 1972 at that time I was chairman of the Legislative Board of the United Transportation Union here in Arkansas. I was the union representative. When I was a railroad employee I developed that relationship. That was the year of the Full-Crew Law campaign. As chairman of the Legislative Board, it was my responsibility to help manage the campaign for the railroad men. Clovis Bryant [of Crawford County], who was a member of the legislature, a senator, was the director and I was the chairman of the board. I had just gotten out of law school so somehow I got assigned the responsibility—it was really Clovis's job—of making public appearances in defense of the full-crew law. I was in a thirty-minute debate on television with Byron McKinney, who represented the Chamber of Commerce in the debate.

ED: Who was Byron McKinney?

CH: He's a real-estate broker and he has a big real-estate office.

ED: We should explain something about the full-crew law. In 1972, there was an initiated act in the general election, to repeal the full-crew law, which required railroads to maintain a full crew on trains, for safety reasons.

CH: It passed that year. It had been tried several times before and it had failed. It was a very narrow vote, as it turned out. What defeated it was that Clovis had hired a campaign agency and they put together this ad of a crippled man, who was a railroad man, on crutches talking about the hazards of working without a full crew. Well, about a week and a half before the election it was determined that the guy didn't have one leg and he was an actor, and that blew the whole thing. So, from the time that I got my license until that election in November, I was pretty much not practicing and doing that campaign. That election was when Bob Rosamond was elected mayor of North Little Rock.

ED: "Pin a rose on me." [Rosamond's campaign slogan.]

CH: "Pin a rose on me." I did not know Bob Rosamond. Milas Hale had years before been partners in practice in a law firm with Tom Tanner. Tom Tanner was now in practice with Bob Dawson, who was the city attorney of Sherwood, where Milas Hale was municipal judge. When Bob Rosamond was elected, Tom Tanner was his business lawyer and became what in those days was North Little Rock's appointed city attorney. John Harmon had been Casey's [Mayor William F. "Casey" Laman's] attorney for years and they had run the whole show. So Milas asked Bob Dawson, who was the Sherwood city attorney, and Milas also asked Tom Tanner to hire me as his assistant, which he did. I didn't know anything about municipal law, didn't know much about practicing law at all. But I was hired as assistant city attorney and learned how to practice law. I started off in January as the municipal court lawyer for the city attorney in Dean Morley's court down there in North Little Rock. That's where I learned how to try a case, trying traffic cases. Six months later, Tom Tanner had all of Bob Rosamond he could stand and he resigned. Rosamond called me into his office and told me he wanted to appoint me city attorney. Well, I refused. I knew that Tom Tanner had quit because Rosamond expected Tanner to be his attorney as Harmon had been Casey's attorney. I wasn't going to do it. I went to the office and told Milas what had happened, and Milas threw a fit. Looking back, I was

from out of town and didn't know anybody and didn't have any clients and here I was with an opportunity to get some high-profile work and turned it down. Milas wanted to know why, and I told him that I didn't want to be Rosamond's lawyer. He said, well at least go tell him that. So I went back to the City Hall and told Rosamond that I wouldn't be his lawyer but I would be the city attorney as prescribed in the state code and city ordinances. He said, "I wouldn't have it any other way." So I took the job. And that's the way it was. I found out later on that the only real leadership that North Little Rock had at that time was an alderman by the name of Bob Kirspel. Bob Kirspel took a liking to me in that six months time. Kirspel had told Rosamond when Tanner quit—he didn't talk to me—that the law requires the city attorney to be approved by the city council and I've got all the votes and they'll approve no one but Hoofman. He died without ever telling me that. I learned that from Rosamond after Kirspel died. You'd think that Kirspel would try to use that in some way with me, but he never did. I stayed city attorney for two years and quit for about the same reason that Tanner did. Rosamond by this time was under investigation. I resigned and Mike Moore and Jim Holsted came to me and talked me into running for the House of Representatives. At that time, I had never been inside the state Capitol, and I didn't know what I was getting into. I did it.

ED: That would have been 1974.

CH: 1974.

ED: Was it a vacant seat?

CH: No, that was when North Little Rock had multiple seats. There were Henry Osterloh, Dave Roberts and Bob Traylor.

ED: R.W. "Bob" Traylor. It was a three-man district.

CH: We had breakfast, and I didn't know anything about any of that, but I knew that they were our representatives. Even though I didn't get out of law school until 1972 and I had lived in North Little Rock, I didn't know anybody because I hadn't done anything but go to school and go to work. I had been in the city attorney's office for a couple of years.

ED: Did you run against Osterloh?

CH: I ran against Bob Traylor. I knew Osterloh. He was a lawyer. I wasn't going to run against him. Dave Roberts was Mike Moore's father's best friend. That left Bob Traylor. Lot of the strength of my first campaign came out of labor. I had my first job out of college while I was going to law school as a labor organizer for the operating engineers. I had labor background. I was an officer in the railroad union. Bob Traylor, of course, had been labor's number-one guy in the legislature. And I did not get labor's endorsement the first time. We decided if I was going to run he'd be the one I'd run against. And away we went.

ED: Was it a two-man race, just you and Traylor.

CH: Traylor and me. Looking back, incumbents just never were beaten.

ED: It was rare.

CH: Bob Traylor was not a colorful guy, so he hadn't been into anything. We just ran. And I won.

ED: Do you remember how much money you spent?

CH: Oh, we spent about seven thousand dollars. But we knocked on every door in North Little Rock. It was the same kind of tenacity that has motivated me all my life. We just kept going.

ED: Did your wife campaign, too?

CH: Some. That wasn't her cup of tea. I just knocked on doors and handed out cards. Of course, as city attorney I had had some exposure. Most everybody generally agreed that a country boy who was educated but could hardly speak the English language appealed to people.

ED: Well, North Little Rock was a working-class community and your demeanor, background and speech was probably appealing. You might not have done as well out in the Fifth Ward of Little Rock.

CH: Probably not. And although I carried all but three boxes, all in the Lakewood area, after that election I carried every box whenever I had a race. I did not do as well in the Lakewood area as I did in other parts of the city, which would be consistent with your observation.

ED: Did you have to go to rallies from time to time? Did the race get nasty or was it pretty polite?

CH: He knew that the incumbent need only stand up there when we had a speaking engagement and say, "My name is Bob Traylor. I'm your state representative. I do this for a living. I have three children. I've done a good job and I plan to continue." That's what he did.

ED: I've forgotten what Bob Traylor did.

CH: I think he inherited an old hotel over in Little Rock.

ED: It was a motel.

CH: Out there off Roosevelt Road.

ED: It was the Bluebird Motel or something like that.

CH: Something like that. He was a nice fellow. I didn't run against him. I never used his name. I just ran. Same thing when I had an opponent in 1980. Chip Welch, who is now circuit judge [Morgan "Chip" Welch]. He was Ralph Patterson's partner. [Ralph Patterson was a state senator from North Little Rock.] I had helped Jim Holsted defeat Ralph.

ED: Ralph Patterson was in the Senate for probably one term and Holsted beat him.

CH: Holsted had beaten Ralph in 1978, and then 1980 was when Ralph got his partner, Chip Welch, to run against me. Ralph was sour toward me because I had helped Holsted. So he had his partner run against me. Most everybody was pretty well satisfied at that time. I won nearly three to one, which teed me up right two years later when Holsted resigned. I ran against Lyndell Lay for the Senate then. I am confident that had I not had that race with Chip I would not have been able to win against Lyndell. When people get to thinking you're going to win, you're going to win. When I won three to one in 1980, that teed me up for the Senate when Holsted quit. Of course, when Holsted resigned, that was when Frank White was governor. Frank White, if you will remember, promised the truckers that he would raise the weight limits [on state highways] to eighty thousand pounds. You probably don't remember the front-page article of the *Democrat*, where I'm standing there like this with my hand in the air, as I was coached by [state Representative] Cecil Alexander when I was in the House to read the rules, and defeated

the truck-weight bill. Frank White had passed it in the House, and I gave notice of reconsideration. Henry [Gray, director of the state Highway Department] was of the opinion that if we could just stop it for the weekend he could beat it in the Senate. It was headed over there and this was on a Wednesday. The Senate would read it and pass it on Thursday. I didn't have a plan at the time, but I was reading the rulebook and it came to me how I could grab that bill if I could get the speaker's attention. I managed to do that and managed to take control of the bill until Monday. And we did manage to beat it in the Senate.

ED: The truck-weight bill would have raised the weight limit on highways from something like seventy-two thousand . . .

CH: Seventy-three thousand, two hundred eighty pounds to eighty thousand pounds. What happened was that I was given singlehanded credit for defeating it.

ED: The Highway Department was strongly opposed to raising the weight limit on big trucks.

CH: Oh, absolutely. Our highways were not built to carry that weight. So, Holsted resigned in about January of 1982. He came up for re-election, in the Democratic primaries of 1982. Frank White called a special election—and it never happened before because it was such a short term—because the Constitution wouldn't allow me to run. They called a special election and all the advisers . . . Lyndell Lay had plenty of money—he owned Charter Mortgage—so they spent a hundred something thousand dollars in that special election to give him a very high profile, not to win that election, which he won handily, but to dissuade me or anyone else who wanted to run against him for the full term, which came up a few weeks later. He was sworn in on the same day I filed for the Democratic primary. He was sworn in when a small group of senators showed up out there for the swearing in. A lot of folks didn't think I ought to do that. Running against someone who had just gotten elected and never had a chance to serve was not the thing to do. He was well respected. I figured I had learned enough about races that you can only capture your own friends' interest in a political race for so long. He had worked so hard and milked everybody for so much money in that special-election race. I thought there is no way I could keep my supporters fired up for an election that would go on for two more months, so I didn't think he could. I guess I figured it right.

ED: We should point out that the reason you didn't think you could run for the seat in a special election to complete the last few months of Holsted's term was that the state Constitution has a provision that says something like this: No member of the General Assembly shall, during the term for which he was elected, be appointed or elected to any civil office under the state. I think that is largely ignored sometimes, but clearly the purpose is that a legislator can't resign during his term to run for another office or to be appointed to another state office.

CH: That provision was adopted to prevent senators in the middle of their terms from running against the governor.

ED: Yes.

CH: But Frank White didn't want me . . .

ED: He wanted to keep you out of the Senate.

CH: Because I was the one who deprived him of passing the truck-weight bill.

ED: That's an important story. The truck-weight issue was an important part of Arkansas history.

CH: My relationship with Henry Gray developed my interest in roads and highways. You know I sponsored the weight-distance tax, which was the only one of its kind in the nation. I passed that sucker and . . .

ED: We're going to get to that . . .

CH: And all of that led to Beebe appointing me to the Highway Commission. You need to take a break?

ED: Let's take a break.

ED: All right, Judge, we're back. And I think we had gotten you elected to the state House of Representatives from North Little Rock in 1974, which would have been the same year that David Pryor was elected governor. He had beaten Orval Faubus in the primary.

CH: Oh yes, he did beat Faubus. That was Faubus's first effort to come back.

ED: No, his first effort was against Dale Bumpers in 1970. He made his second comeback in 1974, against Pryor and Bob Riley.

CH: Oh, yes, I remember how impressed I was with Dale Bumpers in that first race. I thought he was far too sophisticated to be elected governor.

ED: So, did you know David Pryor before he got elected governor in 1974? He had been a congressman from South Arkansas and then ran for the Senate against [John L.] McClellan in 1972.

CH: I did not know him. Paul Riviere—remember Paul Riviere? [Paul Riviere was later Arkansas secretary of state.] I was president of the student body at ASTC in my senior year.

ED: Oh, were you? So you were a politician even in college?

CH: Yeah, but that was only to prove a point. I wasn't active in school activities. I worked all the time. But I had observed that a fraternity brother had been elected president of the student body and Dick King got elected twice. I had observed enough that I thought anybody could get elected president of the student body. I was telling my wife that, when we were driving back and forth to North Little Rock. I guess she got tired of hearing about it and she finally said, "If you think it's that easy, why don't you do it?" I learned the rules then. I was going to be in my fourth year and I learned the rules. The rules were you could run for president of the student body, but you had to serve on the Student Senate, which I had not done. This was in the summer when I was having this discussion. Absolutely no one knew that I had any thought of this. So I would wait and do that, but I would run for the off-campus representative in the Student Senate, whose members were elected at the beginning of the school year along with the freshmen officers, in late September. The off-campus representatives and the freshmen representatives were elected. I just ran and I ran a real active campaign for off-campus representative. Others didn't have much interest in what was going on and I ran a real aggressive campaign and I got elected. When the spring elections came for next year's offices I qualified because I was in the Student Senate. I ran against two fine young men who were both groomed for three years to be president of the student body. I was in a fraternity, but I realized that I wasn't going to win in the student body that typically controlled those elections. I knew that my fraternity would get me a lot of votes and, given the natural enmity that goes on, I

knew that I was going to get some votes from the fraternities that didn't particularly care for the other guys. I spent my time with the cafeteria workers and the people who worked in maintenance and people who never participated before and got them interested in student government. We had the biggest turnout the school had ever had in school elections, and I won with 56 percent without a runoff, against two who were groomed to be student president. It was just because of my observation of what one could do that would be a little different, and it proved to succeed. The only thing we accomplished of any consequence that year was that at that time girls were not allowed to come out of the dorms in anything but a dress or a skirt. One of the things we accomplished that year was that girls were allowed to wear slacks on campus.

ED: The student government did that? Or did you get the college to do that?

CH: We got the college to do that.

ED: So you were a feminist back then?

