ROBERT GRIFFIN

Interviewed by
Dennis Cawthorne
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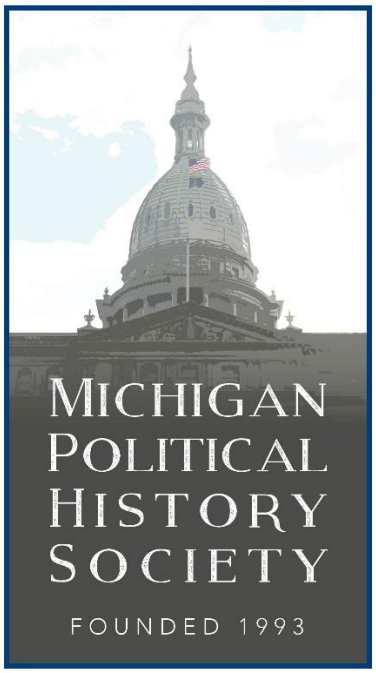

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Dennis Cawthorne (DC): Robert P. Griffin has had an exciting and remarkable political career that has spanned nearly 40 years of Michigan and American political history: United States Representative, United States Senator, author of major legislation, confidant of Presidents, Supreme Court Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court. He has been all of these things and more.

DC: RG was born in Detroit, grew up in Garden City, and graduated from Dearborn Fordson High School. He served 14 months in the Infantry in World War II in Europe. After the war, he graduated from Central Michigan University, and the University of Michigan Law School.

DC: Bob, what was the spark that caused you to get interested and excited about politics?

Robert Griffin (RG): Well, like you and a lot of others, I know here and there, in junior high or someplace, I was perhaps a class president or a student council president or something of that kind, but I don't think I really became interested until I went to the Wolverine Boys' State, between the junior and senior year I had at Fordson High School. There, somehow, things seemed to come together. I was a candidate for governor, but I didn't have the support, so a deal was made, and I ran for the lieutenant governor and was elected and spent the day, as these young people do every year, in the legislative chambers in Lansing.

RG: I remember very well, the Lieutenant Governor at that time was Dickinson, as I recall, and I had his office and presided over the State Senate. One of the State Senators was a fellow named Jim Churchill from over in The Thumb. Later on, I would have a chance to appoint him to a federal bench, based largely on the experience I had at the Boys' State.

DC: You then moved to Traverse City, after you finished Central Michigan and the University of Michigan Law School, and established your practice in Traverse City. Before very long, you were again actively involved in politics. What led to your running for the U.S. Congress in 1956?

RG: Well, first, let me tell you that when I was about to graduate from the law school, John Dethmers, who was on the Supreme Court at that time, had agreed to take me on as his law clerk for a year, and everything was all set. Marge and I stopped in Lansing one time, going through town, and had a social visit with him. He happened to ask me, “Well, what are you going to do after you serve your year with me?”

RG: I had an answer, because Marge and I had been traveling all over the state, and I told him we'd decided we wanted to live in Traverse City. He looked for a while. He said, “Gee, I happen to know that there's only one law firm in Traverse City,

and one of the partners in that three-man firm has just left." He said, "I think there's an opening there. I hate to lose you," he said. I don't know if he meant it.

DC: I'm sure he did.

RG: He said, "I'm going to call up Bob Murchie and see if they're looking for somebody," and he did. That led us to Traverse City. We didn't get a chance, but my career started, in a sense, with the Michigan Supreme Court and, in a sense, ended with the Michigan Supreme Court. I thought maybe I'd put that in. I practiced law here in Traverse City for ... I was in my fifth year. By that time, I had become Precinct Captain for the Republican Party and, in that capacity, got well acquainted with Bill Milliken, who was the County Republican Chairman. First thing you know, Bill wanted me to be the County Republican Chairman, and I was.

RG: Things went along, moving up toward the 1956 election. Our incumbent Congresswoman, Ruth Thompson, was getting up in years. She had served three terms in the House of Representatives and, unfortunately, had gotten into a lot of political trouble, because of the way, I guess, she handled a matter, which we all referred to as the Air Force Base. The Air Force was going to locate a base in this part of the state, and I think maybe, if she looked back on it afterwards, she might have said, "Well, now, wherever the Air Force wants to put it will be fine with me, if it'll serve [national interest, crosstalk 00:05:00]."

DC: She didn't do that, did she?

RG: She didn't do that, unfortunately. She appeared to make statements that, at one point, would satisfy Manistee and at another point make Cadillac happy, and then Traverse City was happy, but they were unhappy that ... Pretty soon, she had a lot of political trouble. The Democrats, in the meantime, had recruited a very good candidate, Bill Baker, who was superintendent of schools in Mesick, well respected, and some of us thought that she was in political trouble.

RG: Bill Milliken and I were so concerned that we got on a plane and went down to Washington and tried to talk Ruth Thompson into graciously retiring, so that there wouldn't be the problem. She wouldn't have it at all. On the way back, we thought, "Well, this is unusual, but we're going to look for a candidate to run against her in the Primary." Never for a minute did I think I would end up being the candidate, because we did want somebody from this part of the district.

RG: The district ran from Traverse City, along Lake Michigan, all the way down to and including Muskegon. Ruth Thompson was from that area, the Muskegon area. We were looking for somebody up in our area. We were looking at different state representatives, and ... Arnell Engstrom and others, but the logical people weren't interested, didn't want to go to Washington. Bill Milliken didn't want to go to Washington. He had his eye on Lansing.

