

**The David and Barbara Pryor Center
for
Arkansas Oral and Visual History**

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Arkansas Memories

Lindsley Armstrong Smith
Interviewed by Stephen Austin Smith
March 15, 2022
Fayetteville, Arkansas

Objective

Oral history is a collection of an individual's memories and opinions. As such, it is subject to the innate fallibility of memory and is susceptible to inaccuracy. All researchers using these interviews should be aware of this reality and are encouraged to seek corroborating documentation when using any oral history interview.

The Pryor Center's objective is to collect audio and video recordings of interviews along with scanned images of family photographs and documents. These donated materials are carefully preserved, catalogued, and deposited in the Special Collections Department, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville. The transcripts, audio files, video highlight clips, and photographs are made available on the Pryor Center Web site at <http://pryorcenter.uark.edu>. The Pryor Center recommends that researchers utilize the audio recordings and highlight clips, in addition to the transcripts, to enhance their connection with the interviewee.

Transcript Methodology

The Pryor Center recognizes that we cannot reproduce the spoken word in a written document; however, we strive to produce a transcript that represents the characteristics and unique qualities of the interviewee's speech pattern, style of speech, regional dialect, and personality. For the first ten minutes of the interview, we attempt to transcribe verbatim all words and utterances that are spoken, such as uhs and ahs, false starts, and repetitions. Some of these elements are omitted after the first ten minutes to improve readability.

The Pryor Center transcripts are prepared utilizing the *University of Arkansas Style Manual* for proper names, titles, and terms specific to the university. For all other style elements, we refer to the *Pryor Center Style Manual*, which is based primarily on *The Chicago Manual of Style 17th Edition*. We employ the following guidelines for consistency and readability:

- Em dashes separate repeated/false starts and incomplete/redirected sentences.
- Ellipses indicate the interruption of one speaker by another.
- Italics identify foreign words or terms and words emphasized by the speaker.
- Question marks enclose proper nouns for which we cannot verify the spelling and words that we cannot understand with certainty.

- Brackets enclose
 - italicized annotations of nonverbal sounds, such as laughter, and audible sounds, such as a doorbell ringing; and
 - annotations for clarification and identification.
- Commas are used in a conventional manner where possible to aid in readability.

Citation Information

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**Stephen Austin Smith interviewed Lindsley Armstrong Smith on
March 15, 2022, at the Smith residence in Fayetteville,
Arkansas.**

[00:00:00]

Stephen Smith: My name is Stephen Smith, and I'm here with Lindsley Smith in her home at Fayetteville, Arkansas. Today's date is March 15, 2022. Lindsley, do you give—uh—your permission for taping this video in use in the Arkansas Women Legislators project and later donating it to the University of Arkansas Special Collections and use, even online use, by the David and Barbara Pryor Center for Arkansas Oral and Visual History?

Lindsley Smith: I do, yes.

[00:00:29] SS: Great. Well, let's get started—um—talking a little bit about—uh—when and where you were born, at the very beginning. [*Laughter*]

LS: Well, my name—uh—is Lindsley Farrar Armstrong—it's my maiden name—and now Smith. And I was born in Birmingham, Alabama, on September 8, 1963. Uh—where I was born, being Birmingham—1963 was a real turbulent time for Birmingham. Uh—and I was born seven days before the little girls at the 16th Street Baptist Church were—uh—killed by a bomb set by the—uh—KKK. Addie Mae, Carol, Cynthia, and Denise, as well as—

uh—twenty other people were injured. And it was a very, very turbulent time. There were—uh—Birmingham was known as Bombingham at the time, and that was its name. And—and—and that event at that time when I was born there—um—set a national presence in what Bull Connor was doing and the dogs and the hoses and—um—you know, once big—I really [*laughs*] am thankful for the press for capturing the pictures of Birmingham during that time period. I'm very thankful of being born into a family with very strong civil rights—uh—and parents for equality for all people. So—uh—and the 1964 Civil Rights Act I think was something where, looking at Birmingham and living there, growing up there—um—the Civil Rights Act—uh—that Congress passed was—uh—very important. And I saw how it benefitted—um—our city. And I'm glad I didn't have to—uh—go through that—uh—so much in my growing up.

[00:02:23] SS: Okay, you mentioned that your—uh—family was supportive of—of civil rights. Can you talk a little bit about your family and—uh—influences they had and—and what you think about it?

LS: Yeah. My—uh—father's name is—Lewis Munn Armstrong. My mother's name is Jewel Dean Ott. Um—my mother's family was in northeast Alabama—uh—mainly around Pisgah and Rosalie,

the very small —uh—towns up there. And my dad and his family, of course, were in Birmingham—uh—where I was. Uh—my—um—mother’s mother—um—was Minnie Adkins. I mean, Classo Ott. Uh—and she—her maiden name was Adkins. And—uh—Minnie and William Adkins were her parents, and those were the only grandparents that I had living during my lifetime. Minnie Adkins lived the longest. And in fact, I’m wearing her engagement ring—uh—that . . .

SS: Mm-hmm. Great-grandparents.

LS: My great-grandmother. Uh—sorry. Minnie—Minnie Adkins. Uh—for—on Classo side. [00:03:32] On Sheridan Ott’s side, it was—uh—Henry Clay Ott and Ida Bowman Ott. And—um—Henry Clay Ott—we’re really fortunate as a family. He came to north Alabama—uh—in the Civil War with—uh—Sherman, General Sherman when he came through. And he fell in love there. He—uh—ended up liking north Alabama so much that he stayed after the war—um—there. And he has a diary. And it’s actually a—I have a copy of the diary in my papers that are up at the University of Arkansas in Special Collections. And—uh—it’s also a very important diary not just for the Otts in Northern Alabama but for a lot of people. And I donated a copy to the Birmingham Public Library—uh—so that they have it as well.

And—uh—so Sheridan and Classo Ott, my grandparents—I would go see them—uh—pretty much every summer growing up. We called it the farm. We're going to the farm. And—uh—our family would visit often. And they were a great influence on me. [00:04:37] I member one summer I went, there was a two-week-long singing school, and it was how to—learn how to shape note sing. Um—and—uh—there were just rare, wonderful moments there. I used to love spending time sit—you know, in the—in the country there, I mean, they—the Ottts were known by everybody. We pretty much had—[*laughs*] there was a whole area. Like Ottts here, Ottts here, Ottts here. We had a lot of Ottts. And there's a hill, Ott Hill, that is named—uh—after the family up there. [00:05:09] My—uh—granddad, Sheridan—uh—was named after General Sheridan in the—uh—Civil War. And—uh—I spent a lot of time, really, when I was up there—I loved sitting on the front porch in the porch swing—uh—'cause there it's like everybody beeped, you know, when they came by. Just beeped. And so I just loved sittin' on the front porch swing just wavin' at people as they went by. Uh—and I loved goin' down in what we called the crik [*laughs*]*—*to the creek and playing in the creek and—uh—going down with Granddad when he would milk the cows and—uh—it was good family—um—on my mom's side.

[00:05:49] My—my dad's side—uh—my—my dad, Lewis Munn Armstrong—um—he was born in Birmingham, Alabama. Oh, I wanna say my mom, Jewel Dean Ott—um—she was born in Pisgah. Uh—you know, and they lived—the Otts lived in Pisgah and Rosalie. But my dad was born in Birmingham, Alabama. My—um—uh—Mom—uh—well, I mentioned that. But my dad's—um—mom was named—um—well. [Laughs] Um. Beulah Munn was living, but Luther Armstrong, my granddad, wasn't living when I was born. So and I spent a lot of time with—um—my grandmother, Beulah Munn, when I was growing up, her and Farrar—uh—my brother's [LS edit: father's] sister's name is Farrar Armstrong. And they lived in a little house—um—in what's called East Birmingham. [00:06:55] And—uh—it was interesting you asked—led into this question talkin' about civil rights but—um—I often think that—you know, our family—you know, we wanted to stay in East Birmingham even though during the, what, [19]60s, [19]70s, and [19]80s there was that thing—it was called white flight where so many people were moving out. We continued all through—even when we were married, you know—uh—our family had our church there in East Birmingham—uh—our family was there in our house—uh—in East Birmingham where—uh—they got the house in like the

1870s. And—um—anyway, my Grandmother Beulah lived there with Farrar. And Beulah's mother was—uh—Minnie Munn. And then Lewis Henry Munn—um—was her dad. [00:07:50] And it was interesting because—uh—my mom's mom [*laughs*] was Minnie, and then my dad's mom's grandmother—I mean, mother was Minnie as well, so I had two great grandmothers named Minnie. And Lewis Henry Munn—oh, there's interesting—I have an article here. It's from the *Birmingham News* in 1914. And I thought it really captured them real well. Minnie—uh—was a—she did a lot for the community and the beautification of the community. This was a time when the roads were still—um—you know, dirt around in that East Birmingham area. [00:08:28] Oh, but I was gonna say, you know—uh—living in East Birmingham for so long and—and going to my grandmother's house and—uh—essentially every Saturday I would go over there and clean the house, you know, for them. And then later on when I was in high school and when I was driving, I would go over every summer and spend, what, three months—uh—taking care of her. She had—uh—colon cancer, and—um—she was bedridden for a lot of the last say fifteen years of her life, so she did need somebody to take care of her. And so I would do that. But—uh—here's—here's a part in this article. It said—uh—"The

41st Street City Beautiful Club is fortunate to have its president Miss Lewis Munn," which is Minnie, "who has lived on that street in her present home for twenty-three years and has seen wonderful transformations in the whole of Birmingham as well as along the street. When the Munns bought the home on 41st Street, they settled in the midst of the pine woods. Mr. Munn was an engineer on the old dummy lines before Birmingham had ever begun to dream of street cars. He took the first train with its dummy engine over the East Lake Road. He was the engineer who pulled the piping over the mountain for the very beginning of the Birmingham water works. He and his wife have been identified with the history of this city in a remarkable degree." And there are—uh—other places where it pretty much talks about, too, you know, his influence there.

[End of verbatim transcription]

[00:10:04] LS: My mom's side of the family, they were more farmers. It was a big thing. Except my Granddad Sheridan. He was a police—a peace officer of some kind. My Aunt Ruth, my mother's younger sister, she thinks he might have worked at the county—or like as a—in the deputy's office, or perhaps he was a constable. I don't know. But on my dad's side, they were big union and railroad. Railroad was pretty much—the engineer

work is what they did. In fact, Beulah, my grandmother's, brother, Marion Munn, also worked on the railroad. And Luther Armstrong, who is my granddad, who died when my dad was a teenager—there's a very—actually a famous picture. It's in the Alabama—I mean, sorry in the Birmingham Public Library on the wall, and for a while the picture was in the Birmingham Civil Rights museum. But it's of Granddad stickin' his head—Luther—stickin' his head out the cab of the window, and there were several of the others who worked on the railroad down below. And it's really—it's a picture that's often used places, books or—you know. And there's a colorized photo at the Birmingham Library. And my family, my grandmother and Aunt Farrar, had a picture of it. It was in the kitchen, the same one, but it was in black and white. [00:11:47] And George Luther's parents—it was George Armstrong and then Maggie Fulton Armstrong. The Fultons—we always had a Fulton reunion when I was growin' up. But of the Fulton line, Maggie's—I think it was—yeah, great-grandfather. He served in the Revolutionary War, and there's—David Lindsay. And there's a Daughter of the American Revolution in his name in Alabama. And there's also—they're buried right outside of Montevallo. I think it's Shelby County. And George Armstrong, my great-granddad on my dad's side, he

was known around the city as Daddy. And he was a police officer. And he was a really popular police officer. He was the first officer in Birmingham that was assigned to the schools in order to keep the schools safe. So I have a very rich family history, both in North Alabama as well as Birmingham.

[00:13:13] My brother—well, my parents met—they actually met at church. My mom left right after she graduated from Pisgah High School. She went to Birmingham for—well, to go to secretarial school and then to get a job, really. And she had a roommate there. And at the time her roommate was marry—I mean, sorry. Was dating my dad, and they attended Stockham, and she went to Stockham Memorial Methodist Church with my dad, which is in East Birmingham. And but somewhere in there, my dad stopped dating the roommate and started dating my mother. And they were married on April 6, 1958. My brother is Lewis Munn Armstrong Jr., and he was born in 1959. My sister, Lois Dean Armstrong, now Gray, she was born in 1961, and I was born in 1963. Five years later my mom was pregnant, and we had—my little brother died. He was stillborn when he was born. Charles Douglas Armstrong was his name. The birth was fine. Everything was going great, but when she arrived at the hospital—what I have been told, essentially, when she arrived at

the hospital there weren't rooms. She was going into labor, and they gave her a shot to delay the labor until they could get to her or something like that. But—well, my sister calls him Dougie, but Dougie died. So those are my siblings.

[00:15:05] SS: Your mom and dad were both real active in the Methodist church.

LS: Yes. Oh, yes. It was Stockholm Memorial Methodist Church. And it was on 41st Street also where, you know, my great-grandmother, Minnie, did a lot of beautification of that area. My—you know, when doing—when—having the dummy lines, the engineering, you know, that was the precursor to the street car, and so I think there was probably some influence there in wanting the area to look good. The big train from Gate City would come in in that area. And yeah, so there was—with church. When growin' up, that was a large part of our life. You know, we had church three days a week at least. And growin' up we were—our family was the groundskeepers of the church. I do often think that people—you know, after a while, it was very rare to see because of the white flight, particularly in that area of East Birmingham, you know—I wondered if people thought of us as, "Oh, there's that white family," because it was so rare. But it was very important to us and our family that we keep that

church alive. And it got smaller and smaller and smaller. And I think—well, it was our family, the Armstrongs, and then Bill and Peggy Lindsley who were still there when—you know, in the [19]40s and [19]50s going to Stockham as well. And they were there until they died also. And we kept that church alive. It was real important for us to help East Birmingham to stay alive.

[00:16:57] Our family—even though people stopped shopping in downtown Birmingham, that's the only place we did our shopping. We still did the Pizitz and the Loveman's, and we had—you know, growin' up that—we just felt it was a family need and obligation to, you know, do what we can—could for the community and people and not—you know, and maybe in some visual way add some racial unity. [00:17:32] I member there was one time my dad thought, "Well, how can we bring more people into our church and on"—he built a telescope and—anyway, one day he brought his telescope and put it out in the parking lot, and when people walked by and all, he wanted to see if they wanted to, you know, look at the stars, and he would do like these little lessons and stuff. But it was good times. I spent a lot of time with family growin' up.

[00:18:01] SS: I noticed you have a copy of *Celestine Prophecy* in your book case . . .

LS: Yes.

SS: . . . is it . . .

LS: James Redfield is my cousin.

SS: Yeah.

LS: Yeah. And he is from the Fulton line. That—he wrote that.

SS: Well, when you were growing up—I mean, it sounds like your family was real important. Did you have any particular mentors that sort of shaped your development or . . .

[00:18:24] LS: I think my biggest mentor was my Aunt Farrar.

Again, I—you know, we had a lot of similarities, or at least I hope so, and I probably model myself after her a lot, but she was single all her life. She could've gotten married, but when my—when her brothers, my dad, Lewis, and then his—their brother, Luther, when they went off to World War II, of course, she was there and taking care of Grandmother, and then my dad served in the CCC camp and was in the army during World War II. But she was there tryin' to help the family get go—you know, keep it going along and help bringing money into the family. And she was very—I wanna say politically astute. She wrote letters to the editor. She wrote her congressional representatives. And there were a lot of letters that she had that I have read where—and a lot of times it was on working

issues, working families and labor-type issues. I—one of my favorite letters to the editor that she wrote was—it was in the [19]50s. It was when the Dixiecrats were wantin' to invade the Democratic Party. She wrote a letter to the editor that said, essentially, "Get your own party. Don't come in our party. We need just Democrats, you know, in our party." And it was just a really good letter. But she was—I would say she was my biggest mentor. Again, I would—all growing up, I would go over every Saturday and I essentially would clean their house, take care of Grandmother when—and allow Farrar a day off, you know, 'cause she was working the forty-hour weeks pretty much as secretary most of her life. And I would go over on Saturdays. And sometimes I would go with her, and then we would go downtown. And we'd talk a lot, and we'd have—we'd do like hibachi grilling, or we'd set up like little tea parties in the living room. And we—she taught me how to polka dance, and we would dance. [*Laughs*] And we just—I just learned so much from her. And then, of course, later, as I said, in high school I was over there a lot more like in the summers taking care of Grandmother on sort of a weekly, full-time basis helpin' out.

[00:21:00] SS: Well, sounds like your family was really involved in public affairs and paid attention to politics.

LS: Yeah.

SS: Anybody besides you . . .

LS: Well, I wanted to add . . .

SS: Sorry.

LS: . . . that my—you know, two others I think if I say—were mentors were my dad and my mom. You know, I think Farrar and Dad helped me in really getting a love of the arts. My mom—and my dad in terms of reading and language and just an interest in libraries and study. And my mom, too, with libraries. When I was growing up, I would always have—we would—in the summers what—we'd have that "You must read ten books a week." [*Laughs*] But it was fun. We'd go down to the Avondale Library, which isn't far from our house, and I'd get my ten books and then read 'em and then try to get the gold star and do the library program. And my mom—there's not a sweetest, more honest, nicest person. And you made a comment like that yourself. She's just the sweetest person, and I learned a lot from her in terms of, you know, interpersonal communication and just a love of life.

[00:22:14] SS: Well, were any of your family in politics or run for office or . . .

LS: Well . . .

SS: . . . hold party decisions.

LS: . . . you, my husband, and—Stephen Smith, Stephen Austin Smith. And he was in the Arkansas House of Representatives from 1971 to 1974. I also had a cousin, Rena Hudson. She was mayor of Warrior, Alabama. Actually she ran for—she was city clerk first, and then she was mayor of Warrior, Alabama. And she was the first woman, and she was the longest-serving mayor. I think she probably was there close to thirty years, but she retired in 2012.

[00:22:57] SS: What was it like growing up in Birmingham, and where'd you go to school, and what kind of school activities were you in?