CH: I guess maybe. There is a real great story. Dr. [Silas D.] Snow [the president] was such a great gentleman. He was another Ed Lightle type of guy. In my senior year when I was president of the student body he and I went around Arkansas and talked to legislators about university status for SCA. It had become State College of Arkansas by that time. We went around and talked to legislators about that. We didn't succeed, but on down the road I went to law school, practiced law and went to the legislature. In 1975, my first session, one of the very first bills we voted on was to give university status to SCA, which became the University of Central Arkansas. Dr. Snow was there. Shortly after that, he retired and became the director of the Good Roads Council, which fitted in because of my interest in highways and his involvement. We made a lot of public appearances because of the commonality of our interest in good roads and government. A lot of times he would tell the story about how we had worked on this project together when he was president of the college and that it was unique that it was my first term in the legislature that one of the first bills I voted on was to give university status to the college. He said that, "because of that when I retired I felt obligated to retire in Representative and then Senator Hoofman's district so that I could always repay the debt to him if he ever had an opponent. It was a good story. If I happened to be on the podium someplace and he was there, I would share the story.

ED: Did you sponsor the bill?

CH: Bill Stephens [representative from Faulkner County and athletic director at the college]—it was his bill. I'm not sure of this but at that time I probably would not have known how to sponsor a bill. This was within the first two weeks of my first session. Remember that I had never been to the Capitol, except the time that I went to file to run for the legislature. If I had had the chance to sponsor it, I would have told him to put my name on it. I don't think I went to see if Bill put me down as a sponsor. But, if he did, that was a practice. Legislators really developed that practice of getting as many legislators as you could to join as sponsors. People would say, "If there's that many sponsors, it's got to be a good bill" and they would vote for it. But I remember how proud I was to have voted for that bill, one of my first votes.

ED: Well, Stanley Russ would have sponsored it in the Senate.

CH: No, I don't believe he did because that special election when he got elected was in 1975. He was elected during that session. It was during that session that they voted Mutt out [Senator Guy H. "Mutt" Jones of Conway, who was expelled by the Senate after his conviction for tax fraud] and Stanley was elected at a special election.

ED: That's right. So the senator at that time was . . .

CH: Mutt Jones.

ED: Back to David Pryor. You had no acquaintance with him before you went to the House.

CH: My acquaintance with him was on the other side of the issue. Paul Riviere and I were presidents of our student bodies at the same time and the student government associations, which we strengthened in our years . . . I didn't work the year I was student body president. I think I was at that time and may remain today the only student body president elected who didn't live on campus. I became very involved on the campus that year. When Paul and I graduated, we had developed a close friendship. We had gone to the Prayer Breakfast together in Washington. Paul, shortly after we got out of college, went to work for Senator McClellan in Washington. If you will remember, two years before Pryor had given up his congressional seat to run against McClellan. Because of my relationship and affinity for Paul, who naturally was supporting Senator McClellan, I watched that debate and reveled in Senator McClellan eating his lunch.

ED: "David, David, these were no cookie-jar nickels and dimes. . ."

CH: Then, Bill Wilson, from the day I met him, was one of my instructors in law school. [Billy Roy Wilson, later United States district judge] I thought so much of him. In my first year of practice, I had a lawsuit. He represented the bank and I represented some individuals. Judge [Tom F.] Digby was the judge. We went in there, had a little hearing, got the facts before the court, and just before lunch I submitted a brief that said under these circumstances you can't foreclose on a loan against this lady. Judge Digby broke for lunch. I knew Bill Wilson, who was so renowned from the day he started practicing. We came back from lunch. Judge Digby said, "Gentlemen, are you ready to proceed?" Wilson said, "Well, judge," referring to my brief, "that's the law." It was clear that that was the law, but my experience has been that lawyers will go ahead anyway.

ED: So he acknowledged that you were right on the law.

CH: It was a forty-thousand case, maybe a little bit more than that. And he said, "That's the law." Judge Digby said, "Well, I hoped you would say that." Neither one of them knew that it was the law in Arkansas that any document that affects the title to real property, if it's owned by spouses, if it is not signed by both spouses it's not voidable—it's void! I expected Bill to then argue that he only wanted to foreclose on the husband's interest and not the wife's. But the whole document was void. Since then, we have been the closest of friends. Then, in my freshman year in the house, no my second term in the House, which was in 1977, Bill Wilson brought to me—you know Pryor was a senior-citizen supporter . . . North Little Rock had more of its population who were senior citizens than any place besides that village up in Northwest Arkansas [Cherokee Village] and then later Hot Springs Village, probably because of that high-rise for senior citizens that Casey Laman had built in North Little Rock. I was interested in senior citizens stuff and passed a lot of bills over the years, but I was the sole sponsor of the legislation that mandated drugstores to carry and display the availability of generic prescriptions. Bill Wilson brought that to

me for Governor Pryor. He was the liaison to the legislature for Governor Pryor. We have had lots of other involvements since then.

ED: Did you sponsor any other legislation that first session?

CH: The only thing that I remember that I sponsored that first session was a labor-lien bill. Later in my career, I was able to give some more teeth to a labor lien. I thought people in the legislature were there to represent the people. I didn't realize until two years later that everything about the legislature is special interests. The issues that you argue, on one side or the other, about how it affects the public arise only because one special interest is pitted against another special interest. That's really how our governments are run. I was disappointed. Again, I had that clean slate of mind then and I didn't know so much about government. I am sure you observed the same thing in your lifetime.

ED: Yes.

CH: That was the only thing. I was strong on the repeal of the terrible payday-lender law [authorizing payday lenders]. That was my last fight. I lost by one vote.

ED: That was your last session. You were term-limited out, right?

CH: Yes.

ED: You ran for re-election in 1976 and got no opponent.

CH: No opponent. And again in 1978, no opponent.

ED: So you were there for Pryor's four years. His big fight was for what was called The Arkansas Plan.

CH: I thought that was bad. I never had any respect for Steve Clark [Pryor's chief of staff at the time, later attorney general of Arkansas]. I had been city attorney of North Little Rock and was very familiar with municipal law. I could understand David Pryor promoting that. It sounded good. There was no way that could work. Steve Clark demonstrated his shallowness, in my opinion, through his efforts as chief of staff, in public and private meetings, to convince people that that was the right thing to do.

ED: Nearly all the legislators who were practical thought it was a bad idea, but. . .

CH: It *was* a good idea, but it wouldn't work . . .

ED: The Arkansas Plan was, to describe it briefly, to cut the state income tax brackets by one-fourth, and then local governments, the cities and counties, would have the power to come back and vote to levy that tax locally and give the proceeds to cities and counties . . .

CH: . . . to spend in any way they wanted, and how much they wanted. It also empowered them to alter all the other laws that affected human interchange according to the whimsy of the local governments.

ED: Of course, all the local governments opposed it. They said, essentially, "We don't want those powers; we want you to levy the taxes and give the money to us to spend."

CH: Absolutely. They opposed it not for the right reason; they opposed it for exactly the reason you said—they didn't want to be put in a position to have to take responsibility. They wanted the money.

ED: They wanted you, the legislature, to raise it. You take the heat for raising taxes.

CH: That's exactly right. Taxes have never been popular in the state.

ED: So the counties and cities opposed it, the Municipal League, the school boards association, the Arkansas Education Association, and all those kinds of groups. It was a

good idea, on paper, to return power and responsibility where people could take care of their local problems.

CH: To everybody in rural Arkansas it sounded great to turn it over to local government. I think that it was the foundation for David Pryor winning a second term and going to the United States Senate. The people liked it. It made sense to them.

ED: Although I don't think Pryor did it for that political reason. He had this bright young man on his staff that he had just hired . . .

CH: Nichols.

ED: Steve Nichols. He came up with that idea.

CH: He grew up across the street from my first wife. Very smart, but politically naive.

ED: He came up with that idea, and they said "Hey, that's a great idea."

CH: You're right on it. Bill Wilson was in on those meetings, and he attributed the whole thing to Steve selling it to David Pryor. I think I disagree with you in thinking that Pryor didn't think it was good politically. I can't imagine a statewide official making anything such a big part of their persona in the public's eye and not be motivated by politics. What you and I both recognize is officials all across the state didn't want it. For different reasons, the public thought having local control was a great idea, and I think Pryor saw that.

ED: He may have. He was a pretty savvy politician. He still thinks it was not a bad idea. We were on a panel four or five months ago down at the library with John Brummett as the moderator. Brummett brought up the Arkansas Plan and we talked about it. David defended it.

CH: If it were a hundred years ago it might work. In the horse-and-buggy days the whole world was your local area and local folks needed to run it. That would have been fine.

ED: The state wasn't going to help back in those days. At any rate, is there any other legislation from that period that you can recall.

CH: I also sponsored bills to exempt the first \$6,000 of income for retirees from the income tax. That's still the law today. They're talking about expanding it some. I spent a lot of time on those kinds of issues.

ED: Was [state Representative] Cal Ledbetter in on that, too?

CH: That would have been something that Cal would have supported. That was my bill, but Cal would have been one who supported it.

ED: What kind of alliances were there in the House of Representatives? The House was not like the Senate. In the Senate there were always clearly identifiable factions. The Senate, which has only thirty-five members, seems naturally to break itself into factions. But the House may be too big for that. In the Senate, in your days, there was the Mike Beebe faction, the Nick Wilson faction, the Old Guard faction led by Knox Nelson and Max Howell.

CH: When we got there, there wasn't in the House. You had alliances in the House. You had the leadership, which pretty well directed what the House did. Then you had special interests that had a handle on certain groups. Or certain groups handled special-interest legislation.

ED: You had the poultry interests.

CH: The poultry industry and the trucking industry were very close. You had the education faction, led by [Representative] Ode Maddox and his interest in education. Poultry was the biggest thing and transportation. They were the biggest faction out there when I was in the House.

ED: Farm Bureau and Riceland Foods.

CH: But they were all interested in that truck-weight issue.

ED: You had to take on all those interests later on.

CH: Ode Maddox, though, was the one who . . . But back on those days, before term limits, there was no way that any member could know all about everything. So you had people who rose to the top in certain areas upon whom others could depend. On education, you had Ode Maddox.

ED: And Jodie Mahony. [Representative Joseph K. "Jodie" Mahony of El Dorado]

CH: And Jodie Mahony. And they were generally pretty much aligned with each other. When it came to improvement districts and levee districts you had Jim Shaver [Representative James L. Shaver of Wynne], who was in that area and knew all about levee districts and those kinds of districts. But rather than personalities there were government factions that people had an interest in, and they would align themselves in the House that way rather than on personalities. In the Senate, for all my first eight years and for years before, there was not but one faction and that was Knox and Max. Period. Nick [Wilson] came along and Max and Knox placated Nick, because Nick would wreck their deal because he was smart enough to do it. They gave him his little fiefdom down there.

ED: The Joint Performance Review Committee.

CH: Joint Performance Review Committee.

ED: He had a faction of eight or nine senators, something like that.

CH: I handled his bill for him in the House.

ED: To create the Joint Performance Review Committee?

CH: To create it. I thought it made sense. It was a good idea. It was also a way that Max and Knox would funnel some money over there for Nick to spend and help his re-election. He could have some activity and it got him out of their way while they did their deals. Then when we got over there in 1983, our group—we met at my house—had ten or eleven members, counting Kent Ingram. Kent got elected in 1982 to replace his father. He was a part of our group, and that made eleven. What I had discovered when I was in the House . . . Cecil [Alexander] put his arm around me and said "Learn your rulebook." Of course, I had tried to read it and it didn't make any sense. He said you can't learn it that way. Pay attention and when the members apply it then go back and read it, then see how it works. I did that. And it was the reason that I was successful to the extent that I was all the way through, because I did the same thing in the Senate. What I observed when I got elected to the Senate . . . We had dinner at my house before the session started and I had learned that there had not been a rule book printed for the Senate in seven years. They didn't have a calendar.

ED: Knox [Nelson] was the calendar.

CH: Knox called the bills up when he chose. The rest of us had no idea what they were going to consider today. Whether you were for it or against it, you didn't know what was coming up. With two thousand bills filed out there, there was no way anybody knew how

to oppose anything. When Knox got the pot right he called one up. Max would run down there to the well and say whatever needs to be said about it, whether it was correct or not, and they called the roll. If you voted against it, one of them would come over there and be all over you. They wanted to know why you voted against that bill. You couldn't tell him why, because you didn't know what was in it. You just voted against it because you didn't want to be for it. That wouldn't do. So I was out at the Capitol quite a bit doing research. Knox and Max were out there before the session started. I had come out of that dinner, and they knew about it. I said we wanted a calendar and we would like to have a rulebook. I remember [Senator] Paul Benham [of Marianna] the opening day of the session—he was *so* loud—saying [voice louder] "What is this shit here?" Max said, "Why, it's the rule book. It's the rulebook we've been working on so we can conduct our session. And that's the calendar of bills we're going to take up today. And we're going to have one of these every day." So right off the bat, Max says: "So I've passed out the rule book. It's the one we were operating on last session. I move we adopt these rules. There's a provision in there that you can change them if you want to." Of course, it would take a two-thirds vote to change them. So we adopted the rulebook. I watched how the session was going, and I saw that this ain't no way to run a railroad. I got into a confrontation with Max and he had a way of intimidating you. In the first session I went down there like everybody and I said, "This is my bill and my amendment." Well, that's all you needed to say. Nobody opposes you amending your own bill. Max said, "Wait a minute." He wanted to get me cowed in front of the whole body. He was telling everybody what you're going to get if you rise up. So he said, "Wait a minute, what's in it? I said, "words." He got all . . .