RG: It just happened that one day I was sitting in Les Biederman's office, telling him my woes as county chairman and what I thought the situation looked like. When I got all done, he ... Les Biederman, incidentally, I should say, of course, was a pioneer, established our radio station up here, television station, father of the Northwestern Michigan College, and just a great, great guy. He looked at me, and he said, “Well, Bob, why don't you run? If you do, I'll back you.”

RG: That just about floored me, because I had only been in Traverse City a short period of time. I went home and told my wife about that, and she thought I was nuts. How she put up with ever going along with it, I'll never know, but she was a wonderful person then, and she always has been ever since then. She's been a wonderful support.

DC: Plus, she gave you an added advantage in that Primary campaign, because she was from Ludington, in the central part of the district.

RG: She was from Ludington. You're right, yeah.

DC: You also had a campaign manager, Albert Engel, Junior, from Muskegon County ...

RG: Who was the son of a former Congressman from the Ninth District, preceding Ruth Thompson. Al was just a great campaign chairman.

RG: I want to tell you about my wife. She was valedictorian of her high school class in Ludington, valedictorian of her college class at Central Michigan. I had somebody smart on my side, but here we had three young children, one of them was just still in diapers, and not very much income. I'd never served in public office. I was President of the Kiwanis Club, and I headed up the local Red Cross and a few things like that, but to run for Congress in this kind of a district? It looked like it was an impossible thing to do, at the time. If I were to advise somebody at this stage, I would say, “Don't ever do it.”

DC: Don't do it. She had acquired other notoriety, because she was, in fact, Michigan's first Congresswoman, and also a Probate Judge, and herself a State Legislator, so she was-

RG: Distinguished record.

DC: Yes, mm-hmm (affirmative).

RG: That's right. Of course, in those days, you didn't have these negative campaigns, the way you do now. I had to, especially running against a woman, be very careful how I conducted myself. Everything was positive. Somehow or other, we put a good group together, and they worked very hard, particularly down in Muskegon, and we squeaked through the Primary. Once we got through the Primary, the chances looked a lot better, then, for the General Election.

DC: Actually, if I can just add a little bit on the matter of squeaking through, your victory actually was fairly decisive, as I have reviewed the figures. I think your right. It was a real tribute to the team you put together, because you did well, down in Muskegon County, where the population was and, of course, you won overwhelmingly in Grand Traverse County and Wexford County, so it really wasn't that much of a squeaker. Anyway, Bill Baker was a formidable opponent, wasn't he, in that 1956 General Election?

RG: Yes, he was. He was well respected, but of course, this was primarily a Republican area. Without the Air Base issue clouding things up, if I ... I had every reason to believe that I could get the regular Republican vote and, in the final analysis, I did, although I want to tell you. On election night, we were having a party in the basement of our house. I'll never forget that, at that time, the only areas that had machine ballots voting was Muskegon. Everybody else had paper ballots, which took a long time to count. I remember sitting there and watching the Cadillac television station, and the results would be posted, but they didn't say where they were from, just numbers, so much for Baker and so much for Griffin.

DC: Yes, this could be very frightening from the wrong area.

RG: I was way behind, and every time they came in, it seemed like I was farther behind, you know? Jim [Schaner, inaudible 00:10:49], a lawyer from Muskegon, was also very active for me down there. Every once in a while, he would call me, and he'd say, “Bob, you're doing just great down here.” He said, “You only lost such-and-such a precinct by such-and-such a percentage.” He says, “You've lost it bad, but that's much better than any Republican's ever done.”

RG: Pretty soon, the numbers go up, and I was farther behind, because of the Muskegon-

DC: Well, he had the raw numbers.

RG: The Muskegon raw numbers were coming in, but not being identified as such.

DC: Right, right, right.

RG: It went on that way, you know? Pretty soon my neighbors and my friends just excused themselves, because it was getting late, and very ... I think they were all very sad for me.

DC: Yes.

RG: I kept saying, “Well, don't worry. We're going to win.” About three o'clock in the morning we did.

DC: Actually, your margin was fairly comfortable, I believe about 13,000.

RG: I'm glad you've looked this up. I haven't lately.

DC: It was pretty comfortable and, of course, it helped that Ike was running for reelection.

RG: Oh, yes, no question about that.

DC: That was the year, 1956, when the Republicans elected a number of very able, young members of Congress, so you-

RG: We had four new members of Congress under 40 who came in: Chuck Chamberlain, Bill Broomfield ... Chamberlain from Lansing, Broomfield from the Oakland County area, and Jack McIntosh, from over in the Port Huron area. When four of us went down there together, we were Four Horsemen. We really got to be good friends.

DC: Looking back at your first few years in the House of Representatives, what were the major accomplishments, of which you are most proud, in terms of legislation enacted?

RG: Well, there were two. First of all, I went on the Education and Labor Committee, because not only was I interested in education, and Marge had been a teacher, and I had studied to be a teacher and got a teacher's certificate, but also because I turned out to be a labor lawyer in Traverse City. I had taken the course, and about the time I came to town, practicing law, the UAW started organizing up here, and since I was the only one in town who'd ever taken Labor Law, I was-

DC: You were the expert, right?

RG: I was the sudden expert. I did have three or four good years of experience, so the Education and Labor Committee was a natural for me. About that time, the Russian Sputnik caused the United States some real concerns. We were behind in the race for space. Eisenhower came up with what he called the National Defense Education Act, which was to focus on math and science primarily and try to get the United States caught up in this area.

RG: Some of us, who were there, who had gone to law school and to college under the GI Bill of Rights after World War II, which I was a beneficiary of, realized how important it was to help those who were in need to have a chance to go to college. Eisenhower's Defense Education Act, as proposed, did not include any financial assistance program. There were some who thought it ought to be given away. I and others thought this should be a loan program.