LS: Okay, yeah. Let me talk about my school. Just growing-up part. Well, first I went to Gibson Elementary. And I love—[LS edit: I went to Gibson Elementary] for preschool. You know, my brother and sister didn't go to preschool. And I remember at the ti—I mean, I used to love—there was a thing—I almost treated it like a job. We had this swing set in the back yard. Our house—my mom and dad, when they got married and my dad had bought this house in Crestwood, Alabama. And it was up on a hill. It was an area that he and his dad, Luther Armstrong, had—would go on long walks when he was a kid, and they would

walk, and they were toward that area. And Dad tells a story that Granddad once said, "Son, one day this is gonna be filled with houses." And maybe that got in my dad's mind of that's where I wanted to live. But we did live there on the mountain. My room actually—I had a sliding door to it, and I—the—and a sun deck was out on the outside, and I could go out and just look and see the lights of Birmingham shining, and I absolutely loved that.

[00:24:18] But when I was about five years old, I just remember, you know, they had said—and I remember this visually that, you know, "Lois and Munn are, you know, in school right now. Would you like to do that?" But I would go out in what we called our arboretum, and there was a swing set, and I would just go out, and every day I was just—there was this like little swingy ride. [*Laughs*] And I would just do that for hours and hours. That's what I enjoyed doing is playing pretty much just by myself. I loved just bein' alone by myself. [00:24:52] Anyway, and they said, "Would—you know, they're not here now. Would you like to go to preschool or whatever?" And I thought, "Well, yeah." You know, so I could meet people. And I thought, you know, maybe that was the case, but I thought about that later, and I thought, "I bet that's the time Charles Douglas died, you know, when I was five as well," and so it was

probably some things that Mom needed to have space or it could've be some things goin' on there. That could've been the reason. But I went to preschool at Gibson Elementary. And I went to grade school at Comer until the eighth grade. They did this new thing with our class. For the first time they were trying a junior high thing in Birmingham. And so we didn't wanna leave Comer because the food [*laughs*] was so great, and we just loved the staff and all. And in the eighth grade I went to Holman Elementary. And then after that I went to Woodlawn High School. I graduated from Woodlawn High School in 1981. But Woodlawn is where my dad and my Aunt Farrar and my uncle Luther, you know, all went to school. [00:26:04]

Activities in those areas? You know, and I mentioned some of the things, you know—in grade school a lot of it was what we've already talked about. Grade school time was really with family. It was at church, it was being with Aunt Farrar and Grandmother a lot. I would love to draw and paint, and Dad would encourage that. Like he would go off to work, and he, you know, "Oh, how 'bout have an art show for me later. I'll give you a quarter for a painting," or something, and [*laughs*] you know, and I—sometimes I'd lay out—"Here's the art." I would create little art galleries for him. And he would carpool with some guys. He

worked at Alabama Power. He was an engineer, a civil engineer. You know, his dad was a railroad engineer and then—you know, through the family railroad engineers, my dad was a civil engineer. It's something he got interested in when he was in World War II, mainly stationed close to the Philippines, and he was a map maker in the war. And so those are a lot of the things I did growing up. Again, our—we did the church ground keeping. And we—in the summers, we would go a lot to like Disneyworld. I really feel like I had sort of a Disneyworld princess life growing up. But and we'd go to Panama City, where there was a place that Mom and Dad liked to stay. It was called Cannon's Court. And I remember they, you know, they were friends with the family who owned it and everything. And the family who owned it were all so proud of this table they had in there. And Mom and Dad would go visit, you know, their room where there was this table. It was a table that once belonged to Clark Gable, you know. And I loved *Gone with the Wind* [laughs] you know, at the time. It's like Clark Gable's table there in Panama City. But that was the growin' up there.

[00:28:03] When I went to high school, I went to Woodlawn High School, and my brother had graduated before I got there, but I was able to have three years in school with my sister, and I

think primarily because my birthday is September 8, and school when I was starting first grade was—I was almost—you know, you couldn't get in until you were six or whatever. And my mom—and I'm so thankful she did this. My mom went in and talked to them and said, "Look, she's so close." She didn't—"I don't want her to be behind." She—it was real important to her. So I actually graduated—I think I graduated high school at seventeen or—there was some—anyway. So I was really thankful for that. And that allowed me to have three years with Lois. But when my brother was at Woodlawn, he was in the concert band, marching band, he was in the choir, and he was in what was called the Warblers. And that was a very famous Birmingham, even though it was a high-school one, it was a very famous one in Birmingham. And of course they were also really famous earlier on for doing a yearly minstrel show where they dressed up in blackface, and it was just a—it was terrible, and luckily they stopped that like *[laughs]* ten years before my brother got in there. And he wouldn't've done it. [00:29:33] Yeah. But he was involved in the choir and the band. And you know, in some ways I look back, and I think, "You know, Lois and I kinda did follow my brother in some ways." So we got in the band, too. And we—and so Lois and I played the clarinet.

My brother played the trumpet. And when we were there, there were—it was real important to my dad, again, too, that we stay in the band because a lot of people got out of the band, meaning a lot of, well, a lot of white people got out of the band. And there were—it was probably—it was a large marching band. It was probably close to two hundred when I was in it. There were a lot. But there were seven whites. And it was very important—my dad's like, "Oh you need—you know, y'all stay in the band." That—well, of course we weren't gonna leave. We enjoyed it. So I did three years in the marching band as a clarinet player. My Lois—my sister, Lois, did four years. Anyway, my fourth year I was a majorette, and so I did that. [00:30:43] I was also, in high school, I was on the tennis team. And that was real interesting because, you know, growin' up, my dad loved tennis, and I learned how to play tennis from him. And I would love times when we would go down to the Crestwood Park tennis courts, or we'd go to Avondale Park tennis courts, and Dad and I would hit balls back and forth, and Mom would be there, and she would just watch us play tennis. And it was really a great time for the three of us growing up. And so I learned some skills on that. And I learned really—one really important skill. My dad had told me—said, "It's not about makin' fancy moves, gettin'

the gotcha shot, or anything. You just get it over the net." You know, I learned a lot, and I used tips like that that I learned when I was a kid when I was in the legislature. You know, I don't have to pass a bill in a fancy way or do whatever, I just need to get fifty-one votes. Or I just—what did I need to do in order to pass? I just need to lob it over the net. I just—get it over there. And he said, "Let them make the mistake." And that really helped me when I was on the tennis team in high school. And it helped me win in competitions, and I did pretty good. I was also on the gymnastics team. It was just somethin' I really enjoyed. And I think—and lookin' back, that was my first teaching experience. [*Laughs*] There was the gymnastics class that a lot of people took as their—you know, you had to have a gym class. And there were three of us on the gymnastics team. But the teacher—I don't know, you know. She gave it over to the gymnastics team to teach. She would—she saw it as a break, and she went to her office and sat for an hour. And we taught the rolls and the bends, and we literally, you know, taught that class. And that—and I loved it, you know. I loved that teaching opportunity. [00:32:37] I was in the—member of like Future Business Leaders of America, the Bible Club, even the Morning Watch, showing up at, you know, seven o'clock in the

morning to do the prayer or group get togethers. And let's see. Oh, band. Not just in the marching band, but I was also in the main sort of concert band. I was also in concert choir, and I was in the special ensemble competitive group, so I was in the ensemble. And I tried out for and won—I was really proud of being in the all-state choir—Alabama All-State Choir. I was also in the Alabama—I mean, in the Birmingham civic orchestra and the Birmingham Pop Singers. That's somethin', you know, particularly Mom was encouraging of. And I took classes with the Birmingham Ballet Company early on, like when I was in grade school. And I stopped about the time I was goin' in—just probably when I was a sophomore in high school. I—my—actually, the *[laughs]* reason was my chest developed too much, and I just wasn't the ballerina body for moving arms and things anymore. [00:33:56] And then Mom would always take us—we—Lois and Munn and me, we took piano lessons from Miss Cantrell. It was in her house, and there were a lot of people at Woodlawn and at Comer that took piano lessons from her. Let's see. There probably were some other things that—*[laughs]* oh, one thing I will say. What—I was a—probably through my whole life I was a good, B student. But I was always active in so many things with family and stuff. And I was happy at bein'—about

bein' a B student. So I wasn't in the honors society in high school, but I created an honors society. [*Laughs*] And inducted people into it, and it was pretty much based on if you're a, you know, more interpers—honors for being, you know, a strong, interpersonal communication and friendly-type person. And we would have this salute. We'd see each other in the hall. You know, it was a backwards salute. And you know, everybody knew. And so we were called the Space Cadets. And we would have parties, and we would get together, and it was sort of a fun, unifying thing. [00:35:00] I was—my senior year I got Who's Who's most—most unpredictable is what I was. So I kinda came people from sideways area, which is another thing I did a lot when I was in the legislature, you know. I would try—there was such an engrained system in the legislature that I'd try to do things that'd shake it up a little. You know, like there's this guy, a lobbyist, Stanley Hill. I don't remember who he was representing. It was one of the—AT&T. Who was it?

SS: Farm Bureau.

LS: Farm Bureau. Oh, and I gave him some—when he—Farm Bureau was against this—well, LGBTQ. It was an anti-type legislation thing or whatever. And I—when I got there and met him, and I said, "Oh, yeah. Okay. Stanley Hill. All right. Well,

let me tell you." And then he was—I found out later that he didn't like that, and he was real embarrassed by them taking that stance on such legislation. But I would do things like the whole time I would go, "Stanley Hill," every time I saw him, and I would have a good rapport with people. Or I would, you know—lobbyists, you know, the way they'd come to you in the hallway to see you. And I would do things like put my hand out way far away, and they wouldn't know what to do, and they would, you know, start walkin' with their hand because there was just too much space—just to see what they would do. Or but I was kind of a little unpredictable. I'm gonna get to some of the things there when we get to that part. [00:36:36] But let's see. After Woodlawn something happened when I was probably a junior or a senior. We were an upper-middle-class type family. My dad was makin' some good money as a civil engineer, and something happened. My—well, Bill and Peggy Lindsley are my godparents, and I wanted to say that's where my name, Lindsley, came from was their last name. Farrar came from my Aunt Farrar. And her name Farrar came from the doctor who birthed pretty much the area at the time. I forgot where I was goin'. Oh, what happened to Dad. Yeah, so we weren't quite—no, but the—but Peggy Lindsley had told me

that—and this was after Bill had died. She says, "You know, what—Bill always thought what happened to your daddy might have had a mental breakdown." There was something that he didn't come back from. But he didn't work after that, and then he started staying with Grandmother full time to help take care of her, and then Mom went to work. It was real important to them, my dad in particular, that my mom got a four-year degree. And I will say when I was in high school and Lois and Munn were in high school, that's when Mom started with Birmingham-Southern. And she did a secondary education program and graduated about the time I was graduating from high school. [00:38:18] But something happened, and financially we just didn't have the money. So my brother, he went to Jefferson State Junior College, and my sister and I—she went next and went, and then I just followed them, and so I think that's how I ended up at Jefferson State Junior College. But wherever I went, I did try to make the most of it, and I—my brother was involved with theater, and so we got involved with theater, you know. And he was also involved with a group that he was one of the founders of, and a lot of really—who went on to be really sort of great actor people or in that industry, that area. They started what was called Common Man Players, which

was a community theater. And a lot of the people who were at Jeff State were also in that. And so I became a member of the Common Man Players. A lot of things I would do was lighting as opposed to acting. But Lois and Munn, my brother and sister, would do a lot of acting there. So—and my brother was in the choir there and we—my sister and I got in the choir there. But those are about the things that we did that were similar to what my brother did. Other things that I did that my sister and brother didn't do. But I ran for student government, so I was in the Student Government Association. [00:39:46] My sister was a Jeffersonette on the dance team, and then I ra—I got on the dance team, too. So I was on the dance team. Let's see. Choir. My major at first was secretarial science. And I had an advisor who said, "You know, if you just changed some classes up and took these other ones, you could get a degree in business administration. And business administration would take you a lot further in your life and look better on your resume. Why don't you do that?" And I thought, "Well, okay." You know. [Laughs] My life is pretty much livin' by sayin', "Okay." But there was a point where I was walkin' toward the—oh, and I will say, Lois and I were also really active in the Baptist Student Association. And a lot of the Jeffersonettes were—well, not a lot,

but a few of us were also in the Baptist Student Association.

[00:40:46] But there was a point when I was walking across campus. It wasn't that big of a campus, but it was a very nice one. We called it Harvard on the Hill for Jefferson State. And my sister—and it was literally on the hill. We're comin' over the hill, and Lois was with our friend Deonna at the time. And they said, "Lindsley! Lindsley!" And I was like, "What?" And so I stopped. And I was—I think I was finishin' my classes for the day or whatever. And they came over, and they said, "We found a way to go to Florida for free." [*Laughs*] And I said, "Wow," you know, 'cause none of us really—we didn't have much money. In fact, I got a job at PoFolks restaurant. I started off as a hostess and then I became a waitress so that through—at Jefferson State I was also—I was doing all these activities, doin' all my classes, and still doin' things with the church and the church grounds and all this, and then working a lot of hours at PoFolks restaurant to make, you know, some money for various things. But they said, "Okay, so here's the thing. There's this speech and debate team. And you know, if we do—there're things called individual events, and if we do these things like, you know, if we go, we prepare a couple of poetry readings or a couple of prose pieces or whatever, then we can be on the team.

And they've got a trip comin' up in just a few weeks, and they're lookin' for members 'cause they don't have that many. And if we get a part of this, we can go to Pensacola, Florida. There's a tournament at the University of West Florida." And it's ironic because that's the first place we did a tournament because, as you know, I ended up goin' to the University of West Florida and getting both my bachelor's and my master's. [00:42:35] But it didn't really take with my sister. But I fell in love with it. And I worked so hard. And I—I don't know. It was just that—it was a shift over to more of a mental—you know, I was priding myself, and I was becoming stronger mentally and academically and, you know, learning about more social events and political events. And I really came into my own with it. And I—and my sister had gone. And so I was there by myself. She had gone, and she ended up working for a monastery [*laughs*] by the time I was in my, you know, my last year there at Jefferson State. And really very act—I was do—still doing Jeffersonettes and all the other things. But it was interesting because when she was workin' at the monastery—it was Mother Angelica's monastery. She has a very famous national program, Mother Angelica Live, and they have a whole studio and things. And Lois was workin' in areas where—like the mail area and answering letters and

things like that. But you know, my sister had gotten on—she was a—what they called cheerleader dance team, really, for the Birmingham Stallions, so I used to kid her about, you know, working in the monastery during the week and secretly takin' your clothes off and dancing for—it was a US football league, I guess what they called that. [00:44:15] Anyway, so I got to be really good at speech and debate, and it was an interest of mine. And the same advisor who advised me—it was Carol Davenport. She was our forensics coach. There was a member—there was a woman—I forgot her name right now. Anyway, she was going to go to the University of West Florida. And I didn't quite know what I was gonna do. And Carol Davenport the—my advisor and forensics coach, was like, "You know, hey, would you like to just apply to the University of West Florida?" And I thought, "Well, yeah." You know, again, it was, "Sure!" That was sort of the thing. You know, people would make recommendations, and I would say, "Sure!" And I would be all for it. And I applied, and I got in. And so I remember one day I went in. I got the letter and stuff. And it was gettin' close to when you had to be down there or whatever. And I just remember I went in to Mom, and I said, "I got in the University of West Florida. Would you and Dad drive me down to go to school?" And I said that, and she's

like, "Sure, yeah." Anyway, we talked about it, Mom and Dad and me, and then we're goin', and they knew we didn't have, really, any money. And I just knew—I—really, when I went to college, it was on a semester by semester just to see if I can, you know, afford it. But I had our—my forensics coach, Dr. McClintock, she really did a lot for me once I got to the University of West Florida and when I got there, you know, helping—I don't think I could afford it or gone to college if I didn't get—I got a Pell Grant that helped out greatly. I got the Sheney Debate—Speech and Debate honorarium sort of award with scholarship, and that helped out a whole lot. And I did whatever jobs I could. [00:46:16] One of the jobs was—there were some guys in the dormitory. At that time they were mixed dormitories, so women and men, and they were like, "Look, we can make a lot of money by being"—I think it was Avis or something. There was—you know, when there's cars like in Mississippi or Alabama or something, and it was, I guess, more financially economical for them to get drivers. So we'd load up. We'd go, and we'd load up like at four o'clock in the morning in a van that would drive us over to wherever it was, and then we'd individually take a car, and they were really nice little sports cars and stuff, and we'd drive 'em back, you know, to Pensacola

'cause they were in need of cars there. And so it was [*laughs*] enjoyable. It was tiring. But that helped me make some money. I worked at a print shop when I got to the University of West Florida. But I wo—I do wanna tell the story about when Mom and Dad were taking me, you know, when it was time to go down to the University of West Florida. [00:47:13] I got in the car, and I went, and I packed what clothes I had. And I sewed a lot of my clothes, made a lot of my own clothes, too. I had a sewing machine. Our house had burned, not all the way down, but burned really bad in a fire when I was in grade school. And the kids had saved up all their green stamps, S&H Green Stamps. And we had a bunch of green stamps, and I remember my mom took me and Lois in to see what we wanted to get, and Lois and I both wanted a sewing machine. And my Aunt Ruth on the Ott family side—you know, Ruth Ott Guffey now. But she had taught us how to sew. [00:48:00] Anyway, so what I had, I took. And you know, they took me down there. We had lunch together in the cafeteria and all. And then they dropped me off at the dorm. And I just remember I was goin' in, and I had my room, and I went outside, and I sat on the stoop. And I just sat there with this kinda—all by myself, pouting, thinking to myself, "I can't believe they left me," you know. [*Laughs*] 'Cause in my

mind I must not have been that—I don't know what I was thinkin'. It was just I saw doors that would open, and I did that. The sort of student, master student who was helping the forensics coach at the time, David Painter, was so instrumental. He showed up the next day, and he showed me how to register for classes, and he walked me around, and oh, I just don't know what I would done if he didn't help me do that. But I also got an out-of-state tuition waiver. Dr. McClintock helped me sort of figure out, you know, how to do that. And I think Carol Davenport helped me at Jeff State, you know, and—anyway, there were a lot of ways that they let me know how I could find the money. And I actually ended up somewhat ahead, you know. [00:49:11] And anyway, so at that point—let's see. I got—I went to the University of West Florida. It was in Pensacola, Florida. And I got my bachelor's there in public relations and advertising in 1987. And I got—and I stayed and got my master's in 1989. I was there, also, in bah—back in junior college I did, you know, student government association. At the University of West Florida I did student government association. I did the speech and debate team. And one thing that helped with money, too, was 'cause we'd go on these tournaments, and I would eat very sort of frugally, and any per

diem that I could save to help me get through the week, I could. And Mom and Dad and Farrar, they sent me, you know, a little money here and there. But I made it, and I kept the g—as long as I had to keep a 3.5, I could keep my out-of-state tuition waiver, so I made sure I studied hard. I kept—you know, and so I was able to—the tuition waiver, my Pell Grant, I got that forensics scholarship all through my bachelor's, so I was able to keep coming back. In the—my first summer, I went home, and then I got my little job back waitressing at PoFolks so I could build up money waitressing, so when I went back the next year, I had at least some money, you know, in the bank. The next summer, I came back to Birmingham, and I had all my skills in public relations and advertising, whatever, and so I got this job. It was forty hours a week for those three months in the summer—at American Household Products, and I was in charge of—they called it AmPro, but I was called in charge of the ProAms, which was—they made plasticware. We, in fact, use pitchers [*laughs*] still from when I worked there, those pink and green ones that—in the fridgerator came from there. Anyway, they were just mix matched colors or something was wrong. And I was responsible that summer for making space in the warehouse and cleaning out all these sort of bad things and just

get 'em out to flea markets or whoever would take 'em and get 'em sold and everything. And so that was an enjoyable job, you know. [00:51:40] That might have been my first one that wasn't a—like a waitress or grass cutter or something. You know, when m—I was—I will say . . .