ED: Redfaced.

CH: Redfaced. I don't know what he said at that time, but I said, "Look, it's my bill and my amendment. If you don't like this amendment, I'll pull this bill down and rewrite it with the amendment incorporated in it and file it as a new bill." He was screaming and redfaced, and Knox came over and saw that Max was going to lose that. The two of them didn't need to lose. So Knox ran over and said, "It's OK, it's his bill, it's OK."

ED: Knox was a lot shrewder, or smoother, than Max.

CD: Oh, yeah. Max would just cow you. Try to intimidate you.

ED: Knox would find a way to coopt you.

CD: That's right. That's the thing I learned about Max. As soon as it was over and I didn't bend, he came over after I got away from the podium, he put his arm around me and said, "I didn't understand." He was going through his phoniness. He apologized. "I didn't mean . . . blah, blah, blah." So the second session I began to examine it, because Marcus Halbrook [director of the Legislative Council] gave me a copy of the rulebook from seven years before. It was represented to us that this rulebook is the rulebook we've been operating under for the last session and the sessions before. That's what we were told and we adopted it. But I found that the last rulebook that was written seven years ago had provisions in it about how it could be amended. I checked with the secretary of the Senate and found that there had been no amendments. They printed us a rulebook when we asked for one and they changed what they wanted changed and presented it to us as the rulebook that they had been operating under, so we adopted it. I was the one who rewrote

some of the rules, which we ultimately adopted, and put it back like it was in a lot of cases—and adopted some new things. Nick had his own deal by this time. I think the truth is that Max and Knox had already made their money and they didn't have much going on. Nick's steamroller was chugging along. I bring this up because there were those factions in 1983. There was Beebe's . . . Not in 1983. It wasn't Beebe's then. We were "the white hats." We didn't really come together until the 1987 session. At that time, you had factions. Max and Knox, Nick, and then the White Hats, which gravitated into being Beebe's group.

ED: Let's go back to the 1978 election and Bill Clinton's election. Did you know Clinton before that? He had been the attorney general for two years.

CH: When Paul Riviere and I went to Washington in 1968, Paul Riviere took me to a room with Mack McLarty. They had been in Boys State together and he wanted me to meet Mack.

ED: Mack McLarty, who grew up at Hope, was a state representative and a friend of Bill Clinton and was his first chief of staff when he became president.

CH: Right. So we went up to Mack McLarty's room. We were there only a few minutes when a tall, lanky fellow came down the hall. It was Bill Clinton. The four of us sat there for two hours and we created a relationship that lasted until today. I didn't see Bill Clinton again until 1974, when he ran for Congress in the Democratic primary. He won the primary and ran against [U.S. Representative] John Paul Hammerschmidt. And I ran for the House in 1974 the first time and I had a Republican opponent. Clinton was in his campaign in the summer. I was in the bank lobby in Little Rock, and I saw Bill Clinton and two or three people and I went up to him. This goes back January of 1968 when I had met him, and this is the summer of 1974. He had been on TV and I recognized him. I went up to him and said, "Excuse me, Bill, you want remember me . . ." and he turned around and said, "Oh sure I do. You're Cliff Hoofman. I met you in Mack McLarty's room when you and Paul Riviere came up there in 1968 when y'all were at the President's Prayer Breakfast." He also remembered that we had been diverted from Washington because I wanted to see the Biltmore House and gardens and we went four hundred miles out of our way to get there and the only two weeks that it is closed the whole year was the time we showed up. And naturally that was mentioned when we met in Washington and he remembered that, too.

ED: Incredible memory.

CH: He did not get elected then, and two years later he got elected attorney general. I was in the House and he got elected attorney general. Our relationship was such that I handled several bills for him that he thought I could as a freshman. He employed John Fincher, who was one of my original partners in law practice, so we worked on bills together. Clinton and I always had a very good rapport.

ED: You handled some bills for him as attorney general and in 1978 he's elected governor. Did you become a floor leader for him immediately when he was governor in 1979?

CH: When he got elected, I handled some bills for him. For example, Milas was well acquainted with people around Bill and they somehow became well acquainted. I'm not exactly sure how that developed. If you remember, in the 1981 session Bill Beaumont had left the House of Representatives and been elected county judge. They wanted to

create the Pulaski County Municipal Court. We created it in that session and I sponsored some of that legislation. The governor asked me to sponsor it. It allowed the county judge to hire the municipal judge. It was the first county to have a municipal court. The plan was that Beaumont was going to hire David Hale. Clinton knew that I would have an interest because of my relationship with Milas and David. I handled that legislation and it was challenged by some lawyer over some defendant, and it was found that the Constitution wouldn't allow anyone to have judicial powers except by appointment of the governor or election by the people. It was challenged while Frank White was governor, and Clinton appointed David Hale until we could have an election. When I was a freshman in the Senate, it was the same time that Bill came back as governor. Back in those days, the governor got to appoint one member from the House and one member from the Senate to the Budget Committee and one to the Legislative Council. I was that guy from the Senate, and I became his floor leader in the Senate and a member of the Legislative Council and the Joint Budget Committee. When I was a freshman in the House, I got sort of a leg up on the process because Cecil Alexander was a friend of Milas and David, and Cecil and I became good friends right off the bat. Speakers didn't handle bills so Speaker Alexander would have me handle the bills he was interested in. If you will remember, in those days, a freshman couldn't get recognized even if he was standing right underneath the speaker. You had to be in your third term before you got to do anything. There I was a freshman and the speaker would call on me out of turn to handle a certain bill. It might have his name on it but I would be recognized to handle a bill. That kind of involvement caused you to become acquainted with the leadership of the House. That gave me a leg up in regard to the whole process. Being a freshman in the Senate and the governor's floor leader gave me a leg up in the process, which helped me, I'm sure, to the extent that I was ever able to accomplish anything.

ED: Were you shocked when Bill Clinton was beaten by Frank White in 1980?

CH: Yes, I was, because so many people said he was defeated because of his [vehicle] license-fee increase.

ED: Raising the registration fee for cars and trucks.

CH: I sponsored it and campaigned on the propriety of it. I won three to one against a good opponent.

ED: Chip Welch.

CH: Chip Welch. And Clinton didn't do well in North Little Rock. They said that was what defeated him . . . and the Cuban refugees over there [at Fort Chaffee]. But I don't think the refugees from Cuba resonated with anybody outside Sebastian County. I think Hillary not taking his name was a bigger factor than anything else. [At that time, she had kept her maiden name, Hillary Rodham.]

ED: He got beat mainly in the rural areas.

CH: And that's where that idea of Hillary not taking his name resonated.

ED: Well, you had people out in the countryside who had an old Dodge and an old pickup truck. Registration was always difficult, because you went down to the local motor vehicle office, you had to stand in a long line to get your car tag, then when you got up there you found that you didn't have your proof of assessment or proof of having paid your personal property taxes the year before, and the when you got back again with the

right papers you found that rather than nineteen dollars a vehicle, which you paid the year before, it's gone up to thirty-six dollars. It was a nightmare back then to get your car or truck registered every year. So every month about a twelfth of the people went to the county office and had that experience and they came back home complaining about it all, and they blamed the governor. I think it had some effect in rural areas.

CH: Oh, yeah, it had some effect. There were a bunch of factors. He had a haughtiness. It wasn't haughtiness, but he just knew more than anybody else did. When he talked from the podium, he clearly knew more than everybody else did, but I think he made people feel like he thought he knew more than they did. Or maybe they thought he thought they didn't know nothing.

ED: He was a Yale guy.

CH: And a Rhodes Scholar.

ED: And he had a fancy wife who was a Yale graduate.

CH: I think that was a bigger factor, and it might have compounded his problem, knowing more than everybody else did. Making people pay more for their license might have exaggerated that feeling.

ED: Arkansas Power and Light Company, a powerful force, was mad at him over exposing the state's obligation to pay for the Grand Gulf nuclear power plants in Mississippi. They were putting in some money to help Frank White. The timber industry was mad at him because Steve Smith [an aide] made some remarks about the paper industry being "corporate criminals" for clearcutting in the national forests and so forth. A lot of special-interest groups out there were mad at him. Another aide, Jim McDougal, was talking about the state taking away government deposits from banks that did not lend their money for local development projects sufficiently.

CH: Of course, we were on the campaign trail in both cases, in 1980 and 1982. It may be that the issues got further developed after my Democratic primary in 1980. Maybe the car tag did have more effect as the year wore on and got more developed in his race [in the November general election]. I campaigned on it, the rightness of it. The money went to the Highway Department.

ED: Everybody wanted better highways. I think that in addition to the car-tag increase there was an increase of a penny or so in gasoline and diesel taxes.

CH: But it may very well be that that issue had a greater impact on his race, because everybody said it did. It probably wasn't developed very much in my primary race [in May]. Though Chip did use it. There was a mass-transportation bill in the legislature. It was going to use a lot of highway funds to address mass transportation. My campaign ads always had the slogan "Keep on Hoofin'" after I won the first election. On the corner of my campaign material I'd have those two horseshoes. All my radio ads began with horses' hooves, click, click, click. Those hooves would come in at the end of the talking part of the ad and they would get louder and louder and the voice would say, "Let's keep on hoofin'." We thought that would make the name catchy enough that it would be remembered. I had opposed the utilization of highway funds for mass-transit purposes in metropolitan areas. It would have affected North Little Rock, but not much of Arkansas had a need for mass transportation and I didn't think that that we ought to take money from Lake Village and spend it on mass transportation in Little Rock. Chip made a big

issue out of the fact that I promoted the idea of everyone to keep on hoofin' and opposed the creation of more transportation, which was buses. He did pretty well with that. The idea was that North Little Rock would have benefited from those funds.

ED: North Little Rock might have been the primary beneficiary.

CH: But I didn't think many people in North Little Rock thought we needed mass transportation, and what we've got now with that trolley I can't believe that the community has spent as much as it has on that nothingness that only interferes with the movement of people.

ED: It's quaint. Not many people ride it.

CH: So what's the benefit?

ED: Clinton is defeated, White is elected and you've already been identified as a Bill Clinton man, so Frank White was not going to be very fond of you.

CH: We were fine. I had known Frank White and had represented one of his old girlfriends when I was practicing law. So I knew Frank White. He flagged me down on the freeway, on Interstate 40, between Interstate 30 and Prothro Junction. He pulled me over on the side of the road. I said, "What in the world are you doing running as a Republican?" Well, he said, "I didn't have time to win in the Democratic primary."

ED: He told me the same thing at the Capitol when he filed.

CH: He said, "I'm going to win." I said, "I wish you well, but I'm going to have to be for Clinton." He said, "I understand." He said, "I may be out here on my own." His personality was not to be offensive. And not to be offended.

ED: He never held grudges.

CH: He did over one issue.

ED: The truck-weight issue.

CH: The truck-weight issue.

ED: Well, that was a big part of his election. That was the issue that got a lot of big groups behind him. The shippers, Riceland Foods . . .

CH: Absolutely. You think about this alliance that I had. I finally beat that, and even without that, passed my weight-distance tax and Clinton came back and in the end, when he decided to run for president . . . I was working with Tom Keys, who was the lawyer with the state Highway Department. Brilliant lawyer. We were so satisfied that there was so much difference between our weight-distance tax and that of Pennsylvania, which their supreme court had just held unconstitutional. We were in litigation, but we were satisfied that we were going to win. When Clinton decided to run for president, he intentionally avoided bringing me into the conversation, but he agreed to repeal the weight-distance tax. And he had a penny or so tax put on gasoline and diesel to make up for it.

ED: That would have been in the session of 1991.

CH: That got them off his case nationwide. The trucking industry was a big thing, you know. If we had gone on to court with that and we had prevailed, as Tom Keys and I thought we would, then you know that every state in the union would have adopted the exact same language that we had. The way we do it is an atrocious, unfair way of financing of roadways. If we didn't have the big trucks, you could build and maintain the roadways of this state for 25 percent of what you pay now. That tells you that trucks require 75 percent and the cars 25 percent. So the revenues to build and maintain the roads ought to

come 75 percent from the trucks and shippers and 25 percent from the car owners. But look at the record of what happens. The cars pay 75 percent and the trucks pay 25 percent.

ED: The weight-distance—sometimes it was called the "ton-mile" tax—worked this way: Trucks paid a tax based upon the weight of the truck times the miles traveled in the state. You measure how far across Arkansas you traveled with this eighty-thousand-pound load and that calculation determined the tax you owed. The industry wanted to lower that tax .

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CH: Abolish that tax.

ED: Abolish that tax and instead put the tax on a gallon of gasoline or diesel.

CH: They agreed, and the tax was raised on gasoline and diesel, but just like all the other taxes . . . All trucks were powered by diesel. It wasn't fair to have cars considered at all in that equation. Automobiles wound up paying a greater money price for that repeal than trucks did. But the cost was caused by the trucks. That's more evidence of what we talked about four hours ago, when I said I learned early on that state government is run by special interests, altogether.

ED: Arkansas and forty-nine other legislatures as well.

CH: I know they had greater influence than I ever dreamed. It was shocking to me to think that the government that I had studied in law school and history in college had deteriorated to that extent.

ED: But perhaps there was always that element.

CH: I'm confident that is so. But I'm not nearly as naive as I was back then. And I'm confident that it was mankind's nature that caused our forefathers to write the Constitution in the way that they did. I'm confident that government from day one had controlling interests.