RG: I was very instrumental in working with Elliot Richardson, who was then in the Department of Education, in putting together an amendment to the National Defense Education Act, establishing a student loan program, that student loans

were actually given out by the colleges at a low interest rate, and so on. Pretty much, in other respects, except they're done by banks now, pretty much the way it is now, except that was the beginning of it.

RG: We, along with Hal Haskell and a couple of others, Al Quie, who turned out to be later, at one time, served as Governor of Minnesota, was on the committee with us. We had a meeting with President Eisenhower about this particular thing. We spent a long, a good hour with him and came away, having gotten his attention and his interest. Later, he called and said he'd go along with it, and the amendment, which Elliot Richardson was very much in favor of, too, got into the bill, and we established the National Student Loan program, which is still going today. Some aspects of the current program, I don't like, but nevertheless, it's helped an awful lot of students go to school, so I'm very proud of that.

RG: Then, of course, in 1959, following the McClellan Hearings into labor racketeering, primarily with the Teamsters Union and Jimmy Hoffa and so on, I became the coauthor of a bill called the Landrum-Griffin Act. It's actually the National Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959. Let me throw in a story.

RG: The year before the Landrum-Griffin Act, Bill Broomfield and I, who lived ... We lived next to each other in a place called Brookfield. We talked about an invitation that we got from the Michigan Building Trades Council for a dinner that was being held downtown. Neither one of us had gotten any support, particularly from labor unions, but we said, “This is a good thing to do. Why don't we go, show them that we're interested?” I never had any idea ... I never thought about the fact that Jimmy Hoffa would be a part or a principal in that, because he was under intense investigation at that time.

RG: It turned out that we were ushered in and sat right across the table from Jimmy Hoffa. We each looked at each other and talked to him for a little bit. Somehow or other, I got the message from him, “Well, let's go to the men's room,” so we did.

DC: This is message from Bill Broomfield?

RG: Yeah, from Bill Broomfield, right. We went into the men's room and had quite a conference. Do we stay? Do we get the hell out of here?

DC: Yes, politically, is this good or bad?

RG: Yeah, and we said, “Well, we'll go on back.” We sat down and talked to Jimmy and so on. Well, that was no particular problem, but the next morning, as I was shaving, I was listening to the radio, and the news was, “Last night, after having dinner with some Michigan Congressmen, Jimmy Hoffa was arrested on Dupont Circle by the FBI.”

DC: Now, that's an aspect of your career that I've never heard of before.

RG: Bill and I had a very intensive discussion on the way to Congress that day, trying to figure out, now what do we do? Do we just keep quiet? Do we get a press release together, or what? We got into the Capitol and ran into Al Cederberg and told him about it. He said, “Aw, I've got a friend in the FBI. Let's call him up.” His name was Sullivan. He was right under J. Edgar Hoover. We talked to this fellow, and he just laughed and laughed. He says, “Hell,” he says, “We know all about it.” He said, “We had FBI agents in the johns listening to you. We had waiters, waiting on you at the table.”

DC: That is amazing. That is absolutely amazing.

RG: "Don't worry about it."

DC: Well, you took the leadership in what became known as Landrum-Griffin, and in the process of that, you had quite a bit of opportunity to have interchange with Jack Kennedy, future President Kennedy, and also I would imagine that you did have some concerns about what Landrum-Griffin would do to or for you politically. Could you comment on both of those things?

RG: Well, first of all, the House reacted to the McClellan Hearings before the Senate could and got a bill together, sponsored by Alabama Congressman Elliott. It was, in the opinion of some of us, too weak and too nothing. It looked ... It had nice titles to it, but it wouldn't do anything.

RG: I was a member of a subcommittee that was chaired by Phil Landrum of Georgia. Although he was a Democrat, he and I seemed to agree on a lot of things. Somehow or other, also consulting with the Eisenhower Administration ... Jim Mitchell was the Secretary of Labor at that time, as I recall. We began to think about what are we going to do? We can vote against the Elliott Bill, but it's going to become the House bill if we don't do anything about it.

RG: Anyway, a movement developed, and it was with support of the Administration and help of the Administration, we developed a substitute for the Elliott Bill, which became known as the Landrum-Griffin Bill. It provided for secret ballot elections of union officers. It provided that funding, that the financing, of unions had to be accounted for by filing annual reports with the Secretary of Labor. It provided a Bill of Rights eventually for the union members. It made some, a couple of, important but controversial changes in the Taft-Hartley Law to tighten up the secondary boycott provisions and the blackmail picketing provisions.

RG: To make a long story short, it came down to a very, very close vote in the House of Representatives. We didn't get our bill out of the committee. The Elliott Bill was reported to the floor, and so we offered our bill on the House Floor and it was under debate. Something really historic happened, that isn't necessarily reported as history very much, but President Eisenhower made the decision to go on television. He asked for network time and got it. Today, I don't think

networks would give a President free time to go and lobby for a bill or an amendment. Maybe they would, but I doubt it.

RG: This was the first effort, on his part, of any kind like that. He took about 10 minutes on national TV at about 7:30 in the evening, and made the case for the Landrum-Griffin Bill. “If you want to ... If you're for this bill, write and call your Congressman.”

DC: Write and call your Congressman.

RG: The flood came in. We did pass it in the House, and the momentum kept going, to the point where ... Well, the Senate did pass a different bill. We had to have a conference. Jack Kennedy was the Chairman of the Senate Conferees. Although I wasn't a Chairman of the House Conferees, being a sponsor of the bill that passed, of course, I was very much involved and dealt directly with Jack Kennedy a lot, in working out the final details of a bill that later became known as the Landrum-Griffin Bill.