SS: Print shop.

LS: Or what? Or the print shop. On campus I also worked at the print shop at the University of West Florida. But I will say when I was a kid—well, I think I might have been—it was right before I got in high school and then when I was in high school. My brother had a grass-cutting business. He had four yards where we lived, and then four yards in East Birmingham where my grandmother and aunt lived. And he was giving it up, and I was like, "I'll take it." And so I took over his grass cutting business, and I was able to save up money for things. Like I wanted a TV for my room, and I wanted this capiz shell light like Aunt Farrar had. And anyway, so I was at the University of West Florida. Speech and debate were sort of my big things. I did student government. Wow. I was vice president of the Socratic Society. I mean, English wasn't my major, but they were looking for [laughs], I guess, some people to help. Because they publish the—it's a—it was—we did a call for poetry pieces from students,

and then we would—the *Troubadour*, I think it was called, publication each year of student poetry pieces and some other things that we did in the Socratic Society. Oh. I also worked at a gardening company. That would help me get some money, too. It was—actually, it was somebody I knew from school was do—going out and they were doing landscaping jobs, and I would go out and pull weeds and whatever I could to get money.

[00:53:22] Other things I did—oh, I worked—oh, I was a newspaper journalist both at Jefferson State and at the University of West Florida. So that was one thing I really learned a lot from and how to write better. And when I was at University of West Florida, I had—one of my roommates, Jane Chou, was from Taiwan. And I became very good friends with another individual, Ray Chin from Taiwan. And he and I became really good friends because my journalism teacher said, you know, "We have a lot"—she was givin' me a story. She said, "We have a large group of individuals from Taiwan who come over to go to the University of West Florida." And we did. But there's something going on with the roommate situation that the, you know, Caucasian whites, Americans, and those from other cultures, particularly Taiwan—there was a—housing was having trouble 'cause they didn't wanna live with 'em or there

were some problems or, oh, the smell of the food, oh, the this or that, or just the cultural differences. And so she said, "You do the exposé. You do that." And anyway, he was one of the main people I interviewed. And I did I think it was a couple of articles on intercultural relationships and you know, how you can improve it, or what was the situation and how it wasn't working there and all. [00:55:08] And I member Jane Chou, she was my roommate, and we got along great. I remember it was—she was, I think, a year ahead of me. She was—'cause she was leaving before I left. But I remember her tellin' me about how—she's kinda lookin' forward to seeing her husband, meaning it was an arranged marriage, and she didn't—she never has met him or anything. And she later sent me a picture from their wedding and all. So anyway, I did that. So I really enjoyed doing the journalism writing and all, but that was sort of a subset of some of the things that I did. [00:55:53] I was also a student ambassador. Our main thing was we wore green coats, and we went around campus and did tours. And let's see. Oh, and I was—I did an internship at the Pensacola Chamber of Commerce. It was more in public relations advertising, which was my degree. And my big thing there was getting the seafood festival, which had ended because a lot of the businesses, they

butted heads on how they were gonna do the—how the ships were coming into port, and then they—the seafood restaurants had these fights and stuff, and they were like, "We need you to go and smooth it over. And let's get this festival back." And I worked on that, and it worked. And I know my sister—your sister, my sister-in-law, Nancy Smith, she still goes. I mean, it's still—you know, I got it started, and the seafood fe—Pensacola Seafood Festival, as I understand from her, is still goin' strong. [00:56:52] So there was a—I did run for student government president, but it was really just a ruse. There were—in student government, there were two Hispanic young men who were so smart, and I think, the best senators. And they wanted to be president and vice president. And they knew how popular I was. And as—I was. You know, a lot of people wanted to latch on to me to help 'em, like, do particular things and you—I don't know. But they came to me, and they said, "We'd like to do—be president and vice president, and we think that we could do a really good job for what we need," and they were right. What the university needed in terms of the student government, they would've been superior for. And they said, "Would you run for president? 'Cause we don't think they will vote for us." And they let me know but—because they weren't white. I mean,

essentially because they were Hispanic, they didn't think they would get the votes, and so they said, "Would you run for this office? And then when it got close, drop out, and then ask people to vote for us?" And I said, "Sure!" [*Laughs*] So I ran for student government president, and it got close about the time and everything, and we worked it. I dropped out, we made it, and I said, "Y'all, I want you to vote for them. I, you know, I just can't bear—you know—they really need to be" or whatever. And they ended up winning. I was really happy to help usher that in. Tried to do things I could for race, cultural relations when I was at the University of West Florida. [00:58:32] Pensacola was very—and still is a very conservative kinda place. But the university necessarily wasn't. I mean, it was just—it was a nature preserve, really. You almost—when you're walking across the campus, you could bare—you almost couldn't see the buildings until you were right on them because they kept the trees—it was just a beautiful—I'm glad I went there. So.

SS: So . . .

[00:58:59] LS: Oh, I will say, then I got my master's degree there. Okay. Let me mention some things I did there. So let's see. That's when I wanted to—'cause I did choir all through, you know, church choir and choir and that. I joined the Episcopal

church choir, and I would go there Wednesday nights and then Sunday morning 'cause I really wanted that church element back in. And they needed somebody at Pensacola Junior College to teach the Basic Course and all, so I applied and got a job there as an adjunct—and also it helped me financially—as an adjunct instructor, and I taught a couple—while I was doin' my master's degree I did—taught a couple of courses with the Basic Course. And then the University of West Florida, who didn't have student assistants or things like that for master's students being able to teach before that, they said, you know, "Wow, you know, that's a good idea." [*Laughs*] So they asked if I would do it there. And I said, "Yeah." And so I was real happy that I'd really pretty much opened up the future. I mean, after me they were still continuing on to have the teaching assistants, which essentially I had the whole class. I taught the whole class, you know, but that's what they called it. So I al—so I then started teaching at the University of West Florida, got my master's, and also as a sideline, I got involved with the theater and did just a few plays there, so.

SS: You—did you travel a lot with the speech teams?

LS: Oh. Yes.

SS: Tournaments and things?

[01:00:40] LS: Yeah. Well, in my undergraduate I was, yeah, on the team, and we traveled all the time. But and Dr. McClintock really wanted me to be the main person, sort of the David Painter, the—what was it? The one that did all the work, you know, and coached people and did all that. I just didn't—it was a little tough. I mean, you had to be kind of on call at night all the time, and you—it was just a life I didn't want to live. And I would've good for it and th—she wanted it, but I said—I was gla—I said no to it. And but I did travel, you know, a lot there. But in my master's degree, I did do some coaching. I just didn't want to be that person who was always there living that world, getting the tournaments ready, getting the slides, getting the—you know, 'cause that—whoever that person was. And it wasn't that much money, and I needed more money, and I got that through teaching. And I wouldn't've been able to teach the Basic Course and become—later, when I le—when I graduated from the University of West Florida with—it was the general communication degree, I applied for—actually, it was Dr. McClintock. She says, "You need to get out of the South and get a little experience up north. And when you go up north, make sure you get a, you know, an American-made car 'cause"—you know. [*Laughs*] [01:02:15] And so anyway, and so I applied

for a job. Actually, I applied on the phone for a job. I was—it was nice I didn't have to go up there 'cause I could lay out, you know, things in front of me, and I had a nice voice presence and everything. Anyway, I got the job, and it was teaching, essentially, on speech and interpersonal communication at Ferris State University in Big Rapids, Michigan. Got the job. It's just about an hour north of Grand Rapids, Michigan. So I taught there. And I didn't do—I did the teaching. But then I, on my ti—I didn't do a lot of like the activities, but also I, you know, wasn't a student anymore. I was you know, faculty. But Neal Patten was a coll—a teaching colleague of mine. [01:03:07] And while Ferris State had a debate team—Dr. Gary Horn did that one for a number of years—they didn't have individual events. They didn't have the speech side. So David and I got that started. And I understand even today they have both speech and debate, so we got that started while I was there. And I was just there for a year because I thought, well, I'm ready to get back down to the South and see my family and be a little bit closer. And so it was the *Spectra*, which is the newsletter that the—I believe it's the National Communication Association puts that out, right. And I noticed in the back that there was a job that was open at Clemson University, and I

applied for that. And so I went down for that interview, and it came up to two individuals they were tryin' to decide on. And I found this out later from someone. Oh, and what is his name? Mark something was in there. He was somebody I was really good friends with on the speech and debate circuit when I was at Jeff State and later at the University of West Florida 'cause you get to know all these people. He and I were both the—you know, the top two for that teaching job. Well, he wanted to go somewhere else. I think it was the University of Alabama he got a job at. And so he forfeited this one. And he said, "I know Lindsley Armstrong is the other one, and you need to hire her. And she's great." Anyway, I did get hired there, and at—so then I spent four years at Clemson University, and I also worked as a coach for their speech and debate program. I got involved with some theatre, too, you know, as a faculty member. I got involved with some theater there.

[01:04:53] SS: Did you sponsor any organizations or [*unclear words*]?

LS: Oh. [*Laughs*] I did. I was the advisor of the Toastmasters there. They call themselves the Tiger Talkers, so it was really good. It's for students who wanted to do competitive speaking but didn't wanna join the speech-and-debate team.

[01:05:12] SS: So why'd you leave Clemson?

LS: [*Laughs*] Because I'd met my love of my life, you. Let's see.

When I was at Clemson—and it was really nice 'cause my—it was in South Carolina, and my sister was livin' at North Carolina.

Ash—what's it called?

SS: Asheville.

LS: Asheville, yeah, Asheville at the time, so I was able to see her well. And then it was, you know, what, a couple of hours was all to Birmingham, maybe two and a half hours, so I was right there where I could visit family, you know, a lot more. So probably in my—in 1993 our department chair at the time was Buddy Goodall and his wife Sandra Goodall. And then Pete Kellet was also a faculty member, and member we used to hang around together a lot, and the Goodalls would host, you know, us a lot of times over at their house and havin' cookouts and things. And Lora Sager, who I taught with at Ferris State University, she later came to Clemson with me. And so I got to be good friends with her and everything. And we just really hit it off at Ferris, I will say. They didn't know—I was, again, most unpredictable. They weren't familiar with the—sort of the Southern women. I was the [*laughs*] quintessential sort of like Southern woman and all, you know. It'd be, you know, a foot of snow outside, I'm still

wearin', you know, pantyhose, suit, skirt, high heels, walking along in the snow, and they're like, "You really should get some snow boots." [01:06:46] But and my Southern accent. And I remember it was my first day at Ferris. And then Lora was there, and it was my birthday. I was like—and I told her—this is how we really kinda met. And I said—we were sharin' an office together, and I said, "Today's my birthday. Would you go out to dinner with me?" And we became best friends since then. But anyway, she later came to Clemson, and she was there.

[01:07:12] But Sandra Goodall—at the time, Bill Clinton was running for president in 1992, and she started—she really was workin' strong. She had heard from her friend Stephen Smith about this guy named Bill Clinton. He was gonna be it and all. And then so she got more active in Democrat politics there because, you know, she said, "Okay, Steve's always right. Let's go with it." And so I got involved, too, and we did a whole lot of things for his campaign then. And later, you know, she said, you know, "Oh, you and Steve, y'all'd be great." And so essentially that was when email was startin' up, and academics were able to get it before a lot of other people could. And I remember she sent you an email, I guess tryin' to find out, "Are you single?" [Laughs] 'Cause she thought that you and I would really hit it

off. And she pride herself on a match—bein' a matchmaker. She said later she—we were her only success. She never did really well in matchmaking. [01:08:10] But anyway. So she introduced us, sent you an email, and you said, "Yeah," and she goes, "Oh, I got somebody I want you to meet." And then Sandra took me down into this computer lab thing to show me how to do this new thing called email. Anyway, and so she helped me, and we wrote you a note. But after that you and I just started talkin'. We—I say now we were probably the first [laughs] couple that got united on email or whatever. Anyway, you and I just started talkin' for, what, months or something. We caught love on the line and we'd rush to—after classes to talk to each other. But then you and I met at a conference later in [19]93. It was the end of September, early October. I was presenting a paper at it, and you were the keynote speaker. You were the big hotshot and stuff. And anyway, we just immediately hit it off, didn't we? [Laughs] And so you proposed—yeah. Like late November. We were at the National Communication Association Conference, and you had rented a convertible—what was it, a convertible Mustang or somethin'? It was really nice car. And you were takin' me down to Key West. And I member you were lookin' out, and it was like five thirty or

something, and you were like, "Oh, look at that sunset." "Oh, yeah, yeah." And he goes, "What are"—and you were like, "What do you think of it now?" You were waiting till that moment when I thought, "Oh, I love that. Oh, it's so beautiful." And then you said, "I wanna spend the rest of my life with you." Which is actually the most romantic proposal. But I wanted to know what you meant, and I just remember my response [*laughs*] was, "So what're you saying?" And then you said, "I wanna marry you." And I was like, "Yeah." [01:10:05] So, yes. So you're right. That's—I met you, and it was love. And you also got me interested in legal things or legal communication. I remember at the time I did a lot of research, and I wrote the seminal article sort of on the state of—or where we were with legal communication in the sort American communication discipline, and it was really just kinda starting off at the time. And I got syllabi from all these different people. Anyway, I wrote an article on that, and I think that's what got me interested, maybe, in law school, and some encouragement from you. [01:10:47] So you and I decided because you were goin' to England and—to Cambridge Univer—Oxford University for a visiting fellowship. And you got me a—what was it, a visiting scholarship, a visiting scholar status. And so anyway, so

you and I went over that summer to Oxford, and while you did your fellowship and I did work with the Centre of Socio-Legal Studies in Oxford University. And then we got married there, where there was a—at the—we were at Manchester College, and it was the Manchester College Chapel. And Manchester College is part of the University—Oxford University systems college, you know. And it's a Unitarian church. And there was a visiting minister who was from Texas, and he was there workin' on his third Ph.D., and—Frank . . .

SS: Schulman.

[01:11:53] LS: Frank Schulman. I remember I—so he—we did all the paperwork and everything, and he officiated it. We got married on August the sixth, 1994. And his wife took the pictures. And it was just the most lovely wedding I've ever been to in my life, and it was mine. There were actually, though—there was a wedding to be taking place like about one o'clock that afternoon, so the family came in the night before, and there were just spreads of beautiful bouquets of flowers everywhere. And so when we went in at like nine thirty that morning to get married, it was just all decked out beautiful, so there were really great pictures. [01:12:34] And then we went on our honeymoon, then, you know, after we did that, we came back to

Arkansas, and there was a—we had planned on—I was gonna go to law school, and I thought, "Yeah, let's do it, let's"—'cause I actually wanted to teach, but teach legal communication. I wanted to be—there were really, I think, at the time not many. And when I got my law degree, there were only like two of us in the communication discipline who also had law degrees who were there. So I wanted to specialize in legal communication was a really big reason. So when I came back here, I had a year—no, it wasn't even a full year, you know, 'cause school was already starting, and so I couldn't apply for several months. So I started working at the Washington County prosecutor's office for that year, and then I took some courses at the University of Arkansas.

SS: Who was the prosecutor then?

LS: Terry Jones.

SS: And then . . .

LS: But you and I got married then, and then in terms of kids, we have—I have two wonderful stepchildren, Caleb Smith and then Maggie Smith. Caleb is teaching at Yale right now in the English department. Maggie's an attorney down in Little Rock. And I have one grandchild, Van Austin Smith.

[01:14:00] SS: All right. We've been talking a while. Do you need

to take a break, or you wanna keep goin'?

LS: Well, keep goin'.

SS: Okay. Well, then, after you came to Arkansas, what—you were in law school, right? Were there any activities or anything, or were you just [*laughs*] tryin' to get through law school?