ED: A century ago, the railroad industry essentially controlled the legislature. The relative power of special interests has changed. Electric utilities have always been powerful.

CH: The last few years the phone industry got awesome.

ED: In those two years when Frank White was governor, the issue that may have gotten the most attention over the years was creation science. In the 1981 session, your senator, Jim Holsted, a wonderful fellow, filed a bill to require the equal treatment of the biblical account of creation, or what was called "creation science," whenever evolution was taught. The universe was created in seven days and so forth. That was the bill that was introduced, passed, became law, and ultimately was struck down by a United States district judge in Arkansas [Judge William R. Overton]. He was your senator and a good friend.

CH: When I first ran for the House of Representatives, Jim Holsted, whose family had been in North Little Rock three generations, was my campaign manager.

ED: He introduced that bill in the Senate. It passed there and went over to the House, and you had charge of the bill there. The system was that you, as a courtesy, handled your senator's bill when it got to your chamber, and vice versa. That was a courtesy that everybody, nearly everybody, extended to each other, whether you liked the bill or not. How did all that go down?

CH: Well, Jim and I were close. We were both Christians and proud Christians. So I'm confident that Jim, knowing that I was not embarrassed by my religious beliefs, along

with our friendship, probably caused him to bring the bill to me, rather than to Dave Roberts. I did not think that was the thing that we needed to do. The truth is that I don't accept creationism, as it is taught in the books that he provided for me. I do think God had a hand in the evolution of things, but that was not in the books that he brought to me. I'm not certain that I, or anyone else, could ever explain things to me. I just accept the fact that God had a hand in it.

ED: Who knows?

CH: I can't prove that, and I'm not satisfied with someone else's efforts to put it into the written word. Jim brought it to me and he brought me several books. Back in those days, a House member was expected to handle legislation that had been passed by the other body. You don't need to cast your judgment on it. So you present it. He gave me books. The more I read the more I thought it wasn't the thing to do. I wouldn't be surprised if Dave Roberts would have been equally capable—more capable—of presenting the bill than me. He may have asked Dave, I don't know. So he gave it to me. And I told him, "Now when I go to the committee I want you to go with me to be sure that I have a handle on it and that I present it as you would have it presented." Apparently, the Senate was somewhat like the House. They didn't want to talk about it either, but they didn't want their local Christian community to see them voting against it.

ED: It was the kind of bill you didn't want any debate about. Nobody wanted to speak for it or against it . . .

CH: But you don't want to vote against it. It was sort of like all of that stuff that Doyle Webb [state Republican chairman and former senator] sponsored so many times in the Senate. There was no evidence that anybody had ever done anything that would run afoul of what that bill would have prohibited, but you didn't want to vote against it because of what it prohibited.

ED: Lots of people will hate you for it.

CH: So Jim went with me to the committee. When they called the bill up, the fact was that senators rarely belittled themselves to come to a House committee because it was beneath them, but here Jim was with me. They called the bill up and I went over to the table with my three or four books with marked pages. I thought they would ask me questions about what would be taught about creation, and I was going to go to those pages and read them what the book said. I didn't know what else to do. I could say that would be the required text, and here is what it says. That was the way that I thought I would try to present it.

ED: Were you nervous?

CH: I was never so concerned about any moment in my legislative career. The only other moment that was more trying than that one was when I headed to the podium with the same stack of books in the House chamber. When the bill was recognized, one of the members acknowledged Senator Holsted there. "This is Senator Holsted's bill. Senator Holsted, since you're here we'll recognize you." Before he had said hardly anything, somebody—I think it was [Boyce] Alford [of Pine Bluff] or [Grover W.] "Buddy" Turner [of Pine Bluff]—said, "Oh, we know what this bill is," and they called the lady's name who was out there in the hall and had talked to all of them already about the bill. "We know what this bill is and we need to move on. I move it out 'do pass.'" And it passed. I think Jodie [Mahony] was about like [Nikita] Khrushchev by this time. He had his shoe

off, I think, and beating on the table. Not really, but he was trying to get somebody's attention. "That's not right. We don't want to do that." And it just passed. [The chairman said], "Call up the next bill."

ED: You never had to say a word.

CH: Not a word. Jim was there and started to speak, but he never said anything. This has always been amazing to me that somehow I never managed to get bruised up in the media over it. I'm the one who's presenting the bill. Look at the calendar of the House: that bill number and my name's beside it. I'm the one who's going to present it. So anybody—Ernie Dumas—I'm surprised when they were writing all the other stuff, that Ernie Dumas didn't come up and say, "Cliff, what were you going to say to the House?" But, as it turned out, perspiration is running all over me. They call it up and I head to the podium. I hadn't got to the podium when the fight began. Jodie was all over that thing. He was trying so hard. His motion was to send it back to committee.

ED: This is Joseph K. Mahony II of El Dorado.

CH: One of the finest people I served with in the House and the Senate. Absolutely a wonderful, dedicated individual who had all the money in the world, and his interest in being there was what we all were taught were the interests of our forefathers. We all come out of school thinking that Jefferson and Madison and all those people were only interested in good government. Well, that was Jodie Mahony in real life.

ED: Jodie Mahony was a civics lesson in himself.

CH: Absolutely. Like Khrushchev, he had his shoe off beating the table almost, trying to cause the House not to do this. He tried to move it back to committee. "I was in committee and there was no discussion," he said. The chair gaveled him down.

ED: Who was the speaker?

CH: I'm trying to think. 1981. It would have been [Lloyd] McCuiston [of West Memphis]. He was the one who allowed me to grab that weight bill. He was obviously already attuned to the handful that was already committed to pass the bill without discussion. Nobody wanted even to talk about it.

ED: People would have loved not to have a roll call at all.

CH: A lot of people were committed to vote for it. Others didn't want to vote against it but didn't want to be quoted as supporting it. So Jodie moved to send it back to committee and there were people who wanted to speak on that motion. Somebody moved the previous question. The previous question is where you choose up sides and you've got five minutes speaking on this side and five minutes speaking on the other side, and when the speaking's over, you vote. I do not remember whether the motion was adopted or not, but either Buddy Turner or Boyce Alford moved immediate consideration, which takes precedence over all other motions. So even though I think the previous question had been adopted, immediate consideration was voted on and the chair ruled the ayes have it, "prepare the machine and call the roll." There was a lot of racket, McCuiston hammered everybody down and called the roll. It passed. With as little consideration as that, it was presented to the governor, and with just as little consideration he signed it.

ED: And later said he hadn't read it before he signed it.

CH: That's exactly right. That's why I say, with as little consideration as that, nobody else had read it.

ED: In his defense, governors sign hundreds of bills without reading them.

CH: I think that's true. And people vote on hundreds of bills without giving them consideration, without reading them. My discovery of that was one of the disappointments of my life.

ED: But you didn't catch any flak over that. The word probably got around in the community that they wanted a bill like that passed, so you might have gotten a little credit although your name never appeared in the paper.

CH: I never got quoted, and to think about the many political lives that were affected in this state and as much ink that has been spilled about that issue. I'm the only one who really knew what happened. I never got interviewed.

ED: You got caught in the crossfire and totally escaped.

CH: To complete the history, Governor White signed it into law. There was a lawsuit filed in federal district court by the American Civil Liberties Union, a trial was held, Steve Clark, the attorney general, defended the law, which did not help him much politically with either side. He made it clear that he did not like the law but he defended it in court.

CH: Yes, he lost on both sides. He defended in what he said was the best way he knew how. But it was not satisfactory to those who supported the law.

ED: He didn't go into court and read the Bible . . .

CH: And convert the judge.

ED: Steve treated it as totally a legal matter, and he made the best argument that he could that it was constitutional. It made both sides mad.

CH: That might have been what caused him to start drinking.

ED: Eventually, Judge Bill Overton ruled that the law violated the Constitution, because it amounted to the establishment of religion. It was not appealed to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals. There was a Louisiana case about the same time that was appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court and was struck down. It remains a hot issue today.

CH: You've got that ecclesiastical group that's becoming a pretty strong political entity. I don't know where that's going to go. They don't seem to have a very good handle on their religions in light of the candidate they endorsed for the presidency [in 2016].

ED: That issue had been a hot one in Arkansas in 1967-68, essentially the same issue that you were wrestling with. It came up when a woman named Susan Epperson, a biology teacher at Central High School, filed a lawsuit on behalf of the Arkansas Education Association challenging the old 1928 initiated act that prohibited the teaching of evolution in the public schools. Judge Murray O. Reed in Pulaski Chancery Court struck it down. Attorney General Bruce Bennett defended it in court. It was appealed to the state Supreme Court. That caused a terrible struggle inside the court, which did not want to deal with that issue. But it had to.

CH: I think that was when Justice Jim [Johnson] was on the court.

ED: No, he was not there. He had left the court to run for governor in 1966. But Conley Byrd had just gotten on the court. Carleton Harris was the chief justice. George Rose Smith was there. Frank Holt was there. I've forgotten who else. When it got to the Supreme Court, they sat on it for a full year. The original vote in conference was four to three to reverse Judge Reed and uphold the law. George Rose Smith, J. Fred Jones and Lyle Brown all dissented. They thought the initiated act was unconstitutional. They refused to

vote to uphold it. The chief justice thought it was a dynamite case. It could destroy his court. "We need to all go out united," [he was reported to have said]. He tried for much of the year to get those three justices to go along with them. Finally, on the last conference before the summer recess, he persuaded George Rose Smith and J. Fred Jones to go along with upholding the law and reversing Judge Reed as long as there was no opinion they had to support. [Justice John A.] Fogleman had written a long opinion defending the law, and Smith and Jones said they could not sign onto that language and reasoning. "If you'll throw away the opinion and just come out with an unsigned per-curiam order we'll go along," [they were reported to have said]. Lyle Brown refused to do even that. So the order comes out six to one upholding the law in three or four sentences with no reasoning. Brown was listed as dissenting. It went up to the U.S. Supreme Court and, of course, they unanimously overturned the state Supreme Court. In those days, I guess they [the Arkansas justices] thought it was such a dangerous issue that it would damage the court and destroy their careers.

CH: And I guess most of the senators and House members in 1981 were there and saw that play out, and that may very well be why they didn't want any debate about it. Of course, I saw my political world falling down around me, and I just decided that on the basis that it was Jim's idea that I run for the legislature in the first place and he was so committed to this thing that I would handle it. I told him I want you to present me with the books so I can anticipate every question that might be asked. I was going to answer the questions based upon what the texts said. Unfortunately for the state, I never got to answer a question. Forever, for the rest of his life, Frank White held a banana. . .

ED: He did, in all those George Fisher cartoons in the *Arkansas Gazette*. If he had vetoed the bill, there would have been a reaction against him among those people, who probably were a substantial majority of the voters.

CH: They were his supporters. Frank got religion in his later years and that was a lot of what he was about.

ED: He married Gay White, who was a deeply religious person. She worked for Max Milam in the Finance and Administration Department. But he got a black eye from it because he said he hadn't read the bill, and George Fisher put that banana in his hand in all the cartoons after that. People made fun of him for not having read the bill before he signed it.

CH: He lost on both sides, but it was a no-win for him. I was really into practicing law anyway, and I was satisfied that that was going to be it for me, that there was no way you're going to come out of the thing, because I was in a no-win situation.

ED: But God was on your side. He took care of Cliff Hoofman.

CH: He really did. It was so amazing. The galleries were full. The media in those days sat there right at the foot of the speaker, and they all saw me coming down there with a stack of books and not one ever asked me the first question.

ED: You live a charmed life.

CH: I do carry a buckeye in both pockets. I have all my life. My grandfather gave me one when I was about fifteen years old and I still carry them. If I were to walk out this door without a buckeye in my pocket and I found myself in Little Rock, I would turn around and come back up here and get my buckeyes.

ED: I always heard that buckeyes brought you good luck. So there he is flashing his buckeye, and out of his bluejeans there are TWO buckeyes.

CH: If you look in my front yard, there's one bush out there.

ED: A buckeye bush?

CH: I have a buckeye bush.

ED: Do you always keep a fresh buckeye?

CH: Yes. I give one to most people who I learn don't carry one. So before you leave here, I'll see to it that you have a buckeye. I would feel derelict if you got away without me giving you one.

ED: I've lucked out so far, nearly eighty years without a buckeye. Maybe it will carry me a little further.

CH: You must know that I carry a buckeye or something.

ED: That explains everything. We could have skipped all this and say you carried a buckeye. So Bill Clinton comes back and beats Frank White in 1982. Clinton then serves another ten years. You were his floor leader after that, right?

CH: After he was elected, he announced to the Senate that he was appointing me to the Budget Committee, because the Budget Committee was meeting and he needed his representative there. He appointed [Representative] Bobby Hogue [of Jonesboro], who later became the speaker of the House, to the Committee. I was appointed going into my first session in the Senate. I was the governor's floor leader. The members of the Budget Committee were chosen from the old six congressional districts. Back in the 'thirties, Arkansas had enough population that, in comparison with the rest of the nation, we were entitled to six congressmen. Even today, there are committees that are based upon those old six congressional districts. You take Beebe, for example. He was in a district with Jim Wood and Nick [Wilson]. One member of each of those districts gets to be on the Joint Budget Committee, one gets on the Joint Auditing Committee, and the other one of the three serves as the alternate for the other two. In my case, in the old Sixth District, I think we had nine members of the Senate. I was absent when we [the Senate] organized at the duck dinner. I had Beebe draw for my seniority. And he drew thirty-five for me. So I become the most junior member of the Senate.

ED: He didn't carry a buckeye, apparently.