DC: Did Kennedy have a genuine interest in the subject matter, and did he have any impact in the final legislative product?

RG: Of course, you know, his constituency was much more labor union oriented. He was very conscious and worked for some of the amendments that the labor union people wanted. We had some real battles. Generally, it obviously came out looking a lot more like the House bill than the Senate version, or it wouldn't have been called the Landrum-Griffin Bill.

DC: Did Organized Labor put pressure on you in the aftermath of Landrum-Griffin? If so, how?

RG: Well, I don't know that I recall anything too specific but, yes, there was a lot of pressure. In the union trade papers and so forth, you know, I was a demon, a devil of some kind or other, even though the final version of the Landrum-Griffin Bill was passed in the Senate with the votes of Jack Kennedy and Phil Hart and McNamara and others. In fact, I'm going to jump ahead of this and say, later on, when I ran for the Senate against Soapy Williams, we had a debate at the Economic Club in Detroit.

DC: This, I believe, turned out to be a turning point in that campaign, but go ahead.

RG: Well, somehow or other, I had to go first, and so, while I didn't spend all my time talking about the Landrum-Griffin Bill, I had to defend myself. The latter part of my presentation was about that. I ended up with a question to Soapy. If you had been in the Senate at that time, would you have voted with Phil Hart and Jack Kennedy-

DC: Very well put.

RG: Or would you have supported Jimmy Hoffa against the bill. To his credit, Soapy got up and said he would've voted for it, and that-

DC: Yes, and that demolished that as an issue.

RG: That took the issue away.

DC: Yes, and that was indeed a turning point-

RG: For a lot of people.

DC: In that campaign, though.

RG: Right.

DC: In 1961, you briefly considered a run for the governorship of Michigan.

RG: Well, it was very brief, and I don't think it was too serious either, to tell you the truth, but there was a little bit of talk about it. I didn't take it too seriously.

DC: In 1962, you and some other young Republican congressmen encouraged Jerry Ford to seek a key leadership position. That eventually led him on the road that led to his presidency. What do you recall about that?

RG: Well, the effort in '62, when he became Conference Chairman for the Republicans, did give him a step up and make him ... put him in the leadership, although not in a top position. After the '64 election, when Goldwater was trounced so badly by Lyndon Johnson, there was a great deal of discouragement and a lot of effort, on the part of younger members of the Congress, to try to do something about our leadership.

RG: Charlie Halleck, a very likable fellow from Indiana, just did a great job in lots of ways, but was getting along in years a little bit. The Ev and Charlie Show, as it was known in those days, a joint press conference every week, got to be a little old hat. It wasn't really doing well.

DC: It wasn't conveying a positive progressive Republican image.

RG: Yeah, and then there were rumors that Charlie was into the sauce a little bit too much, and things of that kind. A couple of us, Charlie Goodell of New York and I, particularly, sat down one day at lunch and got serious about, well, what are we going to do? We had decided that we were going to try to put up a candidate against Charlie Halleck. It was between Mel Laird of Wisconsin and Jerry Ford. There was a group, including Don Rumsfeld and Al Quie and others. We finally decided that Jerry was the best candidate. We practically drafted him, because at first he didn't want to do it, but we did draft him and put on a campaign, and

he won. Yes, I think that was a big steppingstone to his ultimately becoming the President of the United States.

DC: In 1964, you considered running for the United States Senate but, as it turned out, you wisely did not, but then in 1965 you began to look at Pat McNamara's Senate seat.

DC: Well, it's true. I think that I sort of feel like in my career, there have been built in time limit ... term limits.

RG: Yes.

DC: After I got to the 10 year point, I was restless, and I was interested in the Senate. I began exploring it, checking with people in various parts of the state, and there was a good deal of press speculation about it. In the period prior to May, I don't remember now exactly what month it was, but I actually came to the point where I announced that I would be a candidate for the United States Senate.

RG: I think it was in February of 1966.

DC: All right. Your research is very good. From then on, it got as you know, and others know, that it became a little bit more complicated than that because in May, McNamara died. Then the question was who would Governor Romney appoint? Naturally, I wanted the appointment, and I had a lot of support for it, but nevertheless, it wasn't a sure thing.

RG: The actual choice by Romney occurred when you were in Saigon, as I recall.

DC: That's correct. I was over there with the House Operations Committee doing some investigating of the use of Defense funds. It happened that I was with a fellow named Bo Callaway from Colorado, and Don Rumsfeld of Illinois [inaudible 00:01:47].

RG: Both of whom served in Presidential Cabinets at one time or another after that.

DC: That's exactly right. Incidentally, Don Rumsfeld's career in Congress started out on my House staff before he became a congressman. Since then, of course, he's been on Secretary of Defense and a lot of things. But yes, I got a call from George Romney in Saigon, and we had a little champaign after that.

RG: Going back just a moment, Governor Romney filling that Senate vacancy, was it your impression that he hesitated or that he had something else in mind?

DC: Well, I'm sure he was getting a lot of advice from different people. There were those who really thought that I would be a drag on his ticket because of the Landrum-Griffin Bill, and the labor opposition that would come forth. I don't know exactly, but there were others that were very capable and would have been good candidates that were being considered.

RG: After your appointment in May 1966, you were immediately facing a full blown Senate campaign, and of course in that primary was Soapy Williams, the grand champion vote getter, and Mayor Jerry Cavanagh of Detroit. How did you view your prospects for winning in the fall?

DC: Well, they were rather frightening to think that I was going to be up against the real champ of Michigan, and somebody who was really loved and respected throughout the state.

RG: Got elected six times as Governor.