LS: Oh, yeah. Well, I did moot court and trial-advocacy type things. But Dr. Carlton Bailey was the—he was over the whole trial advocacy, which is all the classes and getting attorneys to teach particular classes and gettin' the juries, gettin' everything. It was a pretty extensive type of a program he had run. And he always had a trial advocacy coordinator, and that job was open. And I did that my second and third years. While I was at the law school, I will say, my first summer I went and worked at the White House 'cause, you know, you're—after your first year you really don't have enough to be competitive to do other things, so I thought, "Well, let me do summer—sort of an intern-type program, volunteer." So I worked at the White House. [01:15:21] The next summer I split that between the Meiklejohn Civil Liberties Institute in Berkeley, and Caleb, our son, Caleb, was attending school there at the time and so—and he had his girlfriend. They didn't need his apartment at the time, so he let me rent the apartment that he was at. And I split

my time that summer between Meiklejohn Civil Liberties Institute for a month and a half, and then I spent a couple of months at the Arkansas Attorney General's office. And I really wanted to be in the Opinions Division. And they'd never had any opinions—any law clerks in the Opinions Division. But I talked 'em into it. And I was the first one. And I will say to this day I think they still have law clerks in that, so I'm glad that I sort of ushered that in there. [01:16:07] But I—so I was a trial advocacy coordinator with Dr. Carlton Bailey, who helped me run that program. I also—my third year I worked at the Lingle Law Firm. Y'all were really good friends. It was just—and gettin' that law-firm type experience.

[01:16:28] SS: You also clerked for a judge while you were in law school.

LS: Oh, yes! [*Laughs*] I—my second year I also, while I was doin' trial advocacy coordinating job, I worked for Bill Storey, Judge Bill Storey, on the Washington County Circuit Court. So.

SS: All right. So after you graduated with your law degree—and what year was that?

LS: That was 1998.

SS: Okay. You . . .

LS: And after that—well, in 1998, you know, I applied for judicial

clerkships. And so I was applying for one with Judge Richard Sheppard Arnold on the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals, but you had to apply two years earlier, so I had a year. So anyway, I applied, and I got that job for [19]99-2000. He had them in short-term and did a lot of turnover so he could give a lot of people clerkship opportunities. And so I had a year there, and there was an opening on the Arkansas Court of Appeals with John Earl Jennings. And he was used to hiring for longer than that, but he saw I was—"Wow, you're about to go clerk for Judge Richard Arnold." And I have one year, and he said—so I got the job. So I clerked for one year in appellate work, opinion drafting, on the Arkansas Court of Appeals, and then I did a year with Judge Richard Arnold on the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals. [01:18:03] And while I was at the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals, when it was coming to an end there, I didn't know, you know, after that if I'm gonna go into law practice or what. And I applied for the judicial—the United States Supreme Court judicial fellows finalists. And there was a lot of people that applied for that. And I got down into the top six candidates. And I was very happy with that. I wish I would've gotten it, but I didn't make the—you know, after the top six then they break it down, and you get in the—only three. So I was not in the top three on

that one. So then I star—I applied for and got a job at—and so this would've been 2000. But I came back to Fayetteville. And so I wanted to work for a law firm. And I did want to work for a law firm to give me that breadth 'cause I eventually did wanna go back to teaching, and I wanted to really be one of the top in the nation in the field of legal communication and then push our field forward with legal communication. And I think when I was teaching I did do that. But so I wanted some experience working in a law firm. [01:19:14] I was there for two years. We did a lot of, you know, Social Security, disability, you know, your basic—car wrecks and different things. And it wasn't nes—I mean, it didn't bring me the joy. I mean, I loved working for union, you know, working families. I—the type of things that we were doing there, the type of practice, I loved it, and it was good experience for me. But a life of sixty hours a week, essentially, talking with insurance adjustors—I mean, it just wasn't something I wanted for the rest of my life. And so in that second—after a couple of years, Mark Martin's son, Aaron ha— was just gonna be graduating from law school. And I thought, "You know, he hasn't found a job yet. This'd be good for him to work, you know, with his dad and work here." And they didn't have an office or whatever. And so I decided this was a time for

my move. And I applied for and got a—and it was a part time, but it seemed like full time [*laughs*], but I—for a research assistant professorship at the University of Arkansas in the communication department. And so Aaron—so I left there. Aaron started workin' with his dad as an attorney, and that worked out really well. And then I started working at the University of Arkansas teaching. At this point we probably do wanna change the tape.

SS: Okay.

[Tape change]

[01:20:47] SS: [*Clears throat*] We're—you were talking about you just started teaching at the University of Arkansas. Can you talk about those courses and what else you did there?

LS: Yeah. Well—'scuse me. While I was at—when I worked at the University of Arkansas and—teaching in the communication department. And while I was there I also—I learned, again from the *Spectra*, that there was an opportunity to teach in summer. It was a junior statesman program. And so one summer I taught at Yale University. Students—they were high school students that would come into the program to learn, and I was teaching mainly legal communication with those programs. And then another summer I taught at Stanford University. In fact I was

running for office at the time I was teaching at the Yale one, and I was already in office as a state representative when I was at Stanford. And during that time period when I was at the University of Arkansas, that's when I also ran for the state legislature. [01:21:52] The courses I taught at the University of Arkansas—let's see. Political communication and legal communication and culture, politics and popular media, public speaking, interpersonal communication. I did teach, also, at Oxford and Cambridge Universities through the study abroad program you had already developed. And when I say you, this is Stephen Smith, who's doin' the interview. You had already developed a really great programs for students at both—you had, what was it, three-week-long—a week and a half at Cambridge, a week and a half at Oxford. And so at—eventually I would go with you and I would help with the classes, but eventually I would teach the legal communication and cultures class through there. But the University of Arkansas, those were the main classes I would do. Political—legal communication, politics, political communication, interpersonal communication, public-speaking type courses.

[01:23:11] SS: Did you sponsor any university groups during your time there?

LS: You know, you had started back the speech and debate program. And for a little while when you were advising and all, too, but you were the main person there, so a little while I did do some advising. And I did do a lot of coaching. So yes. I did do coaching with that.

SS: Were you involved with any groups in the community outside the university community?

LS: Work-related type activities? Well, I will say—well, we'll say some things I did there were—I did have—I did a lot of publications, so I had like seven top papers. And I would—that's what I really—you know, it's—I got a pretty good bit published and did a lot of conference papers. I got a student award for faculty excellence three years, [19]91, [19]92, and [19]93. I was—in the community I was really big in the Democratic Party and the Washington County Democratic Women. And I became vice president, and then I later was president of that.

SS: All right. So that sort of led you into politics and running for office?

[01:24:42] LS: Yeah, so how did I run?

SS: Or how did . . .

LS: How did I get interested in running for . . .

SS: Yeah.

LS: . . . the ha—the state house?

SS: Yeah.

LS: Okay. Well, when I was president, and I guess this was [19]92 or [19]93 sort of area, time period. Jan Judy was the state representative for this district, which was District 92. And she was gonna be term limited. A few years before, they had passed term limits to the point where you couldn't serve more than three terms or a six-year period in the House of Representatives. So she had been in for a while, as some of 'em had, but they were starting to have to leave right before that new—when I got in. But Jan Judy was term limited. And as, you know, president and workin' with Democrat Party, the thing that we do is we think, "Oh, who's gonna run in our district?" And I remember you and I were upstairs, and we were talking, and I was—you and I were just talkin' about, "Oh, who would be good? Who would be good?" And I remember you said, "What about you?" And I've learned that—and particularly in terms of women—you know, when doing this project on our Arkansas women legislators. And I've read a lot, you know, where people say, you know, when it comes to women and all, a lot of times parties—no matter the party, what they are—or people who are engrained in the party politics and all that, when they're thinkin'

about people to run, they often don't think of a woman. They think of the men. Luckily, there was a woman in this seat. But—and that you had said, "Well, what about you?" But I—things I'd read was that a lot of times women, you know, need to get that recommendation. "Well, why don't you run?" The encouragement to run. But that the parties and others don't necessarily encourage women to run. [01:26:37] I think that's a whole different story now. I think they are doing a lot more. So I was really glad that you said it. And I had never thought about running for office. [Laughs] Any office, let alone, you know, house of representatives. But I thought, "You know, I have a lot I wanna get done, you know, for the state and for my district." And I was teachin' at the university, and education and higher education was really important, and I knew that the University of Arkansas was the biggest employer in the district and—very important, education was very important to the constituency here. That's my background as well as union, working-family values, and that's very big in my background and my family's background and all. And I s—I remember telling you, "You know, there is that workers compensation—there does need to be some changes to the workers compensation law to add neck to the list of compensable injuries for a rapid and

repetitive motion type injury." And the reason that came about was when I was clerking with John Earl Jennings, there was a case that came along where a woman was—had a clear—nobody denied it. It was a clear work injury to her neck. And it was right at, like the seventh vertebrae. It was like right here, but if it was like right there, it would've been compensated, but it was right above that, and so it wouldn't be compensated. Why? Because the Arkansas legislature in the past, when they were puttin' the workers compensation together—laws together, they used the word back rather than spine for these types of injuries that would've been compensated. And by using back, they—it didn't include the neck because the neck and the back make up the spine. And the law should have said spine or neck and back. But I was like, "You know, I r—I can fix that." And that was a labor-type issue. [01:28:40] And so I was like, "That's what I wanna do." And so I did think about, "Well, I wanna do this. I'd be good at this." [Laughs] And so at the time it was gonna be an open seat, but there were also like ten people that—names were out there of these people who would probably be interested in running. And so I went around and asked the people that I thought, you know, were gonna run and all, went and asked them if they were gonna run. It came down a lot of nos to some

of 'em 'cause, you know, if they were gonna run, I'm sure I would back 'em, you know, if their name'd been out there to do it. But you know, a lot of people just say they wanna run or they're different things, but they never do it. And a problem particularly like with the Democratic Party things that would happen would be—or like most parties. You know, there might be somebody, "Oh, well, I think I will. I think I will." And it gets so close to time when people are gonna file that you don't get any good candidates because people are waiting around, you know, for somebody else. And then—and then you don't get a candidate. [01:29:38] And so they—you need to decide early. You gotta have time to work the campaign. So I was—somebody needed to get goin' in 1993 for the race for an open seat that was gonna be in [19]94 'cause the primary, [*laughs*] you know, was spring of [19]94. And so the only person was Ken Kieklak, who was my boss at the Martin Kieklak Law Firm before I went to the university. And he still didn't know. You know, "I don't know. I don't know. I don't know." So it finally got to a point in the year 1993 when I said, "Ken, if you s—you know, I think the decision needs to be made. If you don't know now, are you okay? I'm gonna go ahead and run." And he said, "Yeah. Go ahead and run." You know, 'cause I started seeing

he wasn't gonna run. He never has, you know, run. And so anyway, so I knew, all right. And you—I had the best campaign manager. [01:30:37] I mean, Steve is the best, I think, and everybody'll say this, that anybody who's ever seen in terms of how you run a campaign, just your knowledge and all. And so you're like, "Yeah, let's do it." And so we—so you want me to tell you about the campaign?

SS: Sure.

LS: Okay.

SS: Sure, sure.

[01:30:58] LS: So we got goin'. I was teaching at the university and—two courses a semester. So that gave me the flexibility. I wasn't locked into the office forty days a week. So I will say that that gave me a lot of time to go and be able to go and campaign. And I think—and I learned a lot from you in doin' this, but—what is it Senator David Pryor has always said? "You run unopposed or you run scared." Is that what the saying is? And you know, and it really is true. If you're gonna—it—you know, I think a lot of—now I ended up bein' unopposed. People were like, "Oh, you sure lucked out bein' unopposed. Nobody else wanted to run." You know. Nah. You run a campaign to be unopposed. So starting early. And you and I got on the phone,

and anybody who was in politics, just people you knew—you know, it's like the names. There's like 200. And we got 'em. I mean, Al Witte. We had Vince Chadick. We had Woody Bassett. We had—you know, there was just the list. I think Jan Judy was on there. Marilyn Edwards. There was—and anyway, we had this amazing list of supporters, and it was for an ad that would be in the paper. I think it was a full-page ad, right? And so it was like "Lindsley Smith for state representative, District 92, Democrat"—I had Democrat on everything. You know, I wanted pe—I was a Democrat. I wanted people to know I'm runnin' as a Democrat. You know, a lot of people hide that now. Anyway.

[01:32:35] And the list—no one's ever seen anything like this, you know. And in fact, I think a lot of 'em, they said, "We learned how to do campaigns based off of your campaign." But a lot of people would joke, and they'd say, "Well, there's nobody—anybody who'd think about running or everybody who's votin' is on your list."

SS: Yeah.

LS: And so it really made it. And they said, "You're in."

SS: That was the announcement for your—your invitation for your announcement of your host committee.

LS: Okay. And that wa—they were all the host committee, right,

members. *[Laughs]* Yeah. So yeah, and then we had the—a major announcement was at Gaylord's and then invited people out. One of the things I did with that campaign was—you know, campaign finance was a huge issue, particularly in my district, but nationally it was a big issue. And I wanted to show that you could do some of these practices that they were talkin' about nationally that people needed to do, like not—don't take corporate money. *[Unclear words]*—run it on smaller amounts, you know. And I wanted to show that it could be done.

[01:33:43] So I did not take any corporate money. And I was really proud of, you know, financin' the campaign on individual contributions of \$25 or less. I capped it—nobody could give over 100. And a lot of those seasoned people, you know, like Skip Rutherford and—you know, some were ya—Rudy Moore. Some of 'em were like, "What are you doing? Don't do that!" Or Jim Lingle and—he just like, "Oh my goodness, you're not taking any money." But it was—we were very strategic, too, with wise money management. Not wasting any money, too. So yeah. So we did flyers. In fact, I have one here. So officially this would be like that. So I made sure—you know, Democrat. We've got the legislative issues and concerns, a bold commitment to public and higher education, preserving and

protecting our environment, increased state funding for public libraries, cultural resources, and community heritage, an improved quality of life for working families, accountability, ethics, and fair campaign practices being the major part of the, you know, the platform. [01:34:48] And then there were other issues that come out the more I talked to individuals. And then I had, you know, the—Working Together for Fayetteville's Future was my saying. I guess you call it the campaign slogan. And it—what was interesting was the amount of corporate money that would come in. You know, somebody's gonna run. They saw the writing on the wall, I think, that I was gonna be unopposed or whatever, but they still would send the money 'cause when I filed, it was clearly obvious that I was unopposed. And was—course I didn't go for money after that. But we—you know, what was interesting was they'd still send checks, \$500, \$1,000, \$1,500, \$200.

SS: Who would send checks?

LS: Oh, lobbyists.

SS: Oh.

LS: Like the corporations.

SS: Yeah.

LS: So the corporations would still send money. And of course I had

this standard letter, and I said, you know, "I'm not taking corporate money, et cetera, et cetera." And so a [*laughs*] lot of time went into just returning money. And it started takin' money out of my coffers 'cause I had to, you know, pay to send those back. [01:35:59] I thought it was—I just really loved the moment when I received a lobbyist check—who was it, [*unclear word*], maybe? Anyway, there was a lobbyist check that I had received, and included in it was a env—self-addressed, stamped envelope so that I could return it 'cause they knew. And it was like they had to send it. The employer wanted them to send it, but they knew that I wasn't gonna take it, and I thought, "It made it around." I wanted them to know. You know, and I wanted to go serve in the legislature. I didn't wanna—I wanted to be beholden to none. You know, I just wanted to go in, do good bills, do a lot of work, do the right thing, pass legislation, help my constituents, and be beholden only to my constituents. Doin' the right thing.

[01:36:51] SS: So you were unopposed both in the primary and in the general that year, correct? Right?

LS: Yes. In fact, I was unopposed my first and my third 'cause you know, with term limits I got three terms. So I got in in 2005, and I got—that ended at the end of 2010. And but I did have an

opponent in my second term, a Republican. A student, a law student. Cephus Richard. And he—that was an interesting—it was an interesting campaign. I wish it could've been more professional. You know, like I think he had like this website. And there were a lot of like—there were some lies that were out, or there was also this makeshift website that was on. It was like—he had some like students at the university, and they would—it was almost like they were running a student government campaign. I heard from a lot of constituents when I had my signs out that signs were being steal—stolen from their yards and—which is a crime. I mean it—you know, so a lot of sign stealing, a lot of really odd things happened that race. But I just said, "No, I'm just gonna campaign. I'm gonna do door-to-door." And so—and it was different, you know, having the opponent as—and not having an opponent, but I won by 73 percent. And I worked really hard. I mean, you and I—well, I had, you know, the campaign flyers. I had the campaign signs. And I used the same th—you know, we made a lot in the beginning. And then I—environment, you know, was one of my platform issues as well, and so reusing the same things were very important. So we used the same signs, you know, each time. [01:38:43] And—which I hated some of 'em getting

stolen, but, you know. But then I was unopposed my third term, so I didn't have to have out as many. But you and I—also I thought it was—I learned a lot from you on this was strategic placement of signs. So a lot of times what happens is candidates will talk to their par—they'll say, "Go get your sign. Go get a sign and put it in your yard. I have 'em down at the headquarters," you know, and have people—so people will go pick 'em up and, you know, you don't know. They're out in cul-de-sacs, they're, you know, out of your district. I mean, it wasn't that . . .

SS: Trunk of their car.

LS: Trunk of their car. [*Laughter*] Or some of 'em, yeah, are on the carports. You'd see people's signs. It didn't get 'em out there. [01:39:32] But this was your brilliant idea. We created a list in case—and when I'd go door to door, and if I saw a place—this is where a sign would be—I would ask, "Hey, can I put a sign in your yard?" you know. We chose the 200 like best spots, I mean, when they were there. And we did it in a way where it looked like there were a lot more than there actually were. And I used union printers, so union bugs on everything that we had. And I think—still think that that's important. And when I'm advising anybody when they're running for office, I always make

sure I say, "Use a union printer." But we had the signs. You had to put 'em all together and everything. We had 'em in the car in the back seat and the trunk. We created this list of where the signs need to go, and then you had it split up in terms of locations. And you and I, in one night, we got in the car. We had all the signs—all these signs in the car. You drove 'cause you're better at directions than me. [01:40:37] You drove, I had the list, you had 'em in order of where they were. I would read down the list where we'd go. All right, there it is. You'd stop, I'd hop out because the—well, we'd asked the people, "Can I put on in your yard?" So we already had the list based on when people gave us permission as where we're gonna put them, but it was that night that we went out and put them in those locations. One of the best ones, I thought—you had some students from your class who had a house up here where the . . .