CH: He didn't carry a buckeye. Consequently, it probably would have been fifteen years, if ever, before I would serve on the Joint Budget Committee. But I was appointed by the governor. Beebe buddied up with Jim Wood, who beat Bill Walmsley [of Batesville]. Walmsley and Wilson, as you know, were allies out there. Wilson had done everything he could to help Walmsley in that race. Wood wasn't really into government. He didn't care to do anything. He really didn't like to hold office. He didn't have any interest in being on the committee himself, and he didn't care what Beebe wanted to do, but he didn't want to do anything that Wilson wanted to do, so it was easy to let Wood take Joint Audit and Beebe take Joint Budget. So here we are, Beebe, a freshman, and me, a freshman, seatmates and, a rarity, two freshmen on the Joint Budget Committee.

ED: We should say that being on the Joint Budget Committee ought to be everyone's main goal, because the Joint Budget Committee is the most powerful group of people in the legislature, next to the speaker.

- CH: Depending on what interest in government you have, it may be more powerful than the speaker. But, generally, the speaker is on the Budget Committee anyway.
- ED: Today, the Budget Committee is much larger than it was then, but you get to spend five and a half billion dollars a year.
- CH: That's why I say that, depending upon your interests, being on the Joint Budget Committee gives you more power than being speaker or pro tempore of the Senate. I became chairman of Joint Budget. I chaired the Legislative Council. The Legislative Council is the legislature when you're not in session. The important thing that government can do is always managing the money. Whatever you want the government to do, if you can't get the money you're just flapping in the wind.
- ED: In 1983, Clinton comes back and had his big education program. You helped shepherd that through the Senate.
- CH: The special session . . . I was so disappointed going into that session. It was really in the summer of 1983. We had finished our regular session and we weren't out but a short period of time when the governor called us back in.
- ED: You finished the regular session and then the state Supreme Court handed down its ruling that struck down the state school-aid system [*Alma v. DuPree*].
- CH: That was the first time they sort of did that. That case was what brought us together. We were really motivated more by the findings that Hillary produced, which had a big bearing on that case. Nobody wanted to accept it, but the truth was . . .
- ED: She became a popular woman. Remember [Representative] Lloyd George getting up in the Legislative Council after she had made a report on the work of the Education Standards Committee and saying, "Gentlemen, we have elected the wrong Clinton."
- CH: That's right.
- ED: She had come back and taken the Clinton name.
- CH: She was very helpful for our education session. I was the sponsor of every one of those bills in the special session. What I was disappointed in was that he called that session without having any consensus in either the House or the Senate or any of the leadership on anything. You were out there at the Capitol. When we got to the session, we didn't have any bills. We had a few bills, but we didn't have any agreement among anybody about what we should do about anything. They were swinging from the rafters, and it was becoming more and more unglued. I went down there and told him, "Quit talking about the major issues. Let's give them something to do, where they begin to deal with the issues, and not just finding fault with you. Then we can start moving this session forward. Just take one of the simple bills. Let's pass something and get the members to let us know where they are with regard to whether they are going to be supportive or not of the overall objectives." So we began to pass some insignificant bills so people would begin to decide which side they were going to be on.
- ED: He had a huge packet of those little bills. Two or three pages long, and didn't amount to a lot. They all sounded good, though.
- CH: I said let's pass some of those. Get them out there and people will quit swinging from the rafters. They'll begin to take sides on the issues. I really thought that educators took the wrong attitude toward our teacher-testing bill. The teachers of the state attacked it to say what a charade it was to say that "passing that test qualified you to be a teacher." They

sold a lot of the public on the idea that it was insulting to everybody to say that if you passed that test you were qualified to be a teacher. The purpose was that if you can't pass the test, you ain't qualified to be a teacher. That's what it said. Bill never elocuted that distinction.

ED: Well, so that special session was as important as anything else in advancing Bill Clinton's career because, probably as much as anything else, it propelled him onto the national scene as the education reformer and led to his election to the presidency.

CH: As an aside, my contributions to all of that led to my participating in an international exchange program, where I and seven other people from America were on an exchange program with West Germany. I went over there for three or four weeks. I'm sure the reason that I was nominated was the recognition I was given from the people they inquired of here in the state. That particular effort had something to do with that.

ED: Clinton served another nine or ten years after he returned to office. Did your relationship with him continue to be that strong, or did you have a falling out?

CH: For all practical purposes, I resigned after three sessions.

ED: Resigned as floor leader?

CH: Uh huh. By this time there had been changes made in the makeup of the Senate. I did spend a session out of the Joint Budget Committee, but after that I went back on the Joint Budget Committee. And on the Legislative Council, but on my own.

ED: Do you want to say what caused the coolness to develop between you?

CH: It's not anything that lasted and it's not of any consequence. I was very disappointed in his agreeing to giving up the weight-distance tax, but that happened after that. The truth is it's very difficult for one to be independently elected by a district of people and then find yourself . . . Now, Clinton always understood that if I disagreed with what he wanted to do I just didn't handle that bill. I did. I voted against a measure that was important to him. I won't go into the bill, but it was so important to him that he fired Bobby Hogue as his floor leader because Bobby Hogue voted against him. I voted against it and he didn't say anything to me about it, because I didn't make a point of my being opposed to it, but I just voted against it. Hogue made some political points back home by being against it, but Clinton just fired him. I just found that it had grown to be kind of laborious. And Clinton had a way of thinking that his objectives were always bigger and his success more important than anybody's, including his closest friends, and he would sacrifice his friends. But I think he had the attitude that they understood that his career was the one that was important. He did it so often—and people would forgive him—that he honestly thought that he was not the only one who thought that his career was more important and his objectives more important than anybody else's. That's not just an opinion I derived on my own. A lot of people had that opinion.

ED: That's a common opinion. And perhaps it's true of extremely ambitious and successful politicians of all stripes. Whether it's Donald Trump or anybody else.

CH: To give you an example, it's common knowledge among his friends. The Arkansas Travelers, of which I was one, would demonstrate that whatever differences of opinion we had over a period of time we would overcome. I was a Traveler in 1992 [Clinton's first race for president]. I went to three different states. And all of us Travelers had this joke . . . Suppose we go to some town and we go out and it starts pouring down rain.

Everybody gets wet, and when they get back in the van the joke was everybody in unison would say, "It's OK, because we know that he would do it for us." [Laughter] Everybody would just roar with laughter, knowing that he would do nothing for any of us. It was amazing to me that everybody knew that at one time or another he had failed to do what he said he would do, and that he did something contrary to the interest of everybody that was on that bus, who at their own expense were traveling all over the country. But he had that way about him that somehow, even though you might be disappointed in him over something that somehow you still thought he was special.

ED: He was bright and was basically going to do right, and you thought it was important to elect this guy . . .

CH: . . . notwithstanding that little personal thing you've got. I know it was unanimous; otherwise, why did every van, made up of different people in every state and in every travel do it? There may be three vans, and today I would ride in this one and tomorrow in that one and it was unanimous. You never got back on the van when it was either hot, or cold, or rainy or something and everybody didn't say automatically, unanimously, "But he would do it for us."

ED: And then you'd go out and work your butts off for him.

CH: That's absolutely right. It was amazing.

ED: And a lot of them did the same for Hillary.

CH: People were the same way, but I don't believe Hillary conveyed the same kind of thoughts to everybody that Bill did. I don't want to talk about Hillary. I'm so disappointed that people put our whole country in the position it did in the last [2016] election. We had two candidates where the outcome, I thought, was going to depend upon who was disliked the least. However, I can't get over the number of my friends who honestly, notwithstanding anything that has happened since the election, supported and are proud to have supported Trump. It amazes me. I can understand them voting against Hillary, but I cannot understand intelligent people supporting Trump.

ED: Well, he's just a showman. Says crazy things, calls people terrible names. Lots of people like that. They say he just tells it like it is.

CH: But he doesn't tell it like it is.

ED: But they think he does. It's not what he says but how he says it.

CH: I don't think he's competent to preside over this country. But that is not my concern. The country can survive that. He may be smarter than I think he is, but I fear all these billionaires giving up their whatever to serve this country are going to milk this big cash cow to death. I fear the blind support that the Republicans seem to want to give him simply to demonstrate their opposition to those who are opposed to him. Democrats find fault with Trump specifically. Republicans find fault with the Democrats and, as a result of that, support Trump. The result, I fear, is they will put in place a cabinet that, whether they are capable are not, are not interested in the welfare of the country.

ED: We've gotten a little off track. Clinton in 1985 has an economic-development program that he pushes.

CH: I sponsored the bill for him that created ADFA [Arkansas Development Finance Authority], and we did a lot of good things. He concerned himself with economic development. I think much of what he did has been abused by people who since used it

for special-interest purposes. But that's what happens to government. He had some good ideas and he had some people who were advising him that were way ahead of me in their ability to think through economics.

ED: You sponsored ADFA. Do you recall any others?

CH: Well, I helped him pass them. I must confess that some of them I supported and promoted on blind faith. They were more complicated than I was capable of comprehending, and I'm confident that there's been a lot of legislation that I supported over the years that I did not fully comprehend, but I had trust in those who were supporting it that they could make it do what they said it was going to do.

ED: In 1990, he runs for the last time. He thought he was going to run against Tommy Robinson, but Sheffield Nelson beat Robinson and he gets to run against Sheffield. He wins that race and begins to run for president almost simultaneously.

CH: Yeah, he sort of announced to the state before the 1990 race that he really didn't have much interest in being governor any more. He didn't have the fire in the belly anymore. What he was really saying was being governor any longer is not interesting to me. He told people he was not interested in being governor anymore, and as soon as he got elected he began to run for president. I happened to be with him when he made his first effort. I was in Cleveland when he had been elected chairman of the Democratic . . .

ED: Governors Conference?

CH: No, that was two years before. That was at Hilton Head and I went with him there. It was the National Democratic . . . whatever.

ED: The New Democrats. [It was the Democratic Leadership Council.]

CH: They had their meeting in Cleveland and he was going to be chairman and Betsey [Wright] called me and wanted me to go to help him with parliamentary procedure if he needed any help, because he had really never chaired a convention like that. Several thousand people. Two things I remember most about that trip. I met [state] Senator Roger Bedford [Jr.] from Alabama, who remains my dear friend today, and I watched *Dancing With Wolves*, which came out then. I watched it three times in my hotel room. That was his coming-out party.

ED: Do you recall any other legislation that you handled, sponsored, other than the things you mentioned?

CH: As we've talked, I've thought of a number of bills I sponsored, initiated, but now that you asked the question they don't come to mind immediately. But I guess the most significant legislation I sponsored was the Joint Resolution to amend the Constitution to end ad-valorem taxes on household furnishings. Assessing the value of household furnishings for tax purposes was notoriously unreliable and unfair, and besides, it produced relatively little money for schools and local governments for all the trouble it was. I tried for sixteen years to get that amendment passed. I introduced it every session and I never could get the legislature to refer it to the ballot. You know the legislature could refer only three amendments to the ballot every two years. There were always at least three proposed amendments that seemed to have more bang than mine did, so it just never got considered. There was one time that Senator [Clarence E.] Bell [of Parkin] had an amendment he wanted that would have changed the way the state distributed money for the schools in some convoluted way and he attached his plan to my amendment to

exempt household goods from taxes. It finally got to the point that I was even opposed to the amendment. That year it made the ballot but didn't pass. In 1987 I got the Senate to change its rules so that a simple majority of the Senate, eighteen members, could pull a bill out of a committee if the bill had sat there for ten days without action. It was called the Hoofman Rule. Before that, under the system Knox [Nelson] and Max [Howell] had devised you had to get two-thirds of the Senate to vote to remove a bill from a committee and bring it to the floor for a vote. Finally, in 1991, I succeeded. As far as I know, it's the only time the Hoofman Rule was ever invoked. I made a motion near the end of the session that we remove my resolution carrying the amendment from the State Agencies and Governmental Affairs Committee, where it had languished the whole session. The motion passed, the Senate adopted the resolution, the House concurred, and the voters approved it two to one. [Amendment 71 was approved in the 1992 general election 578,609 to 235,932.] One of the things I'm proudest of is the appropriation of \$20 million to help build the ALLTEL Arena [now the Verizon Arena] in North Little Rock. It was appropriated from the General Improvement Fund. I think it is still the largest appropriation in Arkansas history for a capital project that was not a state - owned and - operated facility. [The arena was built with the state's \$20 million appropriation in 1995, a \$7 million contribution by Alltel Corp. for naming rights, and the proceeds of a one-year, one-cent sales tax approved by Pulaski County voters.]

ED: There were a lot of tax bills throughout those years, after the taxes for schools in 1983 and the taxes of the late 'eighties, which also were primarily for education. Finally, there were some taxes in that last session in 1991.

CH: Well, in 1991, we had the road taxes. We had the fuel taxes that replaced the weight-distance tax on trucks, which Clinton had agreed to give up. I was greatly disappointed in that. The Highway Commission had agreed to it and brought me into the discussion. Henry Gray had just retired. The Highway Commission had publicly endorsed the plan that was to replace the weight-distance tax. I suspect they did that because they had understood that Clinton had agreed to it and there were enough legislators who were getting enough heat from Tyson, the poultry industry and the trucking industry that it probably was going to be lost, so they jumped on board.

ED: That wasn't the time the legislature passed the nickel increase in the gas tax, was it? No, I think that was 1987 or 1988. Clinton proposed a four-cent increase in motor-fuel taxes, the legislature passed a nickel increase, he vetoed it, and the legislature overrode the veto.