DC: Absolutely. So of course I was pulling for Jerry Cavanagh. I remember one of the things we did when the primary election night when Cavanagh lost, we made a point to go over to the Cavanagh headquarters, and console with him and his supporters, and hoping that maybe some of them would come and support us, and I think some of them did.

RG: What were some of the turning points in that campaign with Soapy Williams that fall?

DC: Well, George Romney wasn't somebody who stayed on the sidelines, he was ready to get out and fight. I remember Lyndon Johnson coming into Michigan to campaign for Zolton Ferency and Soapy, and to everybody's surprise, George Romney and I were at the airport, and at the bottom of the stairway waiting for the President to come in.

DC: The Governor and the Senators, they couldn't really push us aside. As I recall, Lyndon Johnson put us in his limousine and took us down to Cobo Hall where he proceeded to give a speech, and mispronounced Ferency's name.

RG: Not very good for a Democratic candidate for Governor.

DC: Yeah. Speaking of Ferency, he was a great guy, and unfortunately the Democrats were sometimes put in the hull because of Zolton's humor. He said something about, "Jim Hare had only one decision to make every year, and that was to choose the color of the license plates, and wouldn't you know, he goosed that?"

DC: Then but to everybody's astonishment, he said something about Soapy Williams, that, "Nothing new had come out of Soapy for years except three gallstones." I had a lot of fun with that as I would go around giving my speeches. I would say, "Well now, I would never say anything like this, but have you heard what Zolton said about Soapy Williams?" With friends like that, Soapy doesn't need any enemies. I'm sure that that's not true, you know?

RG: And there was some feeling among the electorate that fall that Soapy maybe was a little past his prime, and so what Zolton said really played beautifully into your camp.

DC: In those days, as I've said, you didn't go negative. You certainly wouldn't go negative against Soapy Williams, but in a subtle way, we tried to make the point with the slogan

of our campaign. It was on the billboards, "Youth and experience." Just saying that there we are. That seemed to catch on.

RG: And that election was won by you by nearly 300,000 votes, and it turned out to be a great Republican year. George Romney won big, once again. As in 1956, Republicans elected a number of new young congressmen.

DC: I want to say something else. Romney put together what he called the Action Team, which was Romney, Milliken, and Griffin. We didn't write off the black vote in Detroit, we went in and had neighborhood headquarters all through Detroit. We didn't write off the union vote, we made every effort to ... we climbed over fences in Flint to go to picnics and things of that kind with suppressed motive, you know? Going in to reach out and try to get the labor vote, and I'm sure we got a lot more of it than Republicans ordinarily would get.

RG: In the spring of 1968, President Johnson surprised a lot of people by announcing he would not run for re-election. You suddenly achieved a great measure of national fame by plunging into a controversy over his choice for a Supreme Court Chief Justice. What can you tell us about that?

DC: When I was flying back to Washington from Detroit one time, I picked up the Wall Street Journal. It had a little note. It said, "The rumor is in Washington that Earl Warren is about to resign so that he will have something to say about the choice of his successor." I read that, and it bothered me very much.

DC: Of course, as you will remember, that there is a lot of dissension between Earl Warren and Richard Nixon back in California. Eisenhower selected Nixon over Warren for Vice President, but then of course Warren was not on the Supreme Court.

DC: I went to my office that day and had my staff begin to write a speech saying that this rumor can't be true. Surely Earl Warren wouldn't do that, this is political, and he doesn't have anything to say about who's going to be his successor, or he shouldn't have. This is the business of the President and the Senate.

DC: Well, first thing you know, before I could even give the speech, Earl Warren's resignation was announced. It was a very strange and interesting announcement, the exchange of correspondence between Warren and Johnson. Warren said, "I wish to resign at the pleasure of the President." The President wrote back and said, "I'll accept your resignation when your successor is qualified."

DC: That meant there was no vacancy and that it said in a way to the Senate, "You either accept our nominee, or you're going to continue to have Warren indefinitely." Well, you have to kind of remember that back in those days, the Warren Court was not in high repute as far as the American people were concerned.

DC: There were polls that over 60% of the people considered it unfavorably. There was lots of reaction, of course, to such things as the decisions on the church/state, the extension

and application of the exclusionary rule as it applied to criminals, there was the whole problem of busing, and schools, and things that just made the whole business of the Supreme Court very controversial.

DC: My reaction was immediately that in here in the summer, just before the election when the people are about to vote, we shouldn't be allowing Johnson, a lame duck, to select the next Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. And I gave a speech to that effect. I never thought anybody would pay any attention to it, but of course it developed into quite a crusade.

RG: Then President Johnson did announce that his choice was going to be Associate Justice Abe Fortas, and that touched off through your leadership primarily, a real national debate.

DC: He named Fortas who was on the Court, to be Chief Justice, and then he nominated Homer Thornberry from Texas, a very, very close crony of his, to fill the vacancy. You have to keep in mind that Fortas had been Johnson's lawyers from day one when he got into politics.

DC: When Johnson won that very controversial Senate race in Texas by 87 votes, after his lawyer Fortas had gone to Hugo Black and gotten an order of the state set aside in order to make that possible. From then on, Fortas was constant, all the time lawyer for Lyndon Johnson.

DC: What happened and came out of this was that Fortas didn't stop being Johnson's lawyer after he got to the Court. Johnson conferred with him about everything. When there were race riots in Detroit, a political thing, essentially, Fortas was at his side advising him what to do.

RG: Even though he was in on the Supreme Court?

DC: He was on the Supreme Court. He did a lot of things for Johnson. These all came out written up in Time and Newsweek, and that they just mounted. It was obvious that he was ... Well, the whole doctrine of separation of powers was being ignored. This became the principle issue in terms of his record in fitness, but I think the real issue that we had to decide in the Senate is what is the Senate's role in a circumstance like this? Because the Senate had gotten into the mode of more or less, and that's in our century, of almost automatically approving presidential appointments.