SS: Phi Delts?

LS: The Phi Delts, the students. Phi Delt alumni. But there were some Phi Delts.

SS: Kevin Stroud was.

LS: Kevin Stroud. Oh, yes. And so the way our post office works is you come in one end and it rotates like a horseshoe, and you

come out. And everybody has to come out this one point. And that's right where they were livin'. So everybody in the district who was goin' to the post office, they were comin' out and they—we had two signs. You know, and then they would see my signs there. But we got them. And it was really fun, wasn't it? And so you would stop, I would hop out, put the yard sign in. Then we'd get back in. "Okay, where's the next spot?" You'd say it. You would go. I would hop out. And then I heard from so many people. They're like, "Your signs are everywhere all of a sudden. Just"—you know. [01:41:58] And when I advise people—you know, when they ask my advice about runnin' for campaigns, that's the strategy I tell 'em to use. It worked well for me, and it'll work well for everybody. It worked really well. So we were real good with the money. We always had extra money, and we didn't try for more than we need, but it was smart thinking in terms of the campaign. Also doin' a website. We would do the photos ourself and all. And I remember you're like, "We need a picture of the university" or something, and I would say, "I'll be right back." So I got my camera up there. And a lot people take a picture of Old Main, you know, straight on. I did this neat side shot, you know, that we used on the website on the part where we're talkin' about higher education

as one of the priorities on the website. And I've seen people use that shot. It was a really great perspective to use.

SS: I . . .

LS: And we went to the capitol. That's the first time I'd been to the capitol, actually, when we went down there. And I met—it was during a session. And I met Marilyn Edwards and got a picture with her and—anyway, we took some pictures while we were down there and put those up on the website and different places.

[01:43:09] SS: You were talkin' about your fundraising. You actually . . .

LS: Oh yeah.

SS: . . . turned down contributions at one time I remember. The senior Democrats.

LS: Well, I think it was 'cause some people wanted to give more than \$100. I said, "No, no, no. You reached your maximum." But once I reached a point where I was unopposed, like particularly in my third term where I didn't have it—I didn't have that. What are . . .

SS: I think it was in your second term, I believe . . .

LS: Oh, okay.

SS: . . . 'cause you weren't—you were opposed, and they passed—or introduced a resolution to give all the candidates certain amount

of money, and you said, "I've already met my budget. [*Laughs*]
Give it to the other candidates."

LS: I did. I forgot that. Thank you. Wow. That's good of me.

[*Laughs*] Yeah, I did do that.

[01:43:57] SS: Well, do you have any advice for other candidates
plannin' to run for office?

LS: Yeah. In fact, I brought these. You know, I have certain things.
You know, I taught political communication at the university so
that I'd have some things 'cause a lot of people ask me to give
'em advice, particularly if they had like, you know, state races,
or if they were runnin' for state rep or the senate or something.
But sometimes for city office or whatever. So I took it seriously,
and I always say yes. And I would go meet with them. So I'd
talk to 'em about, you know, how to work a room. You know,
like don't get—like some people will wanna like keep you there,
and you won't have any opportune—they'll keep you cornered in
a back, and they might not even live in the state, you know. But
go to a lot of events. Work the room. People are there. They
wanna meet you. They wanna see you. And if somebody wants
more than ten minutes to tell you about what's goin' on or
whatever, say, "Can you stay afterwards? 'Cause I'd like to talk
to you a little bit longer 'cause I do need to go around and say hi

to some people." And they'll say, "Oh yeah," or "Can we meet another time?" And I'm always willin' to do that. But do what you can to go around. And most people just want you to say hello for a little while. I learned that for door knockin', too. You know, you wanna go by—you know, early on I spent a lot of time talkin' with people more. They'd invite you in their house or somethin', but you really don't have the time to spend, [*laughs*] you know. [01:45:20] There was one I got invited in, and I think I was there for probably an hour or something. That was not [*laughs*]*—it was when I just first started off door knockin' and all, and it was—I thought, "Okay, I'll take off in my own neighborhood," and I went up here, and you know, I went to the door, and I hit—and you know, it said—it had this sign above the doorbell that said, "Diane, please come back to me." And I thought, "Oh, okay." Anyway, I rang the doorbell, and this guy opened up, and I think he was—he might have been wearin' a shirt, but I think he was just wearin' his boxer shorts, and so it was like—and he started saying, "Are you soliciting? You can't solic"—I said, "No, no, I was running for—I'm running for office, and I was just gonna ask you for your vote." "Ah-ha. That's soliciting." And all this. Anyway, he wanted somebody to talk to, and I—it was something where I—we started talkin', and then*

he seemed so sad, or there was just—his wife had left him and this and that. Anyway, and so I think I said somethin' about, "Oh, well, I like your house." He goes, "Oh, come inside and look." And I did. And so—I mean, at some point—you know, and he was like showin' me things, and then his roommate—it was like ten in the morning, and his roommate was sittin' there drinking beers on the couch and not—and I'm like—at some point, you're in there in the living room, and he wants to show me in the back room, and I'm like, "This is not a good idea." [Laughs] Anyway, so I said, "Well, I really need to go on." [01:46:45] And there were some others. There was one woman talkin' about her—stuffin' her husband's body or somethin'? I don't know. You do meet some interesting individuals. And I did sit on the stoop with that guy outside his house in his underwear for a little while. But you know, you can't door-to-door knock like that. You gotta hit it and go and leave a flyer. And I would always, you know, leave a flyer, and if they weren't there, "Sorry I missed you. I hope to get your vote, et cetera, et cetera." But you know, when I would advise people, I would get—they would get the benefit of the things I learned what to do and not to do in terms of door knocking. It also made for great discussions in my political communication

class. How to do signs. But these are some things—if they're running for any office, the League of Women Voters, I will say, does this wonderful book on *Government in Arkansas*. I mean, everywhere from what's the state bird to how—what's the functioning of the three branches of government in Arkansas. How do they pass a bill? County boards, city councils, major state agencies, internal functioning, the lieutenant governor, the governor's office, the secretary of state, apportionments, sessions, qualifications, the constitution of 1874. This—I tell them all, "Get this." [01:48:04] And in fact, early on—'cause I had a copy when I was runnin', and because I was unopposed, I bought every book you could get that was out there, you know, on bein' a state representative workin' in legislative councils and—I mean, government. And I got a copy of theirs. Well, when I was a legislator, I would go around, and I talked to a lot of groups about how to run to office, too, and I encouraged women in particular to run for office. And it—I talked to them so much about gettin' this book and everything, and it was so outdated the state League of Women Voters said, "We gotta update our book and get out another one." So this is the one—this is the new one that they got out. If they're running for like the senate—if they're running for the state legislature, I tell 'em,

"You have to get this. It's *There Oughta Be a Law!*" And it's what we received when we go down right before we're gonna serve, they do a whole, week-long orientation session, and the staff and the agencies. They are amazing at doin' that orientation. That helped me greatly. [01:49:13] And anyway, they have this on the website now. And so I give them where to get that. And so I advise my—you know, how to work a room, how to do sign placement. To be nice. To—you know, a lot of people will vote for you 'cause they like you. And I tell them that, you know. Go to events. You know, and bring something, you know. If there's a potluck or something, don't just go to be served, go to serve. Don't go to be served. You know. But bring a bucket of chicken or something. They love that, you know. So yes, I would—yeah, I would advise a lot of people, and those are some of the things that I would tell 'em to do.

[01:50:01] SS: You said you encouraged women to run. Do you think there's a need for more women in legislature, or does it make any difference?

LS: Oh. Oh. I think it—yes and yes. Arkansas is still in the low percentage in terms of women who serve. But I will say when term limits were ushered in, that was one of the best things to get more women in. When I was—I was lucky with my first term

in. One of the best parts was serving with some veteran legislators who were there. You know, the Joyce Elliotts, the Linda Chesterfields, or the Jim Argues. Jodie Mahony. Jay Bradford. Sam Ledbetter. That was a huge benefit. And I hated losing them. But you know, when our class came in, it was like a third of the house turnover. And the next year it was anticipated, and I think it came to fruition, that was another third. Because that—I got to be in in that first term that I had with the seasoned ones while the new ones were coming in. And there were more women there, but we were still—the percentages were low, and there were probably more serving—well. After that about—what was that? Probably most had served when I was maybe in my third term, but now there's not as many, but it's—in Arkansas it's still low. But I think we need more women in there. [01:51:36] I think we need the diversity. There are some bills that some men just won't do. The Women's Caucus was so valuable. I found it hugely valuable in that, you know, I remember some of the women legislators the—there's a—from the hospital. They were talking to us about these—birthing mothers. The best thing that they can do if they—is to give the breast milk to their baby. But they had to make money. They had to go immediately back to work,

and the problem with work was, you know, to keep the breast milk going, you have to pump during the day at different times, but employers didn't—the only place they had was in a toilet stall. You know, it wasn't a sanitary spot—area. So they asked us if we'd do legislation that would require an unpaid time period that women could express their milk at work. Just, you know, a break, you know, and a sanitary location, an office or somewhere where they could do it, you know, where it'd be the healthiest. Then they could have the milk for their child when they got home and everything. [01:52:48] Which we did pass. But I remember somebody had said, you know, "Men won't do bills like this." And somebody had said—and I was like, "Well, why?" It's like, "They're embarrassed to talk about women's breasts and things like that." And so I thought that interesting. And I didn't fi—I couldn't see any evidence that that wasn't the case of what I was being told at the time. But I think the Women's Caucus was necessary to bring forth some of those. [01:53:15] Which brings us to the point of, "Are more women needed?", and I think yeah, to bring certain legislation that Arkansas needs. Yeah. Or other states need that to provide that diversity of thought and action. And I tell you, there were some hard-working men, but I pick up—every woman legislator I

saw was hard workin'. You know. When the day's events were over, you saw a bunch of women—and then I'd see like Rick Green and Steve Harrelson, and there would be a few men. But we were still in there. We were waiting for the bill list to come that the staff got ready, which usually didn't come till about five o'clock or whatever. But you know, I think a lot of the women—they don't go down there for those expensive shrimp dinners or partyin' at night and things like that. They're amazingly hard workers and gettin' it done. I was very impressed with the women. And I think Arkansas, yeah, of course needs more diversity in terms of race as well as genders.

[01:54:20] SS: Is there any advice you would give specifically for women running for office?

LS: Well, on that one—you know, 'cause I've talked to—most of the people who've asked my advice on running have been women. But I'll have to say that it's not much different at all than for men. But I do encourage them to run. I do. There was one event—you know, well, actually, there were some various events that I was asked to speak at as—about getting more women in politics, and one of the things I would say is there is a tendency for parties—where most candidates come out of, really, running in a particular party if you're Democrat or Republican—that

they're not gonna ask you as a woman. They might not think of you. You're not gonna be on the first list, so you're gonna have to decide. So to empower themselves more, don't wait. That's one of the biggest things I'd tell 'em. Don't wait to be asked. Or don't wait to have somebody say if it's a good idea. If you wanna do it, just do it.

[01:55:24] SS: You said earlier that your first trip to the capitol was when you were takin' campaign pictures.

LS: Yeah.

SS: What was your first day like after you were elected?

LS: Oh. My first day was—oh, it was exciting. That was the pomp-and-circumstance day. It was the day before the governor gives the State of the State and then the committees start meeting. But the first day you're able to invite family there. All the reporters are there, and the press did like to interview me. Even before the session started, I was in a lot of the articles, and during orientation I was—you know, my picture was in there and all. So I liked talking to the press then. But I think the best part about it—I was just—I was really proud of myself. And I remember you helped me put my car tag on in the parking lot and that we took a picture of it. And I had a place right next to where you come out at the front. It was a really prime spot.

But my brother and his girlfriend, Munn and his girlfriend at the time, Angie, they came up for it, and that meant a lot to me to have some of those Armstrongs—an Armstrong there.

[01:56:36] And my friend from grade school, high school, Melinda Shelton, sort of my best girlfriend—she still lives in Birmingham, Alabama. She came up to see me sworn in. And my dear husband, you were there. And since you were a ex-legislator, you were able to stand in the back on the floor of the chamber rather than have to be up in the gallery, so I remember you were back there, and they had the carnations for us. And it was a special day.

[01:57:11] SS: Good. Were there anything serving in the legislature your first time that you found surprising or interesting or . . .

LS: Like the first year?

SS: Yeah.

LS: When I got . . .

SS: Yeah.

LS: I say the first year was my absolute favorite. And I think—it was something I mentioned before is that I had the benefit of those seasoned legislators who had been in for years. You know, particularly like Jodie Mahony or Sam Ledbetter or Jim Argue, Joyce Elliott, Jay Bradford, Betty Pickett and Janet Johnson. And

Buddy Blair was my seatmate. Buddy sat to the left of me, and then I had Tim Hutchinson was on my right, so I was like, "On my left is Buddy Blair. On my right is Tim Hutchinson."

[*Laughs*] And then right across the little aisle was Jodie Mahoney, and then right behind me was Janet Johnson and then Jay Bradford was right behind me. And so it was a really—I had a great spot, and I sat on the front row. So I heard—you know, you wanna try to get the front row area so you can be recognized if you wanna go down and speak and everything.

[01:58:23] So but it was wonderful doing—with that. I do [*laughs*] remember—you know, I told you before that, you know, when I was in high school I was—the class nominated me as most unpredictable. And I told you at that time, early in the tape that, you know, I saw that come to fruition while I was in there. I'd try to do some shake-up things. Like sometimes when a lobbyist would shake my hand, I would flip it, you know, like I would shake like this, and I'd flip it like that. And there was one lobbyist—I did that, and he was goes, "Uh—uh—right on." [*Laughs*] But I just—you know, there was such a culture, and I liked to sort of shake the culture up in a friendly, fun way.

[01:59:11] But the day we got sworn in, you had gone home and everything, and that night was just the legislators. There

was sort of a dinner party thing. But there were s—it was our opportunity to meet agency heads. And that's where I met Mark Martin. I thought, "Oh my goodness, who is this person?" I really became surprised that he became secretary of state later. I mean, he was somebody I—in my third term, Gregg Reep was up there speakin', and he screams out, "You lie." You know, sort of the ferocious—seeing things happening bad. So I mean, there was some odd thing—like second term, just some of the meanness or backstabbing or some—some of that were comin' in were—I don't know, it was more negative second and third term. There was just so much happiness and fun. And we all worked together so well. And we were all there to get a job done, you know, in the first term. But anyway. [02:00:12] I member bein' at this dinner with—and I was standing there, and the workers compensation commission—I guess you'd call him chair was there. And then somehow it ended up him, Mark Martin, and me. And we were standin' there talkin', and I was meetin' kinda like both of 'em and all. And then the workers comp guy walked away and said, "Well, it was good meetin' y'all." And Mark looked at me and goes, "Well, he's wearing a wedding ring, but he sure looks gay." And I just—and at that point, I was just like—it was just a different world to me. I mean, some of the

things that were said by—not just that. I mean, at different times. It was like, "Wow, that was just bizarre." And I might have called him out on it, but I don't remember what I said. But I do remember later talkin' to the workers compensation commissioner. I went back and talked with him. But actually he came up to me later in the night, and he goes—'cause my bill got sent to insurance and commerce. The workers compensation bill. That's the first bill I filed. Remember when I thought about runnin', I thought, "I'm gonna do that bill."

[02:01:17] And so I—he came up, and he goes, "I see your bill's the first one up tomorrow mornin'." And I thought, "Oh, thank you very much. Where's that posted?" or whatever. And he goes, "Oh, they're online and everything." And so I said, "Okay, thanks." And I remember I sort of skedaddled out of there early and everything 'cause I thought, "Oh my goodness! My bill's up first in the mornin'. I'm not prepared, and I need to go"—so I didn't know at the time, you know, they can call the bills and that the person's not—and I also didn't know, you know, the morning is—of the second day after you get sworn in, so the first real day we have—the governor gives the State of the State Address, and then the committees meetings meet in the afternoon, but I didn't know at that time that nobody really

runs a bill. Nobody runs a bill on the first day. They just say, "Here are the people. Get to know each other. Do certain things." And so anyway, I stayed up probably till three thirty in the morning preparing my presentation, you know, for what I thought you were supposed to do, you know. And so I think I surprise—I was unpredictable. I surprised a lot of people by jumpin' up to go give my speech. [02:02:32] And I remember I didn't know enough that I needed to talk to somebody about gettin' a do-pass motion. So I remember I went to Representative Chris Thomason beforehand, before the committees met. It was after the State of the State, and anyway, I went up to him, and I told him about my bill and everything, and he goes, "Oh, well, that—yeah, that sounds good." I said, "Well, I'm gonna present it today. Would you do a do-pass motion for me?" [*Laughs*] And he goes, "Oh. Yeah—have you talked to"—he goes, "Do you have the other committee members?" You know, meaning—he meant workin' 'em. I said, "I got 'em in my pocket." He goes, "Oh, really?" And I reached into my pocket, and I pulled out these cards with these faces on 'em 'cause I had every committee member, and I had their picture because before I went down to the legislature, I wanted to know every house member's name and what they looked like,

you know, right from day one. And so the Arkansas counties did this big calendar, and they had these little pictures of people. And so like a couple of months before the legislature started, I cut these up into like little cards. And I literally would—it was like this thing. And I knew the people's names I knew. Here are the ones I didn't, and I had a stack over here, and the ones I would wor—so I—when I got down there, I knew everybody. [Laughs] And but it was funny 'cause I was tellin' Chris, "Yeah, I got 'em right here." You know. Anyway, he laughed, and I meant it as a joke. [02:03:56] But anyway, I went in there, and I presented it, and it just surprised like the Chamber of Commerce and others because—see the thing is, I tried to get union support for that bill. I'll go back just a little bit and say on the neck bill—you can file a bill before you're sworn in as a legislator, like a month ahead. So I had that bill, had it prepared and all. And bein' an attorney I think it helped me, and I worked with staff and everything to get that bill filed. And it was a very simple—like almost one sentence one. I was just adding the neck in, and it's along with the back. And so I had it pre-filed, and that's why it was the tenth bill filed for the session. That's why it was coming up in that committee as number one. So anyway, I got—when I got in there, I went in to deliver that bill