CH: Yes. That was after Bobby Hogue, over some little education bill, was fired as the governor's floor leader. Either in 1985 or 1987, we had the road-tax program that was adopted. I'm the floor leader and I vote to override the governor's veto.

ED: Which he wanted you to do.

CH: No, he never told me that. He got blamed for that. He never said you're going to vote to override my veto, or I want you to override, or if they override me that's OK. He never said that. He was said to have supported the override. The reason why, I think, that people said that was because I was his floor leader and I voted to override his veto.

ED: That might be where all of us got the notion that he was behind the override. It looked to us like he was trying to have it both ways. He wanted to take credit for vetoing a nickel

increase in the gasoline tax but also he was happy to have the revenue and the credit for the expanded highway program.

CH: People at the Capitol said that. Bobby Hogue, back during the education session, had voted against an education bill that Clinton was for. No one remembers what bill it was, but he got fired over it. People knew that. Bobby was well thought of in the Capitol. And I voted very loudly to override his veto. So at the Capitol people looked at that, the fact that he had fired Hogue two years earlier for voting against on his bills and that I, his floor leader, had voted to override his veto, but he didn't fire me. It was a very serious thing to vote to override a governor's veto.

ED: He wanted a gasoline tax, but he asked for a four-cent tax. And y'all passed a five-cent tax. We all thought, what is the distinction? Why would you beg for a four-cent tax but veto a five-cent tax when you actually wanted more money than either would bring?

CH: I think it was his effort to be on both sides of the question. That was my take.

ED: He didn't want his fingerprints on a five-cent tax.

CH: I think his support of the four-cent tax had to do with his desire to gain the support of those who were for taxes for highways. We pass the five-cent tax. OK, he's got the support of those who are for highway taxes and he can veto it to gain the support of those who were against it. That was my take on it. I talked to him four or five times a day. I went in and out of his office and we talked about everything. I told him, "You know I'll vote to override your veto." He said, "Well I figure Henry's got you." But he never led me to believe that he actually supported an override. I don't think he thought at that time there would be enough votes to do it.

ED: So he had it both ways.

CH: He had it both ways. But you understand that the governor gets nothing out of getting money for the Highway Department. Whether they get money or they don't get money, it doesn't affect what the governor does.

ED: It's the Highway Department's money and they spend it as they wish, and the governor doesn't get credit.

CH: The general fund is unaffected by what happens at the Highway Department. And the governor's got the commission to cushion him from faults with the roadways.

ED: It's a constitutional agency. As George Fisher's cartoon said, the Highway Commission answers only to God.

CH: It's deteriorated from where it used to be. The bureaucracy has taken it over.

ED: Your last opponent was in 1982.

CH: Lyndell Lay. I had an opponent in 1994, Jim Freeland, a realtor, who was taking advantage of the fact that I got a divorce in 'ninety-three. He hadn't been in the community but about four years, but he was affiliated with good people, McConnell. He ran against me and fortunately for me as soon as the race got underway a letter was mailed out from eight people, and one of them was my former wife, to everybody in the district soliciting support and funds. Jim Freeland told me that when he saw that letter he figured he was whipped. He's a good guy. I had another race in 1998, when Jim Dietz ran against me. He was a member of the House of Representatives from North Little Rock. He was a good contender. I think he got about 33 percent of the votes. I got beat up a little bit by Meredith Oakley [a reporter and columnist for the *Arkansas Democrat*

Gazette]. He ran a negative campaign, created an investigation of sorts of me and my personal business. On the night of the election, a reporter came up to me and asked, "What was it like for you to have your good friend, with whom you'd served for ten years, running against you?" He said "good friend" two or three times. [Mike] Beebe, "Chevy" [Bill Gwatney], [Jon] Fitch and several others were at a conference out in New Mexico and they were watching the news and it made the news all the way there. I said, "Well, to the extent I thought of him as my good friend I was obviously mistaken." Meredith Oakley for a month and a half beat up on me, calling it sour grapes. I've got copies of all those articles condemning me for that comment. I didn't think it was out of the way at all. Meredith was under the tutelage of John Robert Starr. John Robert Starr for years, especially when I first went to the Senate, I trusted him. Somehow we had communicated a great deal. I would occasionally tell him when he got interested in an issue that he was missing the point because he didn't have all the facts. I'd call him up sometimes. I would tell him, "why don't you go ask so-and-so about that?" He'd go ask so-and-so about it, and he would get the rest of the story so he could get it straight. Then he got so crazy I just quit talking to him. He may be one of your best friends . . .

ED: No, he wasn't.

CH: Anyway, he came and spoke to our Lions Club. I hadn't talked to him in two or three years. He came to the club and made his presentation, people asked him questions, and I sat back there and never said a word. He finally said, "Senator Hoofman, I haven't heard from you in some time. Have you quit reading my column?" I couldn't help myself. I said, "Mr. Starr, I have concluded that people read your column for the same reason that others watch wrestling." He said, "What does that mean?" I said, "They just can't believe it." Needless to say, he and Meredith from that day forward, if I got in the media they somehow twisted it.

ED: How many years in all did you serve in the legislature?

CH: Twenty-eight.

ED: Eight years in the House and twenty in the Senate.

CH: You were term-limited. What was your last year?

CH: 2002. My term was up. That was the year that Beebe got elected attorney general. We knew, as soon as he didn't have an opponent [that he would be elected] . . . We had worked hand in glove for many years. I knew his way of thinking, so he asked me to be his legislative liaison. I knew that once I did that I would have to pretty well close my law practice. I'd been very successful, so I did that. We had some very good success during those two terms, two sessions. When he went to the governor's office [January 1997] I was his lead liaison. He appointed me to the Highway Commission. It was the first appointment he made, as a matter of fact. I continued for two sessions as his legislative liaison. But then he appointed me in 2011 to the Court of Appeals. So I couldn't be the legislative liaison any longer. I served two years on the Court of Appeals.

ED: Did you stay on the Highway Commission [highway commissioners serve ten-year terms]?

CH: No, I resigned from the Highway Commission. That would be a conflict of interest because I would hold two constitutional offices. Bob Brown [Justice Robert L. Brown] retired from the Supreme Court, leaving a vacancy there, and he appointed me to fill

those two years on the Supreme Court. Judge [Rhonda] Wood, who took my place on the Court of Appeals, ran for the Supreme Court, leaving a vacancy on the Court of Appeals, and he appointed me back there.

ED: To summarize, you were appointed to the Highway Commission in 2007, resigned four years later when an opening came up on the Court of Appeals when Judge Karen Baker was elected to the Supreme Court, served two years there, when Justice Brown resigned at the end of 2012 you were appointed to that seat on the Supreme Court for two years, and then when Judge Wood went to the Supreme Court in the election of 2014 you went back on the Court of Appeals for two years, your tenure ending in December 2016.

CH: Wood took my place on the Court of Appeals, she took my place on the Supreme Court, and I took her place on the Court of Appeals.

ED: Musical chairs between you and Rhonda Wood.

CH: But we were unacquainted.

ED: She was a Republican.

CH: I guess she was a Republican. It's a nonpartisan election.

ED: The Highway Commission. Highways had been a big interest of yours over the years. You had gotten legislation passed for the highways. That was your thing. So I suppose you enjoyed that as much as anything you've done.

CH: The governor every two years gets an appointment to the Highway Commission. They are appointed to ten-year terms. My two issues all the way through twenty-eight years in the legislature were education and highways. Education from the outset—my wife was a schoolteacher. Education had meant so much to me, from the background that I described to you. What education did for me was to turn my whole world around. The truth is that I met Henry Gray my first session. [State Representative] John Miller [of Melbourne] introduced me. I knew right off that he was "King Henry." I was a neophyte at the Capitol. But he was a bird hunter. Of course, I had bird dogs and I hunted regularly. Dave Roberts and I had six thousand acres up on Highway 107 leased for twenty-something years, and I was out there every day that I could. Henry was a quail hunter, too. We started hunting together, we played tennis together, and we found that we had a lot in common. He was a wonderful, wonderful person. As a result of that relationship, I guess I became acquainted with roadways, their value, and their problems. So I spent a lot of years trying to help address those problems. To paraphrase Ecclesiastes 9:11, it is not the swift that wins the race, not the strong that wins the war, but by time and chance we find our place. I think that bears on our lives as much as any other Scripture.

ED: Ecclesiastes is the most beautiful book of the Bible.

CH: It is.

ED: Let's go back to the Mike Huckabee years as governor. Mike Beebe is attorney general part of that time. The overriding issue of our time was education, seeing that the schools finally measured up to what they should be, according to the Constitution. The state is responsible for seeing that every child in Arkansas has a suitable, adequate education and that it's equal, no matter where you live. Huckabee wound up signing all these major, major bills. Mike Beebe, as attorney general, was probably as much as anybody outside the legislature responsible for what really came down. The taxes . . .

CH: And the implementation.

ED: And getting the Supreme Court to come down hard on that issue. Donnie Corbin, remember . . .

CH: He wrote the opinion. He was very proud of that. And let me say this. I don't imagine that Donnie Corbin knew, nor did I know, nor did anyone else know, or was conscious of, what the clear statement of the Constitution was, which put education before everything.

ED: There's nothing anywhere else in the Constitution that says the government has to do something rather than it can't do something.

CH: Not a thing. Before that case came to Corbin, I'm confident he didn't know that. Otherwise, when he was in the legislature, knowing him as I know him, he would have been at the forefront of bringing that to our attention then. There were others that, if they had known, or if they had ever read that provision and let it sink it what it meant . . . It didn't take the Supreme Court to tell you what it meant. You read it, it's clear. Nobody knew it was there, I don't think.

ED: A lot of legislators to this day are mad about it, because they didn't think the Supreme Court ought to tell them you have to do this.

CH: But that's really what the Supreme Court is there for. Those same guys that you are talking about they're not the least bit upset when the Supreme Court finds some bill they passed to be unconstitutional. "Well, next session, we'll try to write it differently." The legislature is comfortable in the Supreme Court telling them that what they have done is not constitutional, but they cannot absorb the court telling them what they have NOT done is unconstitutional. That is the difference. It makes it appear that the court is writing the law. It's a mindset when we do something, trying to do it right, it's for the court to review what we have done and tell us when we didn't follow the Constitution. But if we don't do something and the court tells us so, it seems to be a shoe on a different foot. It's hard for them to accept.

ED: It was hard for the Supreme Court, for some of those justices, to come around to that realization. I remember Tom Glaze, when the *Lake View* case came before the court for the first time, was kind of on the other side. It's not the court's job to tell the legislature that you've got to do this or that, but he finally realized that the Constitution says the state MUST provide a suitable education to all kids. Well, what is a suitable education? Who knows? How do you prove what is suitable? But the Supreme Court, including Glaze, came around to the position that, regardless of how hard it is, we've got to decide what a suitable education is and tell the legislature and the governor you have to find a way to provide that education. The Constitution requires you to do it.

CH: They got there by addressing the issue of equality. They came to the theory that what is "suitable" is somewhere between what the best schools offer and some lesser schools offer and they find a place in between and they would provide at least that.

ED: You don't have to provide an extraordinary education but decide what is suitable and you've got to provide that.

CH: Yes. They settled on suitable being somewhere between what Little Rock and Lake Village. Somewhere between what they offered would be suitable. We'll go from there.

ED: But you've also got to consider what the rest of the advanced world is doing. You're competing with the whole world now. Mike Beebe had a big role in that, addressing the legislature. You were a part of that.

CH: The legislature, as I've said, was offended by the idea that the Supreme Court was attempting to tell them what to do. The only thing they knew was they didn't know exactly what they needed to do, but they feared if they didn't do it the Supreme Court was going to . . . So the mindset of the legislature was to say, let's see if we can't do away with the Supreme Court. There were processes going on in the legislature about reducing their staff and reducing their salaries and all that kind of stuff.

ED: The legislature didn't give the justices a raise for years.

CH: That's exactly right. That goes back even to Beebe's days.

ED: He wouldn't give them a raise either.

CH: Beebe was the only one capable. [Governor Mike] Huckabee didn't have a clue. But Beebe was able to comprehend from what Corbin had written to find what would be the most the legislature could do to at least satisfy the courts. Or vice versa—what the legislature could do to satisfy the Supreme Court. Then adopting that and explaining it to the legislature. I knew the mindset of the legislature. I go back and tell Beebe if you don't help them understand something they can do to address the problem, I don't know where we're going with the problem, because they're going to do nothing, and the court ain't going to allow that. So our problems are going to explode if you don't help them understand what the court has told them to do in a way that they can approach trying to do it. He did that.

ED: The final step was after he became governor [in 2007].

CH: That was the final implementation, especially the building factor.

ED: The state participating in the funding of school buildings. The Constitution makes buildings part of the state's responsibility.

CH: That's what the court said.

ED: The state had never done that.

CH: It had never done that, and communities embraced the construction aspect of it certainly more than they embraced the thought of consolidation. All the little schools in the state out here that may have been impacted by consolidation were getting new buildings. There was work going on in their communities, jobs, and they were getting school facilities, which pacified a lot of people.

ED: The final step in the process, and the key to reaching constitutional status was the provision that in every session of the legislature when you write the amendments to the revenue stabilization act, which distributes all the state's cash, you've got to fund the schools first. You must decide how much the schools need to provide a suitable education. What's the number?

CH: Determine that number.