DC: I made a lot out of the fact that the Senate had a responsibility, which was as important as the President's, that this is the third branch of government, and Madison wanted the Senate to make these appointments. He lost out, but it was the President with the advice and consent of the Senate that determines who's going to go on the Supreme Court.

DC: Now, it's one thing for the Senate to routinely approve presidential appointments to Cabinet positions, or other positions in the Executive Branch, because they're only going

to serve during the term of the President, but when you appoint somebody to the Supreme Court, the third branch, independent branch of government. And they're going to serve for life.

RG: And certainly the Congress and the Senate has a-

DC: The Senate has a very, very important responsibility. That was more or less the thing that I think was established with the Fortas case, and the Senate since then has looked very carefully and scrutinized every appointment that any president has made since then.

RG: So the final disposition of the Fortas matter was that his nomination was withdrawn by President Johnson?

DC: We had a vote before a filibuster really got under way. Mike Mansfield, as the leadership often does, will file a petition for cloture, and sort of test the water and see how it was. Well, we had so much support that we almost got a majority, when we only needed at that point, you needed only one more than a third. It was obvious that where the strength was the next day or the day after Fortas asked that his nomination be withdrawn.

DC: Well, I got to add this, of course, later on, there were rumors to this effect, but we didn't have any evidence, but later on, an investigative reporter for Life Magazine was able to establish and write that while Fortas was serving on the court, he continued to be a counsel, paid counsel, for a person named Wolfson, who was reputed to have close ties to the underworld. When that story broke, Fortas then resigned from the Court. To my knowledge, the only Justice in the history of the United States who has ever resigned under any kind of [inaudible 00:14:58].

RG: Under those circumstances.

DC: Yeah.

RG: In 1968, there was a possibility that you would be nominated for vice president on Richard Nixon's ticket, and of course ultimately, that could have led to the vice presidency and the presidency.

DC: Well, it's kind of a slim thing, but let me just add ... Fred Buzhardt, who was Strom Thurmond's top guy in his office, and who later was on the staff of the Nixon White House, came to me in Miami in 1968, my hotel room, and said something like this. "How would you like to be vice president?" I laughed, and he said, "Well, there's a lot of interest in you."

DC: At that time, Nixon didn't have the nomination wrapped up. Reagan of course controlled the California delegation. Scranton controlled the Pennsylvania. Rockefeller controlled the New York delegation. Romney controlled the Michigan delegation. Rhodes controlled Ohio delegation.

DC: The only way that Nixon could get the nomination was to have the South go solidly for him, and then pick up some more. Buzhardt was interested in whether or not I would be able to deliver the Michigan delegation. I said, "I'm not even going to try to deliver the Michigan delegation, and I had no ... I am here to nominate our favorite son, George Romney, as a candidate for president."

RG: And you weren't going to undercut him, or you weren't going to end run him?

DC: Not at all. I said right off, "I have no interest, and I can't do anything like that."

RG: Nixon went on to win the presidency, and you assumed a new position in the Senate, that of whip, or Assistant Republican Leader.

DC: Everett Dirksen died, and Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania, who had been the Republican whip, was moving up, taking that position. I can't remember all the details, but first thing you know, I was being supported and urged to run for the whip. It turned out that my opponent was Howard Baker of Tennessee, who was really a very good friend of mine.

DC: Incidentally, when we were first running for the Senate, the two of us, we met at the Washington National Airport and got on the same plane the Republican National Committee had arranged for the two of us without ... to meet them, and to go up to Gettysburg to meet Eisenhower. We had a great time up there for a day or so.

DC: But anyway, to make a long story short, I beat out Howard Baker by two votes for the whip at that point, and that's rather ironic, because later on, as you know, for the leadership, Howard ran again-

RG: In 1976.

DC: He beat me by one vote.

RG: Yes, yes.

DC: We were good friends then, and we're still good friends.

RG: Well, then in 1972, another election rolled around, and this time a little bit like 1966, the Democrats managed to nominate their then current grand champion vote getter, Attorney General Frank Kelley. That was a very tough and interesting race. What do you recall about it?

DC: Well, I recall that it was very tough, because at that time, there was no way that you could run for office and avoid the busing issue. The busing was on everybody's mind, and you had to deal with it, and you had to take a position.

RG: The question of whether children could be bused across the lines of their own school district.

DC: That's right, yeah. The courts were in the process of applying that to the Detroit area. I had from the beginning said before I knew that the Supreme Court was going to adopt such a remedy, that that wasn't going to work. It's going to cause more harm than good, and that was my position throughout that '72 campaign. Frank was on the other side of it. I have no doubt that it played a big role in the outcome of the election.

RG: Because 1972 is really the first election in which Republicans, I believe, did very well, or perhaps even carried Macomb County. That really was sort of the beginning of the change in Macomb County. Was it that?

DC: That's a good point, it's true. But as Frank has said on several occasions, especially when he came to the portrait hanging when I left the Supreme Court, he said that it was a very civil relationship between the two of us. We got along very well. We always had.

DC: I've attended functions of his, and he's attended functions of mine. I told him then, I said, "If I live long enough, I want to be able to come to your retirement party, but I'm not sure that I ever will, because you are the eternal General."

RG: Right, and once again, campaigns, even in 1972, were very different than the campaigns we see today.

DC: They seem to be, yeah. We made the points against each other, but we weren't nasty about it.