in that committee. I wasn't on that committee, you know, I just went in. And I remember—I did a great job, too, you know. And I remember Joyce Elliott was tryin' to have—"Is this somethin' maybe—maybe we didn't do this right the first time we passed this and everything, and this is just to improve that," and I was like, "Yes," you know. [02:05:15] But the—but beforehand, before the session, I went to the AFL-CIO and pitched the bill, and they were just—I was surprised not to get the support because this is a union bill. This is a bill to help the workers and workers compensation. But I wasn't as familiar with the apparent blood bath that they had with workers compensation like a decade before or whatever and the—how you really can't do anymore workers comp because they all—the labor and chamber have already worked it out. And I thought, "Well, that's really odd. So you lobbyist people were tellin' government and legislators they can't do a bill?" I taught political communication, and I had my League of Women Voters book, and I knew that wasn't right. [*Laughs*] Anyway, so they said, "You need to go talk to the chamber." So what I do? I go over to the chamber that day. And I met with 'em, and I told 'em about it, and they were just like, "Weh, eh," so they knew it was comin'. And I knew they knew to get into insurance

commerce to kill it, but you know, rather than public health, you know, which I really wanted it to get in. Anyway, so they were all surprised that I had jumped up that day and had it, and they were—you know, and they did their, "Oh, we're opposed to this. Oh, we're opposed to this." But they couldn't answer any questions 'cause they couldn't say why they were. So it really got them off edge. [02:06:47] But I did hear from the head of the legislative research. Afterwards he goes, "That's one of the best committee presentations I've ever heard." And it was really nice, you know, hearing that. But I spent that session tryin' to get it passed. It was—the chamber knew I was unpredictable at that time, and I would play with 'em. I remember one day there was—durin' the session, it was like into the second and a half month, and I was like out of my committee early or somethin'. I didn't have anything to do, and I thought, "Oh, I'm gonna go down to insurance and commerce, make 'em think I'm gonna be—surprise 'em." So I took a bunch of papers and things. I had a stack of about like this. And I got in the elevator, and I went down, and I started goin' to the committee room with [laughs] a bunch of papers like this, and the chamber lobbyist guy—he was like, "What? Whe—woo—where you goin'? Where are you goin'?" I said, "I'm goin' in here." And it just freaked

him out. [02:07:47] But I worked that, and I think I scared 'em some, but I tell you what, by the end of that session, I had AFL-CIO president on my right hand side, and I had the chamber lobbyist person on my left hand side. We had negotiated somethin' where I had put in "neck, back, and spine," and so I'd gave 'em something by takin' out spine. So it just had the neck and back, which was the same thing. It's like, "Oh yeah, I'll give you that." Anyway, and so we were all up there together, and they were both endorsing it saying, "We ask that you support this bill." [02:08:26] Sam Ledbetter came to me afterwards that year. He goes, "How in the world did you get a workers compensation bill passed?" [*Laughs*] I said, "It was a lot of work." But nobody thought you could do it. And I was really proud of that one because there was a belief you can't do workers compensation law. But after that I showed people that you can, and you can pass it. So that first session [*unclear word*]. But I also—Sue Madison and I worked on the ERA, of course, together. I had a—I met a lot of my colleagues by filing legislation for the City of Fayetteville with the towing bill. It was non-consensual towing. It was one of those things where—you know, Mother May I? state, where you have to ask permission to do things if you're like a county or a city because, you know, the

state rules a lot of things. So in terms of towing, there's like one law, and cities weren't allowed to change that. And so I worked with Kit Williams, who's the city attorney in Fayetteville for legislation. They wanted something—there were people coming in. Fayetteville's just so unique with our festivals, with our football games. We're not Dumas. We're not Maumelle. We're not some of these pla—we have—we wanted some more ability for the city to regulate and work with the towing situation, in our case. And there were some people coming in from out of town where they would tow cars they thought were illegally parked or something, even though it was a festival and the city kinda loosened things up or whatever. And they would get a parking lot where they would just get 'em to real fast before they could take 'em out to wherev—an hour away or whatever. [02:10:10] And essentially the police department was just left with a bunch of calls of people having stolen cars 'cause then wouldn't tell—they didn't know where the car went. And then the towing companies weren't telling people 'cause they were also getting money for every day of storage until people could find their car. Anyway, there was a big problem. And Mary—Senator Mary Anne Salmon was also seein' situations in Little Rock area and all where the towing needed to work 'cause she was also doing

some towing-type legislation. And we talked a lot, and I got to know her really big on that. But I would say one of the best organizations with their members and all and lobbying is the towing—Arkansas Towing Association. When that bill—well, when that bill came out in committee, their lobbyist was—Kit was saying something, and he was in the back, and he said something like, "That's a lie!" or something, and they got—he got gaveled down. It was very contentious. I don't think they understood what Kit and the city wanted to do or what the bill was, but it was negative. [02:11:12] They had sent out—they had asked all their towing members, and they were in everybody's district, to write the legislators, so legislators knew Lindsley Smith's bill on towing—oh, boy, it was hard. I had so many legislators come to me and go, "What is this towing bill that you filed?" Anyway, and that's another one I worked with them and saw that they had certain problems with the law that they wanted help with, and they then understood it. And once Kit Williams met with their lobb—I mean, their attorney for the towing association—anyway, and we worked out some really great legislation. That ended up one where they came up, and they endorsed it. And it worked. What was fascinating was after that session was over—because it was. They—it was just

like—everybody's like, "This is the worst leg"—or whatever because they didn't understand it. But after that session was over, I got a letter from the Arkansas Towing Association that was naming me legislator of the year. And they wanted me to come down to Little Rock for their big, huge banquet with all of their Towing Association members and everything to receive this award, and I thought, "Yeah, I'm goin'." And I remember when—the award looked like an Oscar. It was this gold person kinda thing. [*Laughs*] Long—and so I remember when I got there, I said—I grabbed it, and I said, "You like me! You really like me!" like the old Sally Fields Academy Award thing. And they laughed. [02:12:38] And but then I spent the time—this is what I wanna do. I spent the time speaking praising them. I don't think anyone's told them how important their jobs were, and I spent the whole time praising them and telling them. And I told—I said, "You know, there's some woman with her baby in the car on a dark road somewhere, and she's go—she needs your help. But when you come up, she knows there's somebody she can trust. She knows she and her child are safe because you're there to help her. That's what you do. You do more than just tow cars." And I left them valuing their job again. And I don't think people told them that. So that was neat. But

anyway, that first year was really great. Then Sue and I would do the Equal Rights Amendment. We'd started off in different—the first session we both filed it, so we wanted to get the opponents off, particularly the Eagle Forum, without knowin' who was gonna file it first. And then Sue ran it first, ran it real fast, got it to the floor, you know, but by that time they got their ducks in a row to kill it and talk to the legislators. And it was amazing to me how easy it was to convince these rather smart, somewhat, legislators that—they were able to let—make them believe that this was a bill to allow pedophiles to rape children in bathrooms, and it's a walk-in way to get gay marriage.

[02:14:15] And they believed it, you know. It was really was amaze—that was what killed it on the floor there. But we did—but Sue doin' it that way, get it in, goin' fast, gettin' out of committee and goin' fast, you know—it was the closest it's been. By that time it was like the seventh time we've tried in Arkansas to get it in there. The next term, in my second year, we determined the ERA—it was set to pass in the house. We had the number of votes in the committee and the floor. We worked it. We got—I mean, there were so many. There were more than enough vo—people. I mean, a massive number of people had cosponsored it, okay, on both sides. But we knew we had

enough to pass it on the floor of the house, but the committee was gonna be tough because very conservative Democrats we knew, some of 'em, you know, they were fallin' for this bathroom stuff and all this stuff. They knew it would be hard to get them. But by the time of that committee meeting in 2007—and I had Senator David Pryor come to speak, Joyce Elliott spoke, Treasurer Martha Shoffner. There were some really great speakers. And Senator Pryor was in Congress when they passed it out to the states to ratify. [02:15:38] We were—anyway, I had all the votes, and Pam Adcock was a little shaky like the day before 'cause she was a yes vote. She goes, "Well, I talked to my husband on this. You know, I'm not—I don't want—if this is get—turned over by gay marriage, I don't want—I'm not gonna vote for this. I'm not have"—and I said, "Pam, I'm an attorney, and I've looked at—gay marriage is gonna go without the ERA and before it, but I—as an attorney I'm not seeing where that's gonna happen." Anyway, when I finished talking to her, she goes, "Okay, I'm still a yes. I'm still good." And then I remember Lance Reynolds the day before. See, I didn't know at the time the Republican floor leader was working people to vote against us, so that's what he was doing. Anyway, so Lance Reynolds had come. He said he wanted his name taken off it,

and I said, "I'll—if you want your name taken off, I'll do that." And I knew that would be just horrible for a bill right before you're doin' it, and I'm gonna have to present that as an amendment in the committee. Anyway, I was talkin' to him, and I said, "I'll take you off, but let me tell you—and I don't want a lot of people—I don't want anybody to know this because I don't want him attacked"—'cause I knew—that second term there was contentious—there was meanness. There were some—I didn't want him being attacked. So anyway, I told Lance Reynolds, a Democrat, who took Bill Stovall's spot, unbelievably, 'cause Bill was a big ERA supporter. Wish I had his vote. Anyway, so I said, "Senator Pryor, David Pryor's gonna be speaking, and it's gonna be this and that," and I says, "Are you sure of your no?" He goes, "Okay. Oh, keep me on. Keep me on. All right." And then he left. [02:17:28] I find out the next morning that the Republican floor leader had gotten twenty Democrats and one Republican to get their name off of it. They didn't come to me to do the—anyway, and they had allowed him to prepare an amendment that he presented right before the session. And Phyllis Schlafly was there that day and all the Eagle Forum ladies. And so he presented that, and we start off takin' it off, you know. But I thought I still had the votes. But something

happened, and it was gonna pass that time, but something happened. Pam Adcock changed her vote at the last minute, and we had ten votes instead of eleven. And that was the session it would've passed for Arkansas. It was a punch in the gut. And just the secrecy and sort of the meanness. Those were some of the things that's the hardest. My biggest challenges was hard—was dealing with individuals who would go back on things, or if they would be mean. I remember Bill Pritchard was mean. [*Laughs*] Or there was just some meanness or some bad things. Those were my biggest challenges.

[02:18:43] SS: Okay. You've talked about a lot of the issues. Are there any other issues or legislation that you were most pleased about or even some that . . .

LS: Yeah.

SS: . . . didn't pass.

LS: Well, the ERA. You know, I did that three terms. That's probably what I'm most known for. In fact, I have this wonderful ERA bracelet that was given to me by Marjorie Rudolph. Marjorie was somebody who did a fundraiser for me early on, her and Leighton. But when she passed away, her family thought she would want me to have this, and so she gave

me her old 1970s—'cause she fought for the ERA, and she was really happy what I was doin'. [02:19:22] And the neck bill. There were some other labor bills. Unused sick leave compensation being given at retirement for higher-ed classified employees. I believe it was the American association of— AFSCME. American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, of which I was a member. I believe that was their legislation. I also did a couple of bills for department of Workforce Services, the Training Trust Fund, developed that, and the Unemployment Insurance Administration Fund, developed that for them. And also some legislation improving the efficiency of the Department of Labor. So there was, you know, open government, again, was one of my platform issues, and I was probably the strongest supporter of the Freedom of Information Act in there, and I did some Freedom of Information Act. One of them was—there was a case that happened in Fort Smith, an enforcement of a Freedom of Information Act case, but they can be expensive, so this was legislation to allow those plaintiffs who prevail in FOIA cases, when they're requiring the government to do something, to be reimbursed their expenses. And also the slap suits bill, which was strategic lawsuits against public participation. I passed legislation in order to help that. It was

individuals who are harmed from being—from speaking out because corporations or whoever else didn't want them to speak would hit them with a lawsuit that had nothing to do—it was just, "We wanna hurt your family in some way," or it was just these lawsuits that—there needed to be something to get rid of those quickly. And so I passed legislation in order to make it to where there was a speedy determination that a judge could make to determine that those were frivolous. [02:21:26] And that's been extremely helpful. A lot of environmental legislation, like expanding the Arkansas Wetlands Mitigation Bank, net metering law requiring you utility net metering provisions for renewable energy, and establishing the Heritage Trails System. Senator Cecile Bledsoe and I did that legislation. Did a lot of domestic violence legislation when I was there. My first term, Jay Martin—it was his last term. And he had said—he did a lot of domestic violence with the Arkansas Coalition Against Domestic Violence, a lot of their legislation. And so when he was leaving, he was asked to find some of the new legislators comin' in who could champion that. And he told them, "Dawn Creekmore and Lindsley Smith." And so Dawn and I picked up for those three years—three—sorry, six years of three terms that we were in doing a lot of domestic violence legislation for them as well as

protecting women's health. I mentioned before about the expressing breast milk in a workplace and providing safe, unpaid break, ability to do that. [02:22:39] But another one was requiring health insurance policies to cover prescriptions for contraceptives. That one got me the [*laughs*] the award from the US Center for Policy Alternatives, a national organization—being a legislator of the month. But that was big, and I think people were—nationally were surprised that that was comin' out of Arkansas, and I think legislation requiring insurance companies to cover prescription contraceptives coming out of Arkansas was like—and it came from Arkansas. I think other states were able to say, "Even Arkansas"—you know, I think that helped a lot of other states be able to pass that. [02:23:20] I will say in terms of the net metering bill, Jan Judy, who was in the slot before me, she had passed just sort of the base net metering law to allow people to use the renewable energy. Bill Ball, who was in Little Rock, was—he had a business with that, but he was very supportive sort of environmental—he worked with Sierra Club and others to try to get that going. But it needed teeth. It needed more to it. And that was also considered a controversial bill or whatever. And the utilities didn't want that and all, and we had to work. And I just work,

work, work, work, work, work, work, work real hard. But I passed it. And it wasn't really going to pass, but what happened was I got it out of the house. It got over to the senate. It kept gettin' killed there 'cause all the utilities came together in not wanting it and stuff. It came down to the last day of the session, and I had talked to Senator Shane Broadway about if he'd just do it for me. So got there early, and I was in my little hose and high heels, and Bill Ball was sittin' next to me. And again, I had whatever I could put in my lap. Massive amount of like things ready to go, you know. [Laughs] The visual elements, you know, really got these lobbyists off a little bit. But I was sittin' there ready to go and all. And then they sat—they came over and sat right next to me. And one of 'em stuck his leg out and says, "We're gonna stop you from goin'," or somethin'. It was just actin' really goofy. [02:24:48] And then some of 'em were like, "How bout we take you out to lunch afterwards. This is the last day—blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." And it's like, "Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha." And I just said, "Ha, ha, ha." Anyway, I sat there during the meeting and everything and all that. And then the gavel hit, and the committee was over for the session. And we got up, and they were like, "Oh! You didn't run your bill? You didn't. Oh, well, hey, why don't we go out for lunch? I mean,

oh, well, I thought you were gonna do it," or whatever. I said, "Oh, it passed. Senator Broadway just presented it up there." [Laughs] And they were just—'cause they didn't follow it 'cause I had 'em. I had 'em like lookin' the other way. Again, most unpredictable. [Laughs] But I have a lot of really good legislation that I enjoyed working with. [02:25:37] Everybody. You know, I think it's important to have a good attitude. One thing I thought—I was friendly, I had a good attitude, and I worked with both parties really well. In fact, two of my best friends down there were Republicans, Rick Green and Beverly Pyle. I think I really was attracted to Beverly Pyle 'cause she may—she had a beehive hairstyle like my mom had, and she had similar voice and facial characteristics. She kinda reminded me of my mom, even though, you know, she's just a few years older than me, but I don't know. We just really hit it off as friends.

[02:26:09] SS: It's—you talked about some work in committees earlier.

LS: Oh yeah.

SS: What committees were you on, and did you—what . . .

LS: Yeah. Three—and I had to—'cause I also talked about which ones I chaired so I can remember. Actually three—all three terms I did Joint Performance Review. And the first and second

term, I did Agriculture, Forestry and Economic Development. Joint Performance Review, I loved that because tho—that was one—I wanted to be like Jodie Mahony, too. You know, he didn't wanna chair a committee. He didn't want—he wanted to have the freedom to do legislation, do bills, and not get stuck in a chair, you know. He wanted to do that. And I thought, "God, that's really brilliant." But Joint Performance Review met, you know, in off-session time periods. And so with that one I was vice chair my second term, and then I chaired Joint Performance Review on my third term. [02:27:06] Agriculture, Forestry and Economic Development—Sandra Prater and I were the only two women on there. And I—it was interesting because we both figured out that that's a novelty. We like—there weren't many women who had apparently been there in the past. And there were some differences, maybe, of not being recognized like some of the men. Or I—you know, you can't describe it, you know, when there's—but you know there's a difference or there's something. But she and I really worked on the Women in Government—I mean, sorry, Women in Agriculture, which is—Jennie Popp up at the University of Arkansas's really involved with that, and I think she was head at the time. There's a lot—getting more women in agriculture and the problems that occur.

So I mean, women weren't able to have a credit card in their own name until the 1980s. And the problems that women have that were so unequal in society, but having to have credit, having to have—you know, to not lose your farm. But there were a lot of issues that were particular to women that needed to have some changes. And she and I would, you know, work with them. And we would win awards through them from doing that. But I served on that committee my second and my third. [02:28:18] So Public Transportation was one I had as my—the third one my first term. I got in when, also—Third District, Northwest Arkansas, we had turned red. I mean, you know, I didn't have much seniority, and even if you had the seniority, it was all Republicans. What were there, like two or three of us that were Democrats at the time? So you really didn't have your pick on committees. So I had Public Transportation, but a second term I got off Public Transportation. I was able to get Revenue and Taxation Committee, and I did work on some legislation with that. And I had—my first term I also chaired the Substance Abuse Treatment Services task force. I chaired the house Public Transportation-Rail and Mass Transit subcommittee. And so at the university they were really tryin' to get going on more mass transit here, and so I had a lot of committee

meetings on that. And I was vice chair of the JPR Administrative Procedures Act Subcommittee. Second term I was vice chair again of JPR. And then I was also on Legislative Joint Auditing Committee my second and my third terms. And then my second term, I was so thankful to be on the Taskforce for the Study of the Homeless. And I learned so much. And the reports we did and the things—and I went out to the homeless shelters to meet and talk with people, and that was important. I think we did a lot of good. And I worked a lot with like state agencies and all to try to help particular situations that were goin' on there.