ED: Before you fund anything else. Whenever you write the law that distributes the money month by month, the schools first are funded fully before prisons, or social services or anything else. Before they get a dime, you have to see that the schools get every penny that is required to provide that suitable education for the year. No matter what happens during the year, if there is a fluctuation in revenues in a recession, everybody else gets a cut in their distribution but not education. That's the only way that you can meet the Constitution's mandate.

- CH: That was our interpretation of it. We were of the opinion that the court was not real sure of its station in that regard, but we were of the opinion that they were determined to continue down the road they had started.
- ED: Justice Tom Glaze had been reluctant at first, but he came around to that view. He privately was of the opinion that if the legislature refused to provide the funding, either by taxes or dramatically shifting revenues to the schools, the court might have to order a solution itself. Nobody wanted to do that. Nobody wanted to enter that realm, but Glaze thought that, though it was unprecedented, the court might have to do it if they don't meet their obligation.
- CH: There were members in the legislature that knew that that was a threat and that's what they wanted to do. Beebe assisted in causing them to find some pride in carrying out their responsibility.
- ED: I think a huge part of it was the great respect legislators had for Mike Beebe, and you, too.
- CH: Oh, he was the general, I was the private. I carried his briefcase and told them what was in it. That's what I did. I did have a feel for that legislature. It had been such a part of my life for so long I knew how the vote was going to be on nearly every bill before the roll was ever called. I knew that Beebe's comprehension of where they were and where they needed to go, so my idea was to have the Senate invite the attorney general to come and explain the station that the state found itself in, what the Supreme Court had said, and what they needed to do about it. When he did that, we had adequate support in the Senate for some direction. We did the same in the House. And Beebe did a wonderful job making people comfortable about what they now had an obligation to do, and I think they came out of that not feeling like they had a mandate from the court to do it but a constitutional obligation they had taken an oath to meet. They felt better about what they were doing then. Those presentations by Beebe brought us to where we are today. If the legislature wasn't going to tolerate the mandate the court had given them, then I don't know where the state would be—were it not for Beebe's leadership.
- ED: It was really critical. It is still hard to see how we navigated those waters back then. We raised taxes . . .
- CH: And accepted consolidation.
- ED: They're backsliding now.
- CH: Public education has fallen totally out of favor with the majority of the legislature. Private schools and charter schools are the answer to the legislature. The public schools are not their favorite.
- ED: Nor higher education.
- CH: Nor colleges. We destroyed colleges with the lottery. Even if it does what they say it does, look at their advertising; they're pointed at the poorest people in the state. They know that most of the people who buy the tickets are the poorest people in the state. So even if it is funding college, what it is doing is putting the cost of a college education on the poorest people of our state, which is as wrong as it can be.
- ED: And the poor are not benefiting from it.
- CH: They're not. When you put this influx of more students into colleges, two things happen. The schools have to build more facilities, hire more teachers, and they've got to pull the

quality of education down to accommodate all those who are now in college who have no business being there. We're doing that on the backs of the poorest people in the state. The people voted for the lottery. What the state's position ought to be is: OK, you voted for a lottery so we're going to have a lottery. But for the state to have a commission spending a bunch of money advertising in a way to pull more poor people into buying more of those tickets is terrible. It's immoral. You being in a position to educate the public on what they should and should not be doing, it's a shame that you haven't caused them to do differently.

ED: [laugh] Well, I wrote a lot about it, but I don't think I've ever changed one person's mind about anything. The worst thing that Bill Halter could have done was saddle us with that. He's a smart, good guy but that's his legacy. Well, I don't think we've done all those years in the legislature and the attorney general's office justice, but we'll have to move on and get to your court career, starting with the Court of Appeals. Did you ever aspire to be a judge?

CH: I thought about being a judge. Probably if I had not gone with Beebe to the attorney general's office [2003], I would have sought a court position. We had sixteen of them in Pulaski County. We had municipal court over in North Little Rock. I probably would have gone into one of them. You sort of pull yourself out of the practice of law to go to the attorney general's office. I had a very good practice . . .

ED: Did you make a lot of money?

CH: I made a lot of money. I've got this six-hundred-acre farm and I've got another one at Searcy. Everything I have is paid for and I've got a little money in the bank. That all came out of my practice of law. Time and chance has a lot to do with that, too. I tried some cases that turned out right.

ED: Did you win some pretty good judgments?

CH: Uh huh.

ED: Personal injury?

CH: I did. In my first jury trial, I won the largest verdict in Pulaski County that year that was paid. I represented Moore Ford when they built that new building out there on the Freeway and it collapsed during construction. That was one of my favorite lawsuits. It was me against thirteen contractors and subcontractors. Everybody pointing their fingers at everybody else. In the trial of the case, I was able to in the closing argument cause Judge [Perry] Whitmore to see that they pointed their fingers at each other. We tried that case for seven weeks and two Saturdays. Several of the subcontractors tried to make Mr. Moore to be at fault for whatever went wrong with their contract when he was sitting at the house writing checks. Mr. Moore had agreed to settle that case for a hundred fifteen thousand dollars, because he was financially beat at that point in time. One of the subcontractors wouldn't come up with his share of the money. So we went to trial. I had a copy of the check, which was six hundred something thousand dollars. I've got a few that I lost that I don't recall as vividly. But I had a very good practice. I knew that when I went to the attorney general's office and closed down my practice that I'm done. Clients aren't going to wait four years [the length of the attorney general's term]. I was satisfied that my practice was done. I did think about seeking a court position.

ED: You go to the Court of Appeals. The cases at the Court of Appeals aren't typically big headline cases. They are tough cases but not many are headline cases. You don't get many constitutional cases.

CH: You don't get *any* constitutional cases.

ED: Those go directly to the Supreme Court. Was it hard work on the Court of Appeals? I've heard some say it's a piece of cake.

CH: To me, to start with, it was a job. It was new and I was not an appellate attorney. George Pike I had associated on lots of cases, going all the way back early on when I was city attorney, when we had the asphalt case. The day I was sworn in as city attorney, the city got sued for the purchase of an asphalt plant, which ultimately brought about the demise of [Mayor] Rosamond. I was overwhelmed when I got that pleading and maybe the next day I got a phone call. Did you ever know George Pike?

ED: I encountered him over the years when I covered the Supreme Court. Was he at the Friday firm?

CH: He was at the Friday firm. He was a little fellow who had a speech impediment but I believe he was one of the first Harvard law graduates in Arkansas. He was brilliant. He was head of their commercial litigation. He didn't have law clerks to help him. He did all his research himself. He called me on the second day after I got the pleading. "Mr. Hoofman, I know you don't need any help." Keep in mind that I became city attorney six months after I began practicing law, not assistant city attorney but city attorney. I was way over my head. When this lawsuit came, I was intimidated and I get this call. This fellow says, "I know you don't need any help, but I represent this company that sold the asphalt plant to the city. Our law firm represents them and they asked me to volunteer to carry your briefcase or assist in any way. I know you don't need any help but I'm ready. Praise the Lord. That's when we met. He was very capable. John Fincher was very studious. He handled a couple of cases for me on appeal, but other cases that were appealed George helped me.

ED: So here you are suddenly an appellate judge yourself. You adjusted to that. You were cranking out opinions quickly.

CH: Immediately.

ED: The first day . . .

CH: I was lucky. I was able to hire a law clerk, Carrie Mensik, who had experience on the court, and another law clerk. Elana Wills, who was head of the opinions division of the attorney general's office and very capable . . .

ED: And later was on the Supreme Court [by appointment from Governor Beebe].

CH: When she was on the Supreme Court, she had hired a young lady just out of law school, Erin Walsh. I called Elana. I got an application right off the bat from Erin, and I talked to Elana and she recognized that she didn't have much experience but she was very capable. And she was. With Carrie Mensik, she stayed with me on the Court of Appeals, then to the Supreme Court and back to the Court of Appeals. We commonly referred to Carrie as my keeper; she was so helpful getting me started and then holding me together on things. We didn't always agree on our decisions, but even when she disagreed with my conclusion to start with, she could write the opinion for me or help me write the opinion. She was very capable and I became very fond of her.

- ED: What were the relationships on the court? Were everybody collegial, or was there some friction?
- CH: The only friction on the Court of Appeals that I saw was that Judge [Josephine] Hart was very opinionated. If I ever heard anyone say anything critical of any other member from the time I got up there, maybe some of the members took issue with her approach.
- ED: She was pretty confrontational on the court?
- CH: But I didn't see any. We had a wonderful rapport. When we went to the Supreme Court we went over there together. She got elected and I got appointed. I had nothing but warm professional exchanges with her, all the time we were on the court together. A lot of times I was the peacemaker, between her and the chief [justice].
- ED: Jim Hannah.
- CH: She had a way of bringing out the caustic nature of others, whose opinions at the time were that she was caustic. She is very opinionated and had a military background. I just never had a problem comprehending what she was saying and there was nothing ever but affection between she and me. But I found myself oftentimes—and everybody else knew it—trying to make them understand what she was really saying. And she didn't mind me saying that. And she didn't mind me helping others not be so hostile toward her.
- ED: I know Jo Hart. She married my wife's first cousin, Brook Hart. Elaine and Brook were very close. We got to know Jo for that reason. But I heard about judges on the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court getting into battles with her and take it very personally. That was the way she practiced law and she brought that to the courts. That was what you did. You fought for your clients.
- CH: What the members of the court that had a problem with her didn't understand was that, though it may appear that she takes it personally that you disagree with her, she did not. Though you may see so clearly how wrong she is, the fact that she didn't accept that clear demonstration may bother you . . . I just think she's misunderstood. I think I understood her better than anyone, and I never saw her, in her heart, be upset with anyone because they disagreed with her. If they didn't try to badger her into accepting their position, she would simply write her dissent and move on. But she has a way of bringing out the worst in people and at the same time make those people think it's her fault. That's my take. She's opinionated but she respects the fact that others disagree with her. She doesn't have a way of conveying that respect in a way that the one disagreeing accepts. But I may be wrong about the whole thing.
- ED: The two years that you were on the Supreme Court would have been 2013 and 2014. The school stuff was pretty well behind the court then.
- CH: In my favorite case, the only dissent was the chief. Never in the history of the state of Arkansas has anyone been convicted of a felony who was a lawyer and lost their license and then got their license back, but one time. And I wrote that opinion. The chief dissented. I think everyone went in there that day suspecting that we will reverse the trial court. I frankly was fully prepared to have them do what they had consistently done forever and that is never to allow anyone who is convicted of a felony to get their license back. But in this case, I saw where under the law of the state we would have no alternative but to affirm the trial court and allow the boy to have his license. And we did.
- ED: And Jim Hannah dissented.

CH: He did. If you knew all of the law, you knew that his philosophy was that if you ever violated the rules of society to the point that you pleaded guilty of a felony or was convicted of a felony, it would belittle the practice of law for you to be allowed to have a license and practice again. His dissent was more an expression of that position rather than one attacking the law that caused us to affirm the trial court.

ED: Do you remember the J.B. Hunt Transport case in the Court of Appeals? The Court of appeals, with you writing the opinion, ruled that a lawsuit filed against J.B. Hunt Transport by a former employee alleging invasion of privacy when two managers took inappropriate pictures of him during a company retreat could go forward.

CH: I remember that case, but I don't remember . . .

ED: There was a company retreat in Kansas City and one fellow had too much to drink and fell asleep on floor of his hotel bedroom . . .

CH: And they took pictures of him.

ED: They put shaving cream on him and photographed him and they asked other managers to view him naked. They took some naked pictures of him and circulated them. You allowed that case to go forward. You told the lower court that it had to consider his complaint about how he was treated.

CH: We didn't decide the case; we decided that he had . . .

ED: That he had a case.

CH: The trial court had dismissed the case on a motion for summary judgment. We found that it should be remanded and go to trial. I don't know what happened to it.

ED: The case that got the most attention when you were on the Supreme Court, and is still getting attention, was the same-sex marriage case, an appeal from a decision by [Pulaski Circuit Judge Chris] Piazza. He ruled that the state constitutional amendment prohibiting same-sex marriages or civil unions and prohibiting the state from recognizing the marriages and unions from other states was unconstitutional—that it violated both the federal Constitution and the state Constitution. It went up to the Supreme Court and was kicked around. It apparently was very divisive on the court, I gather. You recused from that case, as I recall, because of an idle conversation with Senator [Jason] Rapert [of Conway].

CH: Well, that was what was reported. I didn't recuse because of that conversation directly. Nothing in that conversation caused me to recuse. He simply told me his opinion and his position.

ED: His position was in favor of the law banning those marriages.

CH: He was opposed to the decision that we were going to have on appeal. He made that very clear, notwithstanding how many times I told him I couldn't discuss the case with him. He asked my opinion, and I told him I don't have an opinion that I could share with him until I reviewed all the law in the case and then I'd have an opinion. He had called me about a different issue.

ED: That's not why he called you?

CH: No, he called me under the auspices of a piece of legislation I had mentioned to him. He's my senator. Some several months before. He started the conversation, but the purpose of his calling me wasn't that. What happened was after we hung up the phone, and there was no reason for me to recuse at that point. In Arkansas, we don't have to disclose why we

recuse. Only two people knew why I recused. Donnie [Justice Donald Corbin] had a tendency to talk to the media, especially the *Arkansas Times*, Brantley [Max Brantley, an editor at the paper]. The only disappointment I had on the Supreme Court was that Corbin talked about what went on in the chambers and it got printed. Max takes the liberty to add what he thinks might have happened, too.

ED: He has his own opinions.