RG: You won big in 1972 against Kelley, and Richard Nixon also won big in 1972, but there were these rumblings about Watergate. What did you think about first reports on Watergate?

DC: Well, I didn't ... I guess I hoped as much as think ... thought that it wasn't a serious matter as far as the White House was concerned. We were assured over and over again that the White House had nothing to do with this, or the Republican Committee, or anything of that kind. Obviously, over a period of time, it came to be otherwise.

DC: I remember very well, and Marge was there. We went to a leadership meeting during the '72 campaign when President Nixon stood up and assured all of us not to worry during this campaign, to go out and campaign hard, because Watergate is never going to fetch our White House. There's nothing there that's going to affect us. That was a very telling thing as far as Marge and I were concerned, when we later were to learn that that wasn't the truth.

RG: In the fall of '73, just when Watergate was beginning to gather some momentum, Spiro Agnew resigned as vice president and President Nixon had the responsibility of selecting a new vice president by appointment. What role did you play, if any, in the eventual selection by Nixon of Gerald Ford?

DC: I remember that there was a lot of talk of Connally, and I wrote President Nixon a letter, and said that I thought that would be a big mistake if he appointed Connally. Connally

had changed parties, and there was a lot of dissension. He needed somebody who could win the confirmation vote of both Houses of Congress under the 25th Amendment, and that he needed somebody like Hugh Scott or Jerry Ford.

DC: I was really thinking of Jerry Ford, even though I mentioned Scott's name. Hugh Scott would have been too old at that time to have appointed. I don't know how much ... that was one more voice for Jerry Ford, because there were a lot of people throughout the Congress that were supporting, and Democrats as well as Republicans, who were supporting Jerry Ford for that appointment.

RG: When the appointment was finally made by President Nixon, did you have any thought at that time that in fact, Richard Nixon was choosing his own successor?

DC: Well, not really, you know? You always realize that that's a possibility when you select a vice president.

RG: Of course you were a member of the Congress for 22 years, and never served in the majority, so it's a wonder in many ways that you had any positive legislative accomplishments, but certainly one of those in your first term was the Repeal the Auto Excise Tax. What would you tell us about that, and any other legislative victories?

DC: Well, there was for a long period of time, a 7% excise tax levied against automobiles, and Chuck Chamberlain and I became very interested in that, because we saw it as a discriminatory situation, as far as the industry that was the major source of jobs, as far as Michigan was concerned. Between him on the House and me on the Senate, we launched quite an effort and got a lot of support, and then eventually got that change made in the tax laws. At that time it was very helpful in my '72 campaign as well.

RG: Sure. What about in the criminal law area? As I recall, you were fairly active in seeking legislation regarding the exclusionary rule, and perhaps some other reforms and reactions to some of the Warren court decisions?

DC: Well, I have always made speeches against the exclusionary rule. No other country has it. Canada or England doesn't use it, but we didn't get anywhere. It was one of those things you talked about a lot, and it's still a problem as far as the criminal situation is concerned now.

RG: All right. Then in 1974 in the summer, some cataclysmic events began to take place regarding Watergate. Up until that time, particularly because you had been Republican whip in the Senate, you had been a supporter of the President?

DC: I certainly supported the administration as much as I felt I could, conscientiously. You also have to keep in mind that way back in 1956, when I ran for Congress the first time, Nixon came into this district and gave a speech for me and supported me. In other elections, he was always there to support me.

DC: At one point he nominated me to be one of the 10 Outstanding Young Men of the Nation, which ... and the JCs took his recommendation, and awarded me such a thing as that. So I owed Nixon a lot politically, and it was very, very tough when I learned in 1974 in August, that the tapes of a conversation in the White House seven days after Watergate implicated Nixon directly in the coverup of that situation.

RG: And you were one of the very few people in the Congress, and certainly therefore in the entire country who were even aware at that moment-

DC: Yes.

RG: ... of those smoking gun tapes.

DC: Because of my leadership position, I was one of the first ones to learn about it. It came indirectly from Alexander Haig, who was the Chief of Staff. I had a tough time during that week. I came home on the weekend, learning that on a Friday, and came home and tried my best to figure out what role I should play.

DC: Here, I'm a leader, and I'm suddenly faced with the fact that Nixon is going to be impeached, he's going to be tried in the Senate, and I knew he was going to be convicted, because the votes were so close even before we knew that. Now I felt like I had to vote against him, which was really something that ... a conclusion to come to. So I reluctantly came within myself to the conclusion that the best solution for him and the country would be for him to resign.

RG: Then you chose to write him a letter.

DC: No president in history, of course, had ...

RG: Before I ever resigned, and I was asking myself what could I do and what should I do under these circumstances. And I felt that I could play an important role if I could shock him with some reality and make him face up to the fact that he should consider the course of resigning. I worked through the night and came up with a letter on the next day after I learned this information. And I wrote to him a letter, which was delivered to Camp David saying that while of course a senator couldn't decide in advance how you would vote, I felt it would be appropriate to let him know what I would consider to be grounds for impeachment. And at that time the Burger Court unanimously had already decided that he had to turn over a group of tapes, including this one to Judge Sirica and to the House Committee. His counsel had denied doing that.

RG: And I wrote and said, "I have no doubt that in view of your defiance that the house is going to vote for articles of impeachment, and there will be a trial in the Senate. And I want you to know that I think, I have no doubt", I said. "That the Senate will also subpoena those tapes, and if you defy the Senate and are in contempt of the Senate, I will consider that grounds for impeachment and will vote accordingly." And I wanted him to know that he was losing me, and that I

felt it very, very strongly. I don't know exactly how that fit into the whole mix. I'm sure it added something to-

DC: And indeed, the national press did make a great deal of the fact that you as the Republican whip had written him this letter.