[02:29:51] So I did a lot of work on the side with that committee. And then my third term I was able to finally have a lo—enough seniority I got State Agencies and Government Affairs because I knew the ERA would always go to that committee, and maybe me being on it could help finally pass it before I get outta here. And I remember at the time there were, you know—when I won in—well, I got on Judiciary. I was on the Judiciary committee my third term, too. And I tell you, I hung onto both of those. Those are the ones I wanted, and I used what seniority I had in my third term and all to get those. And I remember some would come up to me—and I forgot some of their names now, purged them—but they were tryin' to bully me

off. I really got bullied, and I just stayed strong. I was like, "No. No. No." 'Cause I knew from my League of Women Voters handbook that I could [*laughs*] get it, and I could stay on it.

[02:30:50] SS: You talked a little bit about, you know, being effective in committee and [*unclear words*] committees. Is there a difference between the way you approach things in a bill in committee and . . .

LS: Yeah.

SS: . . . on the floor?

LS: Yeah. The committee—yeah, it's—you know, do your research, anticipate your questions. You're gonna get a lot more questions. It's much more causal. You're sitting down, and the people are around you, and they can just—lotta hands, et cetera. On the floor it is much more formal. Keep it short. I member one—I always liked—I always started with, "Honorable members of the Arkansas General Assembly, Mr. Speaker." And I wanted to do—you know, I was trained in classical rhetoric, and so I liked to try to pull some of that in. But you know, debate and dialogue, you know, those are things that I learned aren't desired there, and it amazed me. You know, I was in a committee meeting once, and I was tryin' to—I'd spent a couple of years, and I was tryin' to figure out what's goin' on? I

thought there'd be more debate and dialogue and all. But the thing was—they say if you wanna pass a bill, get in there and just say somethin' like, "This is a good bill," ask for a good vote, and leave. But don't talk about it much. If you talk about it, it's controversial, you know. [02:32:00] And I was in a committee meeting and there were—and that's where I figured this out. And I was sittin' there, and this person had gotten like two questions. And there was—might've been Senator Malone but—or somebody said—and maybe it was Senator Malone who said to the person, goes, "You know, you thought this was gonna be non-controversial, didn't you?" He said, "But you're gettin' questions." And I thought, "Oh, my." And it just like all this tryin' to figure out from a communication professor standpoint what was goin' on. I thought, "I get it." And there was one time—you know, I liked to explain because I wanted them to know I had good legislation. I wanted them to know what it was, and so I explained to 'em because in the committee you're able to explore it more. When you get to the floor, you know—and I found out how many legislators don't read the bills. That's what I di—I read the bills, you know, before I [*laughs*] voted on 'em. I was known for that. "She's the legislator who reads her bills." Well, that should be the case for everybody. But I

remember there was one point when I was explain—and Linda Chesterfield. Just love her. You know, there was one point she knew when that moment was, and she was like, "Get outta there." And she knew, and I just sorta like cut it short real quick and said, "Thank you, I ask for a good vote." [*Laughs*] 'Cause she knew, you know, she knew that history there, you know, if you talk—you know, even if you're tryin' to help 'em, even if you're tryin' to give it to 'em, you know. So you keep it short when you're on the floor.

SS: That . . .

[02:33:25] LS: Which can—reminds me I wanna say somethin' about the campaigning question you asked. One thing—and I tell people about, you know, when doing like press conferences and stuff, it's not—doesn't matter who all shows up. And I learned this from you. There was—I was doin' a press conference, and you and I decide—and actually I think this was your idea. We had a football game, and so Robbie Wills is running for Speaker of the House—this is my second term when I was opposed. Marilyn Edwards is up here. Dustin McDaniel who you served with, he loves you, and he's runnin' for attorney general right now—and Jason Willet's comin' up, and they're all comin' up for the baseball—I mean, for the football game. He

goes, "Ask them." So I call and ask 'em if they would come over and just say a few words. And we timed it early in the morning before they went over. Anyway, and nobody showed up. There was one reporter. Kate . . .

SS: Ward.

LS: Kate Ward. Yeah, Kate Ward was there. So and I member lookin' at you, and I was like, "Well, nobody's here. What do we do? Do we just go?" and you say, "No. You have a reporter. It's a press conference." So you put that chair in the middle of the room. You put Kate Ward—she sat down in it, and we all circled her. So I had—I mean, Dustin McDaniel has a phrase that he's used about me a lot, and I love that. He say—he called me the conscience of the legislature. You know, so the moral values. I was always tryin' to do that which was right, that which was good. And Marilyn praised me, and there was—Jason Willet, who was head of the Democratic Party at the time—and he was there, and he really praised me. And then Robbie, Representative Robbie Wills had mentioned that. And Marilyn Edwards, she said, "Yeah, she reads all the bills she's gonna vote on." [02:35:15] You know, and I would. I would stay up—I would stay—I knew—I waited for my list of what were the bills gonna be considered in the committee the next day? Which

were the bills gonna be on the floor? And I didn't go to sleep at night until I knew how I was voting on each one. And I really read them [*unclear words*]. At times I would actually call or email a legislator and say, "Hey, there's a bill I'm not gonna"—like Rick Green. I said, "Rick, I saw this bill. I saw in the newspaper that it's a big thing in your district. I'm voting yes on it, but you're probably a no. Just take a look at it 'cause that's a real big one, and I didn't know if you knew." And he really appreciated that, you know, different parties. And I tried to do the right thing.

SS: So that was—do you think your strength and skills as a legislator?

[02:35:59] LS: Yeah, oh, my strength and skills. I was a hard worker, and I had a good attitude. I think those were two of my biggest strengths. And I filed a really good [*unclear word*] legislation.

[02:36:12] SS: What aspects of your service were the most challenging?

LS: I think what I mentioned before. Most challenging would be people or legislators who you can tru—who would go back on their word for something, like what happened with the ERA, or certain meanness, or there's certain—yeah, things like that

that—and you know, if the challenge came up—I love a challenge. And I can overcome it. But certain things like a personality thing or—I didn't get. Yeah.

SS: A lot of legislators leave legislative service because they're havin' trouble balancing work and family and things. Can you . . .

LS: Yeah.

SS: . . . have any advice for people in public office to do that?

[02:36:56] LS: I get that question some from people who are running for office, and they are—when I would go to the presentations and all, and I think that question is asked a lot more for women than men. But what I do tell them is, you know—'cause it shouldn't matter. But what I tell 'em is make sure your family is on board. And if you're in Little Rock and you're gonna be in the session for, you know, four months, you know, it's a little easier. You get to see your family. But like here, I was three hours away and back and forth. I had to stay in—I stayed in a hotel room down there and—but I would come back on some weekends, and you'd come down there on some weekends. But I tell 'em work hard when you're down there, and when you go back for the weekend, while you'll have some events and other things, really value that time, you know, with your family and all. And you can engrain them in it. Like you

and I had a lot of fun. You helped me a lot. I mean, you would let me know like, "Oh, that"—you know, if there was somethin' in the *Arkansas Times* or if there was something I needed to know about something. I mean, sometimes those bills were worded in a way—I'm like, "I know somethin's goin' on. Somethin's going on." And you would—we would talk and like, "Well, what do you think's—what is this really gonna do? What is this—what the—I don't know, I get—I just got that feelin'," you know. [Laughs] And if I did I would make sure that I sat—reserved some time to go talk to the sponsor the next day and say, "Can you"—but a lot of times the sponsors didn't even read the bills that they're carrying forth. That was a big thing I learned, too, that some lobbyists would find the person who couldn't discuss the bill, you know. [02:38:23] After my first term, a legislator who—I won't say his name, but who I didn't talk to much at all. He came up to me when—the last day of the session and all, and we're all sayin', "Bye, bye," you know. He came up and says, "Lindsley, I just wanna know—I've been watchin' you this session, and you know, you work so hard, you read the bills, and you speak so well on legislation and everything, and you read these bills, and you know what's goin' on." And he said, "I wanna do that more. I'm just a farmer,

and I don't understand a lot of all this. But if they send me back next year, I'm gonna do that. I'm gonna do better." And I said, "Well, thank you." I mean, I've—it really meant a lot to me that he noticed that.

SS: Okay. I've got some more questions, but I'm gonna have to change the tape on this.

LS: Okay.

SS: So let's take a break and then come back and finish up.

LS: Oh, yeah, all right.

SS: Thank you.

[Tape change]

[02:39:16] SS: National legislator of the month. Were there other awards or honors that you got for your legislative service?

LS: For my legislative service? Yeah, that one was for—from the Center for Policy Alternatives. There was the ERA Arkansas [*unclear word*] things—gave me—I got some American Association of University Women awards. The Arkansas Coalition Against Domestic Violence, of course, for carryin' their legislation. The AFSCME, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, each session I got an award, top legislator award, from them. But Arkansas firefighters gave Senator Madison the—they actually gave us a—it was a real

firefighters hat with Smith on it and then the number of the bill that we passed. And I think it was HB-something, 1007 or something, I think 'cause it originated in the house. But that was really great, and I gave that hat—that was an original hat. It had Smith on it. I gave that to my grandson, Van Smith, 'cause he loved firefighters. The Business and Professional Women awards, mainly for sponsoring the ERA 'cause they're the ones that came to me about doing the ERA. Berta Seitz with Business and Professional Women had approached me and Senator Sue Madison before the legislative session, and we went out to Tim's Pizza, and she was tellin' us about it. And I will say I was like with 80 percent of Americans—this is a statistic, essentially—that think the ERA is already in the Constitution. I mean, that's where Sue and I both were like, wait, what? You know, we just didn't know at the time. And then Berta was tellin' us the truth about it and how it hasn't passed. It got out of Congress, but we need three more states, and we've been tryin' in Arkansas. And so that was great, and the Business and Professional Women were a big sponsor of that and helped with the rally that we had in 2007 at the capitol that was huge, and all the constitutional officers, which were at the time Democrat, they all came out and spoke on behalf of it. The Arkansas

Towing Association, which I mentioned, had given me an award. The—I got the 2005 Sierra Club Legislator of the Year award, and I won some other Sierra Club awards. And the Workers Justice Center gave me an award for labor. So and there were some others. Those are main ones.

[02:41:54] SS: Okay. Was there a Women's Caucus one?

LS: Yes. I—that—I mentioned before that it was highly successful, and I got some bills like the breast milk expression bill as well as the contraception insurance coverage one from that. But we met probably just like every other week. We met down in the cafeteria. We bought our own lunch, and we would meet and talk about issues that were important to us as women legislators and, particularly, legislation. And we had some speakers that would come and talk to us about some legislation that needed to be done.

[02:42:33] SS: All right. Among the women legislators, who do you think were the most effective while you were there other than yourself, of course? [*Laughter*]

LS: You know, my—immediately who comes to mind is Joyce Elliott. Representative at the time when I first started with her, and then later Senator. And I'll just briefly mention some things about her. You know, she did bills that people would consider

very controversial. Did a lot of education bills. She was—she knew the government processes. She worked with people so well. She was an effective legislator, and I hate that this term, I think, is her last term 'cause she's gonna be term limited out, so we lose her, which—I served with her one term in the house, and then she went over to the senate. And after she was—after I was out, she started pickin' up the ERA and then tryin' to get it passed. It still hasn't passed in Arkansas. But there was some points where—she worked on the Dream Act, and at the time that was part of the governor's package, Governor Huckabee's package, was the Dream Act, which she—there were a lot of racism. I mean, people had to get—Senator Hank Wilkins, I remember, had to call some people down for it. He just said in one meeting, "I'm not gon—we're not takin' any more of that racist stuff here. We're not—none of that. I'm not gonna hear it in this committee any more." And it was just ugly, and there were meanness. Joyce came up to me one day later, and she said that the FBI had contacted the state police that there was a racist group that has been targeting her. And she showed me some of the things that they had written about her. In fact, I won the American Communication Association Award for a paper that I wrote on, you know, such strategies as like the right wing,

you know—it's sort of like where Trumpism is now. I could see it twenty years ago . . .

SS: Citizen's Council stuff.

LS: . . . starting. Very Citizen council—in my research on Citizen's Council things. [02:44:48] But the state police said, "Representative Elliott, we're gonna be walkin' you to your car every day." And it was—there were serious threats to her health and life. And that was bad. But you know what, Joyce, if she—people tried to give her a bounce or a knock on the floor, she didn't take it. She kept goin' no matter what. She just kept goin'. There was—of course, you know, Linda Chesterfield—I think Representative now Senator Linda Chesterfield—we need somebody like her in there. You know, she doesn't suffer fools easily. I mean, if there was like idiotic things that—people would try to say this bill meant that. She—we need somebody there that would say, "That's just bull." You know, that's what we miss when we lost some of those season—you know, Jim Argue would've said that. You know, Sam Ledbetter would've said—I mean, that—they knew that this stuff of flippin' these bills into some of these horrible meanness things, like the Dream Act meant diseased Mexicans comin' over the border to do—and raped your kids or—I mean, mean, horrible things. But you

know, she would—she was real, you know. And I think they needed that. I mean, she'd be in a committee, and she would just say, "No, you know. We're gettin' off here. We're doin' thi"—and she would keep—she'd keep it real, I think. She was good. [02:46:23] Johnnie Roebuck. She came in—you know, her husband had served for a number of years previously, and he was term limited, and then she came in. And when she came in, she taught everybody how to do a rally, how to get public support for something. And she had a what has been known as a bottle bill, the environmental bill to help recycle the bottles and all. You know, Coca-Cola was a big person went against the bill. A lot of the bottling companies and all, they were just—they didn't want anything to do with that. But she was masterful. She came in. She got all the—there were all these schoolkids holdin' these Crayon-made signs and stuff about save our environment, and there were these great speeches. And I—there must've been 300 people in that rotunda packed in, a lot of 'em, these parents and these kids and all. And just—and what she brought up and how she did it, I was like, "That's a legislator to watch." And I was not wrong. She was an excellent, excellent legislator. And in fact, I supported her for speaker in my third term 'cause she would've been really a great

speaker. I mean, a lot of people said, "No, she's a woman. She can't win." You know, and I heard that from a lot of people. I was on her committee to help her win. And she didn't win, and there were probably some things of—you know, Robert Moore's—I know his mom was somebody big in the party and different things. And I think he had like a father or somebody who was in legislat—there was some kind of good ol' boy thing in the past. And he was good, and he was nice and all that, but she was stellar. And that campaign became contentious and all, but she would've been an amazing speaker. [02:48:16] Joyce—I mean, Janet Johnson and Betty Pickett, I thought they were amazing in working bills. And I member when it was in 2007 when I was workin' the ERA, and they came, and they said, "How many sponsors do you have now?" You know, and they said, "Here, give me that," and they went over to get and try to sign up some more people. Of course that's the session, too, that, you know, some of 'em at the last minute, you know, right at the committee day pulled their names from it. But they did a lot of things on education. And Betty Pickett was kind of a star in terms of education administration type legislation. And there are a lot of people—more lobbyist types or superintendents or ones that didn't want what she had wanted. It might not make

their life as easy as possible. But she was always, I found, right. I thought they were both excellent legislators.

[02:49:09] SS: You mentioned that . . .

LS: Oh, can I add one more? And not in terms of like legislative—but Kathy Webb was a master at campaigning. And during the session she's a really great fundraiser. I mean, she's the first openly gay legislator, and there are a lot people who didn't li—legislators who didn't [*laughs*] like her for that. I mean, there—I remember there was a man who—in my first term she had—oh, no, we were out somewhere, and we were talkin' afterwards, and he said, "I wanna shoot all the gay people." I mean, he was just—I was like—I might've called him on it or whatever. I don't remember, and I should remember, but I think I was probably so dumbfounded, but those were the attitudes. But she came in, and I tell you what, by her second term, that guy and her, they were best friends. But you know, a lot of it, too—she knew how to fundraise. She knew how to get them money for their campaign. She knew what she needed to do. And they were all, "Oh, she's—[*laughs*] she's the puddin'. She's the"—you know. But her campaign—I use—I have copies of her campaign materials, and when I go talk to these people—you know, you asked earlier about any advice for candidates. I always bring

her campaign materials. I said, "This is how it's done." You know, I mean, she would have things—I mean, it was next level. [02:50:35] And she did have a lot of national support. There was some national LGBTQ organizations that helped. But you know, I remember one of the ones was about clean drinking water and all, and it was this little kid's face holdin' a glass of water, clean water, like this, and then it just talked about the issue and all. And it was like each one was like that. I mean, it was great. I use her campaign materials in my classes, too, on political communication about how to do it. She really showed people how to take campaigning in Arkansas to another level.

[02:51:15] SS: You mentioned that somebody said a woman couldn't get elected . . .

LS: Yeah.

SS: . . . speaker. Are there other differences that women experience that men don't in that particular culture?

LS: Oh yeah. You know, a lot of it's just skimmin' on the top, and it—and I think it's kept that way so you can't totally identify it. But I will say there are some obvious ones. And bein' a communication person and nonverbal and all that, I tried to see. I mean, I did not see women sexually harassing men, but I did see men legislators doin' it to women. Or I didn't see—you

know, just how women were treated. Maybe they weren't invited to certain back rooms or—well. [*Laughs*] Or they—or to different events or to different thi—there was somethin'—there was a difference. And it just took me like in my second week there, and Tim Hutchinson, a Republican legislator—you know his dad was in—Big Tim was in congress for a while, and his uncle's Asa Hutchinson, our governor, right now. But there was at one point when I was noticing—'cause in there, you know, a lot of times, you know, even during the session goin' on, you'd have some legislators readin' the newspaper or sometimes they'd talk to each other or whatever, but it wasn't noticeable too much. But when a woman got down to speak, you could hear the volu—and I—this when I was sittin' on the front row. You could hear the volume as if "We're not paying attention." But it was only when a woman walked down. And so I knew Joyce Elliott was coming up, and I thought, "If anybody's not gonna have that happen to her—I mean, if it's gonna—they're gonna listen to Joyce Elliott." But I leaned over to Tim, and I said, "I don't th"—I told him what I had noticed, and I said, you know, "Let's see if it happens here." And Joyce went down, and then you heard—and he goes, "Oh, my." I mean, he didn't know. And he was glad that I made that aware to him, but then

he said, "You're right." And then he noticed it after that.