CH: He has his own opinions, but he writes it as though it was part of the facts. At any rate, the reason I recused was that right after that conversation, maybe two weeks later, there was a reception at Conway that I went to at the [home of the] president of UCA [Tom Courtway]. I was in the reception area and Senator Rapert and his wife walked up and spoke to me. We spoke back. Nothing was said about anything and they went on about their business and we went on talking to whomever we were talking to. And then somebody else came up and they wanted to tell me how they were opposed to same-sex marriages, but they made the statement "But I know you've been talking to Senator Rapert." Senator Rapert had just walked off. Nothing then. About that time I was named as a distinguished alumnus at UCA. A big banquet. At that banquet, I had another person in the course of that evening come up and tell me their position with regard to the concept of same-sex marriage. But they, too, said "We know you've talked to Senator Rapert." Now this had never been put in the paper at that point in time. And they said "So you know how we feel about it." I decided then that maybe Rapert had told people that he had talked to me. I thought it would be inappropriate for people to be about thinking that Senator Rapert talking to me would have any effect on what I did on that case one way or the other. So the appearance of impropriety existed in the eyes of at least some and I didn't know how many. So I decided that the best thing for me to do was to recuse from the case, because I didn't know how many people were led to believe whatever they may have been led to believe. Since I was not sure about that, I did not think I should participate in the case. I had no idea that it would be so controversial. I didn't recuse because of the conversation, but I recused because of what I feared what others thought about the conversation. That's why I recused. That recusal had a great effect, because I'm confident that had I stayed on the case we would have handed down a decision. That's the end of the discussion as far as what everyone thought about the case, but it would not have been where it is today, or wound up being. The court wound up not ruling on the case, because it was not necessary. I will say this in defense of those that would condemn Jo [Hart]. During the course of the case, Jo's husband was dying. That affected her ability to participate to the extent that she needed to participate. It brought about some delay. For those that would find fault with a wife who was dealing with a dying husband and even as a result of that and disregard that or leave it completely out of the conversation is unfair.

ED: The lawyer who was appointed to sit on the appeal when you recused was from Harrison, I think.

CH: McCorkle or something.

ED: [Robert] McCorkindale of Harrison took your place. I don't know him. Of course, he sided with, I guess, Jim Hannah, Corbin and whoever else to uphold Piazza.

- CH: I think the thing that made the case go so haywire was, in my opinion, the wrongful position taken by [Justice Paul] Danielson and the chief [Hannah]. When you have a new governor elected, a new legislator elected or anybody elected to a position, that person takes on the responsibility of that position. Period. The governor appoints someone to fill a vacancy on the court. When someone recuses, you have a vacancy. The Constitution provides for filling that vacancy. It's a vacancy because they've got a case that needs to be taken up, the one the judge recused on, but it's a vacancy on the court. When there was someone elected to fill that position I think the embarrassment for the court was brought on when Danielson and the chief recused themselves from participating in the case to decide whether the new judge that was elected to take on the responsibilities of that court position would fulfill the duties now. Of course, naturally, they appointed more judges to take their places to take up that case and the court unanimously decided that the new judge would take up those responsibilities of the position, which caused just a furtherance of Brantley's ink. They were wrong in their position, proven wrong by the unanimous court that took up the issue. They were wrong, and yet even those of you who choose to make a profession of writing the news and having opinions never found any fault with them and hold them up as being the right ones and everybody else as being wrong. Amazing.
- ED: It was a mess, and confusing. The public was bewildered by all of that. You had to rely a lot on people who didn't go public. Brantley didn't quote Corbin or anybody else . . .
- CH: No, but he quoted stuff in his paper that was not complete. But what he quoted, to twist the way he wanted to, could only have come out of those chambers. And there ain't but one person when the words were written, ain't one person that said it like it was written. But that is neither here nor there. Can we go off the record here?
- ED: Let's shut this down.
- ED: We're back. I guess there's nothing else to say about the marriage case. You were leaving the court. But while we're on this issue, we might mention one case that you were on. That was a case that you wrote the majority opinion on. It was a four to three decision to reverse a circuit court order that a gay dad's same-sex partner could not be present when he had overnight visits with his young son. In this case, you cast the deciding vote and wrote the very strong opinion that would suggest to a very naive person that you supported gay rights. That's how somebody might think about it. You interpreted the law in a way favorable to a gay parent. You decided that case not based upon any kind of religious or moral ground but on what the law was. Do you remember that case?
- CH: Yes, I remember that case. I knew, too, how the public who looked at the case would interpret it.
- ED: And that was that it was a decision for gays.
- CH: As I remember that case, the [circuit] court based its opinion solely on one issue. All we said was that the court had to consider the best interest of the child, and the court hadn't done that. The court said that just the fact of a gay relationship itself prohibited overnight visits with a child. Totally on that fact alone. The only thing we really did point out is that they have to take up the best interest of the child and consider it, the best interest of the child, and not base the decision upon the court's determination that the fact of a gay relationship in itself was the deciding factor. You have to consider what impact on the

child does that relationship have. It was easy for one to find what we had said in that case, that a court cannot prohibit overnight visitations with gay partners. If you are going to prohibit overnight visitations with a partner of the opposite sex you have to consider the impact on the child and how, if you find that's prohibited, you have to find how that affects the child. They didn't do that. They just found that the sexual relationship alone, the fact that it existed, was in itself a prohibition, and that is not what the law says. Quite frankly, I was always of the opinion that the media would pick that one up more than it did and that I would hear from that. I never heard anything.

ED: You didn't get a rain of letters and telephone calls.

CH: The first time I heard a mention of it since I put my name on that opinion was today.

ED: I found that case yesterday and I thought I would bring it up, particularly since it seemed to come along in conjunction with the same-sex marriage case.

CH: It was about the same time. It sort of played out in another case of mine a little. There was a sheriff at Searcy County who had been challenged, because he had been convicted of stealing some poultry products twenty or thirty years ago. He had been elected two or three times. In his campaign for sheriff in 2012, it came out that he had been convicted and wasn't qualified to be sheriff. He had been convicted of a felony, a theft, which was an infamous crime. He won the sheriff's office, it came out and he admitted it in the campaign. He was very popular, so popular that when the case was brought to the trial judge—those on the other side of that election had filed suit challenging his right to hold the position—the judge, knowing the popularity of the sheriff, ruled that that was not an infamous crime. So I got that case, and as it turned out, based on all the previous cases that the court had ruled on what was, in fact, an infamous crime, stealing a chicken was an infamous crime. The court had found, in fact, that stealing a yard sign in a political race was an infamous crime and a man couldn't hold office. I wrote the opinion that overruled the circuit court and removed the sheriff of Searcy County. That opinion came down and hit the paper on Friday morning. That's when Supreme Court decisions all come down. Debbie and I loaded up our mules on Saturday morning and went up to a man who owns an arena and three or four thousand acres that only serves to hold the world together, which makes for some good riding trails for those of us who like to challenge the trails. I had never been up there before . . .

ED: This is Searcy County? Out from Marshall?

CH: Before you get to Marshall, off to the left there. We unload our mules. They ask you questions, of course, make sure your mules have been properly examined, are disease-free and have a health certificate. They ask me some other questions, if you get hurt who to contact and all that. I just gave him my card. I never thought about what county I was in. He said, "Hmmm, Supreme Court. You boys removed our sheriff yesterday." It dawned on me then. I said, "They did?" I could tell he wasn't proud of the Supreme Court. He was one of those who were fond of that sheriff. He said, "That's what it said in the paper today." I said, "Well, you never know what they can do." I acted like I hardly knew what he was talking about, like somebody else on the Supreme Court did that. He didn't know enough different to know.

ED: He hadn't noticed the name of the justice who delivered the opinion.

CH: I was glad that he didn't remember whose name appeared on that opinion in the paper.

ED: Up in Searcy County, he might have been carrying heat.

CH: With the terrain we were in, I might not have come out of there.

ED: While you were on the court, those six years, did you ever get telephone calls from people who were mad about your decisions?

CH: No, I never did. I got one call that addressed a decision. The court receives our calls, and I didn't pass out my personal office telephone number. None of us do that. I don't have a landline. I have a telephone but it is not on my card. But the court receptionist oftentimes got calls about cases that we had decided, but I never got any because no one had my number. I'm not in the phonebook and they didn't have any way of reaching me personally, so they called the clerk and left messages.

ED: Nobody came to see you at the court?

CH: There's a lot of security around the court, for that reason, I guess.

ED: In the old days, there wasn't any security around the court, and people could wander in. I remember Darrell Hickman and Tom Glaze used to talk about people wandering. Glaze talked about people, even a lawyer, who came in and wanted to talk about cases that were coming before the court, a case that the lawyer would be arguing before the court. Glaze told him, "No, you've got to get out of here, you can't be in here."

CH: I'm confident, in the human experience, having been a legislator and familiar with the fact that everybody doesn't think alike, I wouldn't be surprised if that would happen. However, my experience on the court has been that the security never lets anybody in. Even when we had oral arguments, when the judges walk down the outer rim of the court chamber, you see the lawyers out there. I never had one attempt to talk to me about the case. There seems to be in the profession a respect for that boundary.

ED: Anything else to be said about your experiences on the court? We skipped over some personal matters. You got a divorce way back there, and you remarried. When and who?

CH: I got a divorce in 1993, and I remarried in 2000. I married Debbie Birch. She was married to one of the vice presidents of Centennial Bank, now, but he was employed as vice president of Twin City Bank there in North Little Rock. They got a divorce in '93 or '94. I was on the board of the Chamber [of Commerce] and sometime in '95, Debbie went to work for the Chamber. We didn't know each other before. Her husband was a friend of mine and the bank would have Christmas banquets and I had seen her with Bob. I asked her to dinner one time after a Chamber meeting at the Chamber office, where she was the receptionist, and she was in a relationship with someone else. Then she became director of the Homebuilders Association. I asked her again to dinner, and she said she knew that I rode horses. She said, "I'd like to ride those horses you've got." So there we went. She didn't know anything about riding horses. But my horse, like every other animal I've got, would get into a fast trot and I would holler "Walk." It would walk and she didn't have to do anything. I think she was more impressed with the horses than she was with me. We dated for about five years and got married July 3, 2000. I told her if she married me I believed the people of North Little Rock would be so excited in twenty-four hours they would shoot fireworks in celebration, and they've been doing it every year since.

ED: When did you get all this up here?

CH: I had a friend who had a farm at Searcy.

ED: When did you get the farm up there?

CH: As soon as I got enough money to buy a place, I bought it. It's just down the road from where I grew up.

ED: Did you ever live there?

CH: Oh, no. It's just a hundred-acre place. It was a thirty-six-acre place when I bought it and the man who lived there when I was young was helpful in encouraging to me when I decided to go to college, so I stayed very close to him. He took a job that took him out of state so he sold his farm to his daughter and her husband. He had thirty-six acres. They divorced and Mack, her father's name, wanted her to keep her four children in the country rather than go to town. He didn't have the money and she didn't have the money to buy out the husband. So I just bought the husband out and she and I owned the farm. I was doing whatever I could to support Mack in this and she, Sharon, got married and I was of the opinion that I, Mack and Sharon would never have a problem over anything, but if she got a new husband things might get complicated so I then bought her interest out. I had thirty-six acres and later sixty-something acres became available adjacent to it and I bought that.

ED: You weren't going to live up there but you had the idea of having land where you grew up. CH: I had me a little camper trailer in the back end and ran a water line up there. I had a man who lived there and he helped me take care of my cattle.

ED: You had cattle there?

CH: Uh huh. I loved the cows. Like I said, when I was on the farm I had a cow that would let me get on her in the pasture and ride her to the barn and then milk her. I owned some cows, had a man there that lived on the farm and he helped me take care of them. I had a travel trailer in the back that I set up. I would go up there most every weekend. My wife didn't have much interest in it. But I just love being out there. Dr. Beasley—I became acquainted with him on a hunting trip to Montana and he owns a farm over here. He's a practicing doctor at Conway. This farm became available. He said, "You ought to buy it. It's just grown up. The old lady doesn't have anything to do with it and nobody's done anything with it in thirty years. It's grown up everywhere." He drove me onto the north end and it was just a thicket. He drove me around the road here and we could see the thicket out here. All of this was grown up. I had the money so I just bought it.

ED: What year approximately?

CH: 1995.

ED: And then you built this house.

CH: I began first to clear some ground, move my cows from Searcy over here, move my travel trailer over here. I came up here every weekend and worked on it, cleared ground and built fences. Then I built a barn on the north end, drilled a well up there and developed an interest down here, and built this to become my functioning in and out. I drilled a well out here and then after a few years bought a mobile home here. Then we decided we would build a cabin. We built, not this room but the rest of it, to start with. I came up here so much after I was out of the Senate when we went to North Little Rock. I had a house there. We went there just to go to church on Sunday, and then we'd be back up here. So I decided I would sell that house, and we added this room on and moved up here. That was about eight years ago.

ED: So you're perched on the top of a hill out here where you can see two or three miles in that direction, a couple of miles over here in this direction . . .

CH: Probably four miles.

ED: Four miles to that ridge. Maybe even farther than that. This is where you're going to live out your days.

CH: I guess.

ED: You're not going to work any more.

CH: Well, I've got sixty-six brood cows and I enjoy that. I might teach a course at UCA in business law. I'm going to concentrate more on riding my mules.

ED: That's more productive . . .

CH: As long as my health allows me to do that.

ED: Well, judge, we could go on for another four or five hours but I think people can get a sense of who Cliff Hoofman is.

CH: We've certainly brought up some memories of some good times, and some experiences.

ED: Judge, thanks.

[End of interview]