[02:53:29] There are times, you know—I mean, I think I might have been a target for some for flirting or something, and I—I'm—*[laughs]* I have a large chest, and I think that made some of the yahoos maybe be more flirty. I don't know. I try to keep everything very objective and all. But I member once I was looking in the back—the quiet room, and the men's restroom was right here, and I was looking in. And then somebody—I won't say his name, you know, but he pinched my butt. And I thought—I g—I said, "Don't do th—what're you doin' that for?" I just thought that was—who does that, you know? *[Laughs]* It was just like, you know—I don't know. You know, that or just the flirty things or the—I mean, I stayed in a hotel room when I had the opportunity to stay at the apartments, the legislative apartments near the capitol, which would've been a great experience, but honestly I didn't wanna have late-night knocks on the door, and I knew that that would probably happen. I just didn't wanna go there, I mean—but I knew how to handle 'em. A lot of 'em were yahoos. A lot of 'em were just goofy kinda thing. [02:54:43] So there were some that didn't need to go on, some sexual harassment things. I member there was—you know, and some of the legislators—like we would have Women's

Caucus meetings. Sometimes we'd talk about that or whatever, but—there was only one time it really got to me. It was in 2007 when I was doin' the ERA, and I—and I was in the kitchen, and we were about to start the session and stuff, and he was there, and I thought, "Oh, this is my opportunity. I'm gonna pitch the ERA to him." And he was talkin'. I was pitchin' it to him, and somehow I—and I don't know how it happened, but somehow I was like back up against the wall near the—there was a refrigerator over here, and I was like against the wall, and he was like, "Well, Lindsley, you know—my wife's a member of the Eagle Forum. You know I can't vote for that. She won't allow me." And he comes in to kiss me on the mouth. And I remember turnin' my head. But you know, I also felt like it wasn't a culture where you can call somebody out. I remember when Joyce Elliott was tryin' to get us to stop calling it chairman of a committee, to get it changed to chair. That was happenin' my first term. Oh, she was uppity, she was—this was somethin', you know. But that—when he wanted to—I felt—I was—that was sexual harassment, right. I mean, that was—yeah. And but what got to me was not that that happened because I'd been in those situations. I knew how to get out of 'em all. But it was—I was pitchin' the ERA. The words "wife" was on his mouth at the

time, and he wanted to put his on mine. And I—and it was—I was just in there—and the fact that we were right here where people can walk back and forth. Nobody was at the time. Maybe he has good peripheral vision. [02:56:3] But I don't know. It just got to me. and I knew I had to go in 'cause we were gettin' ready to vote, and David Johnson was— Representative Johnson was sittin' on my right-hand side, and he saw that I was teary eyed because that was getting to me. I was—it was a stressful session. There was some negativity. There were some really odd, horrible things goin' on. But anyway, and he said, "Are you okay?" And I told him what happened. He goes, "Does that ha"—and I remember him askin', he says, "Has that happened to anybody else?" and I said, "I know it's happened to"—you know, like he would maybe just—you know, he would, "Well, I won't say anything if you kiss me. Will you kiss me?" And I told him—I said, "Well, what'd you do?" She said, "I just kissed him on the cheek. I just had to get out of the committee or whatever," you know. And there was another time, you know, that he had me like in the hallway, and he says, "How about a kiss, then? How bout a kiss?" You know, he couldn't talk to you—a woman about a bill or whatever without somethin' like that. [02:57:20] And there was—I

member my first term there—and I probably shouldn't say this, but well, why not. You know, there was a chair of the committee whose wife was running for—at the time—and I've told you all these stories. I just [*laughs*] can't believe I'm sayin' in public, but he's like, "Oh"—we were in the rotunda down below, and he goes, "Oh, here, I wanna—come in my office with me. I wanna tell somethin'." And I'm street smart. I've learned to be street smart [*laughs*] in my life, so I knew. And so I got in there, and I thought he was—and I was on the committee there, and he like wanted to give me some advice or help or something, but I saw immediately kinda what was goin' on there 'cause there was really no discussion goin' on. There wasn't a whole lot of furniture. There was a desk, and I thought, "Is he wantin' like—what are we gonna do it on the desk or so—what was goin' on?" I knew what to do and—which was I said—I just kept talkin' about his wife. I said, "Hey, your wife's runnin' for office for your seat, right?" or "You're blah, blah, blah," and I kept doin' that. I said—and then eventually I just said, "Oh, I gotta go," you know, and I just made my way outta there because I did feel like there was a culture there you couldn't—you know, but—which was—you know, it's just those yahoos. And I don't know—I never would have expected it. I mean, he

looks like somebody that's your—you know, the deacon at your church who's not—well, that—[SS laughs] you know, I don't know. Yeah. Well, and there was that time I—I guess I'll go ahead and say it. [02:58:44] You know that time when I was away at that—I think it was Mount Magazine or somethin'. Should I tell that story? [Laughs] I don't know, but that—I was at—there was some party, and they were dri—and I don't drink, really. But I had an orange juice with a little bit of vodka or whatever. But something happened. I left there, and I thought, "Something's gon—am I gonna throw up? Or what's gonna ha—what's goin' on?" And I remember leaving, and I just knew, "Get to my room." I don't know. I remember when I called you, and I said, "I don't know. Somethin's happenin' but I feel like I'm gonna faint. I feel—there's somethin' going on." And we were talkin', and didn't I have a knock on the door or something? Yeah. And I do thi—I thin—what I've heard other people say, and I think somebody slipped somethin' in my drink. I mean, there was—member you're sayin', "Well, get to the bed, get to the bed." And you were—you didn't know what to do, but you know, I woke up the next mornin', but that doesn't just happen. And I'd keep tryin' to come up with other reasons or whatever. And I don't know who did it, you know. But that

happened when I was a legislator. But there were some things, yeah. [02:59:56] But women—they were just so wonderful and hardworking, and they were some of the best legislators Arkansas could have. But there were a lot of really great men, and there weren't a lot of these yahoos or bad ones like that. It was just a small, small amount. But when—you know. That's when I started—when I was in the legislature. You know, I used to wear pearls a lot and normal—but with my chest, you know, my—I mean, my cleavage comes up to here. I mean, there's—if I don't wear a turtleneck, I've got cleavage showin'. So when I was a legislator, I will say—because I wanted to have more [laughs] eye contact with a lot of 'em, that's when I started wearing scarves and being known to—I was known to wear scarves at the time, and I've got quite the collection.

SS: Can you . . .

LS: So yeah.

[03:00:47] SS: So while you were in the leg—you're still teaching at the university. I mean, you had to take a leave during the session, but you taught during the off season. What—and legislature at that time was sort of looked at as a part-time job. So what were your sort of non-legislative activities when you—in the legislature?

LS: Well, I still—you had brought the speech and debate team up, and so I did do some coaching with that. I was the UA—I got voted as the UA Outstanding Mentor. I think the students voted for me for that. I won the James Madison Prize at the Southern States Communication Association, and I won some more. I won the top paper at the American Communication Association Conference. So I'm still actively doin' my research. [03:01:42] In fact, when I got in the legislature, the book had come out on nesting, *It's a Chick Thing*, where I had an article in there with Dolly Parton and Priscilla Presley and others and all. And there was an article in the newspaper about that one. But I wanted to keep my writing goin'. Now remember I said I was—and when I was in law school, I worked at the Meiklejohn Civil Liberties Institute. Well, when I became a legislator, Ann Fagan Ginger, who's the director of that—you know, there were certain things that we needed to do, particularly for states to enforce the human rights declaration, *United Nations Declaration on Human Rights*, and things. And there were certain things that we could do in Arkansas or whatever. Anyway, and she thought havin' a legislator on the board would be good, so I got on the Meiklejohn Civil Liberties Institution board, even though it was in California, and I would do the phone call-in things. And I remember you

and I were attending the Episcopal church here, Unitarian Universalist. And we—I invited her to come speak here, and they helped sponsor that, and so that was really good. And in 2008 I was a Hilary Clinton delegate . . .

SS: Yay.

LS: . . . yay—for president. So I went to the convention in Denver.

[03:03:10] SS: All right. So what—after you termed out after three terms, what type of occupational things did you pursue or volunteer activities or . . .

LS: Oh.

SS: . . . or any type of service thing.

LS: Well, when I . . .

SS: Other than public office, yeah.

LS: Okay, well, in 2009 right after the session, that's when I left the university and took a job at the city of Fayetteville under Mayor Lioneld Jordan's administration. And at the time, the position was a policy advisor, but I was there for six years, and I turned it into—I created a communication department and took a lot of different things under the wing, public access, the government channel, neighborhood programs, Fayetteville forward programs, the newsletter, a bunch of different things, and put it under an umbrella and created the department and became the

communication director. And so I did that for six years. So I was able to do 2009 and 2010 doing that while I was there. And the mayor was really supportive of me then going down—'cause that's when we hit with the fiscal session. So I had my first fiscal session I went down for in 2010. But that helped also in the office, too, 'cause I knew how to, you know, follow the bills when the sessions came along and everything like that.

[03:04:37] And I was there until 2015. And then you and I both retired, you from thirty years at the university and then me from the city. And you and I started Oxbridge Research Associates, which is a research and writing organization. I'm also an associate, a non-voting board member of the Evergreen Cemetery here, the historic cemetery. And I'm secretary of the Clinton House Museum. The—but after being a legislator, some award things you mentioned. I was also an active member of Rotary, and I was really happy—and I became a Paul Harris Fellow, but that was after I was a legislator. I won an American Association of University Women Leadership Award. The—I was named the 2013 Women of History—they did a—every March for Women's History Month, Washington County and various women's organizations selected about five different women of history, and I was one in 2013. And I edited and indexed four

books with our company, Oxbridge. I've done a lot of encyclopedia entries. Mainly those are related to Arkansas women legislators. And you and I now have the book *Stateswomen*, which is about Arkansas women legislators. And that is in press right now with the University of Arkansas Press. It's to come out the end of this year, 2022, probably around October.

[03:06:21] SS: All right. Your—today we're doing this video biography. It's the last one in a larger project you've been working on for a while called Women in the Arkansas General Assembly. Can you . . .

LS: Yeah.

SS: . . . talk a little bit about that?

LS: Well, it was something—you know, there wasn't a list of women or—you know, I was teachin' political communication at the time, and the Women's Giving Circle at the University of Arkansas was giving out grants, and I thought, "Wow, this would be a really great project to develop. You know, who are these women who serve in the legislature? Who"—you know, because I—at that point, I was going to be in. It was twenty—2004, and so I was unopposed, and I member the applications—I think they were due that summer. But they didn't do the presentation

of them until early in 2005. And I remember Dina Wood from the Fulbright College where I was applying from, from the communication departments under the Fulbright College, she had made a recommendation. "You're gonna have a better chance if you bring in the Blair Center." So I met with Dr. Todd Shields, who's now the head of the Fulbright College. But he—to bring the Blair Center in. [03:07:42] But anyway, they had the Women's Giving Circle presentation when I was down in le—my first term in the legislature, so I couldn't be there to do the presentation for the grant that I had applied for. So you and Dr. Shields went and give—did the presentation for me and, yay, it got it. And so it was awarded \$10,000, and that was largely to do, you know, to create the list of the women, create a website, create—did the biographies. The Blair Center got this camera in order to do these videos. There was—so a lot of traveling, a lot of meeting with women, a lot of interviews. I've done probably about fifty different video or audio-taped interviews. And the pièce de résistance to the final part of the project is the book on Arkansas women legislators, and so I'm really excited about that comin' out. And it's gonna—it's a really good book.

[03:08:44] SS: And these interviews are available to the public?

LS: Yes. I donated all the videos, and this one will be as well,

donated to the David and Barbara Pryor Center for Oral and Visual History. And I'll get this tape right out to them probably today or tomorrow. [*Laughs*]

SS: Yeah.

LS: And say, "Here you go."

[03:09:04] SS: And there's another collection Special Collections has.

LS: Oh, I did collect . . .

SS: I don't remember the manuscript name.

LS: Yeah. I mean, in terms of mine. Oh, I did a lot. I have a huge set of files. You know, when I went in to be a legislator, I also went in as sort of an archivist person. So I thought, "I'm gonna also, while here"—and it was real easy to do. Sort of do the day-by-day, moment-by-moment opportunity to—if anybody wanted to, they could see this is what it's like in the life of being a legislator. Anything that came across—any—you know, I told you that I had, you know, the—what were the bills that were considered in committee or on the floor. I had—the night before I would look at those, so an—all of—how I voted on all of 'em, you know, any markings and stuff. Like I had a plus if it was a yes, a plus circle if I maybe needed to talk to somebody, a negative if it was no, a negative circle if I needed to like check

and see with a sponsor about some question or whatever.

Anyway, there were a lot of bills. So what I'd do—I had—you know, we had chairs bolted to the floor, [*laughs*] essentially, and then you have your machine at the top, and you get one drawer. But I used that drawer to whenever I saw somethin'—"Wow, this'd be really neat to have in Arkansas history over in Special Collections," I thought, "Eh." And then I'd turn it face down. So essentially in the weekends, I'd leave and everything would be in chronological order, you know. [03:10:38] And like there was one that came across—if you got a legislator's permission to do so and they signed off on it, a lobbyist can put things down on the table. And I remember there was one that I saw that it was like on camo paper, and I thought, "Well, that's gonna pass." [*Laughs*] And it did, you know. I'm thinking may—not a lot of people knew what it was. I don't remember what it was, but I was li—"I'm sure that passed 'cause of the paper it was on." [*Laughs*] But I saved all those, and then and, you know, our emails, particularly usin' the government email site that—we were—when I was down there, you know, we always—it started off with all just the big books. I mean, things weren't—the staff didn't have the bills sort of on an internet site that we could go to. You had to have the big books, and you had to stay there to

look at the books 'cause you couldn't take the things home. Sometimes I would sneak 'em out because I 'em to my hotel room, and I'm like—'cause we all had our own, you know. But they—you weren't supposed to, but an—you know, to study that way. That's why I was down there late a lot. [03:11:42]

Anyway, but then when I was there—I think it was the first time they started also moving in—we all got laptops. And then email. I think I was there the first session when email really made the difference. There was one point where Jay Martin got a— Representative Martin got up to speak against a bill or somethin'. He says, "You know, I just received an email from a constituent on this who's saying, '[*Unclear words*] I want y'all to consider this,'" and I thought, "Wow, that's direct constituency. Boom, boom, right to him at this moment, and then, boom, right there." You know. [03:12:21] Anyway, so I was there—it was like that moment in history when you could capture this, where lobbyists, legislators, constituents, everybody—a lot of it was on email. You didn't really get the stamped letters kinda stuff anymore. Although I say Maylon Rice always made my day. He gave me some stamped—it was just really encouragement things. It was just like, "You're doin' a great job. Keep on goin'. Get on out there. Yeah." You know, and he would—he probably

sent me, you know, four of those a session. And I tell you, that was encouraging. But I had—I actually [*laughs*] have said—there probably are 20,000 emails I got when I was a legislator in those six years, whether in session or out of session and all, and I preserved all those, and I—those are some of the things like I've donated, I mean, where you can see my struggles. I used you and my friend Melinda in Birmingham, best friend, Melinda, to—if I even had like frustrations like, "What somebody did mean to me," or "What did this or that?" or "I don't know," you know, our—I kept 'em there. I mean, they are what they are, and it was the true what I was thinkin', what I was feelin'. And I called it my legislative diary. [03:13:33] But yeah, I have a lot of—and a lot of the things that I've donated to it. And so I pretty much have it. My Women Legislators files is pretty big. But when I was doin' this project and talkin' to women, I also encouraged them to give theirs. So when I talked to Charlotte Schexnaydar, "Please donate your papers," or Myra Jones, "Please donate your papers to, you know, the University Special Collections." And I always make sure that they would do that.

[03:14:01] SS: I think, you know, those are gonna be invaluable to future scholars studying . . .

LS: I think so.

SS: . . . any number of issues about Arkansas history. And I think the videos'll be used in . . .

LS: Yeah.

SS: . . . schools at some time.

LS: Yeah, the Pryor Center is getting them online, so direct access.

SS: Yeah. Do you have any message you'd like to share with the school students or school [unclear]?

[03:14:26] LS: You know, out of all the interviews, video—biography interviews I do, I've started asking that question. What would you tell the schoolchildren of Arkansas? Because I did want to have that question—if anybody wanted to pull out, as an excerpt from these tapes, what these women legislators were advising, you know, what would it be? My message would be to take school very serious. Learn to love reading and go visit your library. And there's so much that you can learn. Like take your classes really serious, and value your time with your family. When I was a state legislator, my dad was in bad health, and I remember my third term I would take as many opportunities going from Little Rock to Birmingham as possible to go see him. And he passed away at the end of that—end of December 2010. But I have such a rich time with family. And I think reading would be a big thing. And come to know your public library and

value it.

[03:15:44] SS: All right. Well, is there anything else that you'd like to talk about or add that I haven't asked?

LS: No. [*Laughs*] I can't think of anything. I appreciate you doin' this. And I . . .

SS: Well, I appreciate you doin' it.

LS: Yeah.

SS: Appreciate your service to the people.

LS: I appreciate the Women's Giving Circle at the university and the Dianne D. Blair Center for sponsoring this project.

SS: All right. Thank you very much.

LS: And I enjoyed serving.

[End of interview 03:16:13]

[Transcribed and edited by Pryor Center staff]