RG: Yes, that's right. Because I decided later to release it to the press after he had had plenty of time to have it and consider it, I did release it to the press. And then I thought some more, and I decided having taken that step that I was going to publicly, and I ultimately made a public statement that I felt that it was in his interest, and the country's interest for him to resign. And that was of course a major step too, because that was a more direct statement.

DC: And then President Nixon did make the decision to resign and there was a very dramatic meeting that took place the night that he went on television to announce that resignation.

RG: Thursday night of that week, he was to go on television at 9:00 and make an address. And he had invited a group of about 30 house and Senate members to a meeting in the cabinet room an hour before that. And I was rather surprised having said what I said, that I was included, but I was. And it was one of those meetings that you'll never forget because it's hard to describe, but he was very emotional. He went through a lot of irrelevancies, but at the end he said, "I hope you won't feel that I've let you down." And then he kind of just collapsed, and his aides came to his side and helped him out of the room. And I couldn't believe that 30 minutes later he was going to be on national television, but he was, and he'd gotten himself together. That was very moving. There were about 20 house members and 10 senators. People he felt very close to I guess, at least that's the way he put it.

DC: What was your reaction then after the national television address, and the following day?

RG: Well, the following day of course he flew off to California with the black box, which he was going to control until the presidency was transferred.

DC: Is that a little frightening in retrospect?

RG: Something to think about, isn't it?

DC: Indeed it is.

RG: And of course Jerry Ford was sworn in and all of a sudden our friend from Grand Rapids was no longer Jerry, it was Mr. President.

DC: And indeed this was a whole new era in a way for Michigan and Michigan politics because suddenly we had someone from Michigan in the White House

and suddenly people from Michigan really achieved new stature and new importance including yourself.

RG: That's for sure. Yeah.

DC: To what extent did a Gerald Ford to rely on you for advice in the early days?

RG: Well, just being a leader of the Senate, of course, we met with him at least once a week, sometimes twice a week. And in addition to that, I was on his transition team as he was trying to move into the White House and get his staff in place. Some of the people he kept from the Nixon administration, but a lot of them he didn't. And I was on the team that helped to make those recommendations at least to him. So I was very close to him.

DC: In 1975, a year into his presidency, Gerald Ford came back to Michigan and visited Mackinac Island and the Cherry Festival here in Traverse City. Tell me your reminiscences about that great time when Jerry Ford visited this area.

RG: Well, I remember being up in the personal quarters of the White House when I asked him if he'd come out and do this, and he gave me a hard time for a while and then he finally said he would do it. We were awfully happy he did. To my knowledge, it's the first time that a sitting president has ever visited Traverse City. As, we're saying this, President Clinton incidentally is thinking about coming to Traverse City, and he may do that. After he went through the parade downtown, we had a big reception out here at our place where we're holding this session today and had a lot of the people from Traverse City out here to meet them and so forth. It was a great, great event.

RG: Incidentally, the secret service came in about three or four days in advance. They took over our little guest house out there. They were up in the trees and out in the boats and looking all over the place, so they made quite a scene for the local people to see what the secret service does for the president. But anyway, after it was over, and the cavalcade of the president was headed back to the airport. They got about two miles down the road and one of our neighbors, farmer Gallagher, all of a sudden his cows started to cross the road, and the whole cavalcade of the head of the free world stopped, as the Gallagher cows went across the road. And there were the Gallagher children out there with a sign saying, "Welcome, Mr. President. Welcome Betty."

RG: And we learned later that the kids had wanted to go to the parade. Gallagher had said, "You've got to do your chores, but don't worry, we'll make sure that you get to see the president."

DC: And there is one way to do that.

RG: The Detroit papers had a big three column color photograph of that scene the next day, which was really fun.

DC: A great story. A great story. Then in 1976, of course, President Ford had to seek the nomination for a new term and although a lot of people have kind of forgotten this, he was hotly contested in that by Governor Ronald Reagan. And you played a major role in that Reagan-Ford 1976 battle.

RG: Well, a few people may still remember seeing me on their television screens with my cap and waving signs and so forth. I was the floor manager for the Ford campaign at that convention. And I remember sitting in the ... The Michigan delegation wasn't close to the podium and I had to be near the podium because of my responsibilities. So they put me in the Kansas delegation. I was in the front row of the Kansas delegation. And so I was seeing a lot of Bob Dole incidentally all the time. And we had a dickens of a time. I studied very hard the Eisenhower-Taft Republican Convention and realized of course that there could be a test vote on something or other. And we had to be prepared for any particular vote that might come along. And sure enough, the Reagan people did come up with a gimmick and Reagan announced that he would name Schweiker to be vice president.

DC: Senator Richard Schweiker of Pennsylvania?

RG: Right. And challenged Ford to announce his choice in advance. Well, Ford's strength was so diluted and divided and having candidates for vice president in various states. We didn't want to do that. So we had to take that resolution head on and try to defeat it. And we barely did. And when that vote was over, we knew that Ford would get the nomination, and he did. Unfortunately, the Ford and the Reagan people didn't really get together strongly after that convention.

DC: There was some doubt in the fact that Ronald Reagan will join him on the podium.

RG: Whether Reagan would even to the podium. But finally he did.

DC: And the nomination was won by less than 100 votes, I believe.

RG: That's right.

DC: Now there is a story also as to Ford's process of selecting a vice presidential candidate.

RG: I was in a group, I think of about 12 who met with Jerry after that, after the convention was over. And he had to announce the next day, of course, and he hadn't made up his mind, which wasn't unusual under those circumstances. I strongly recommended as my first choice Anne Armstrong, because I thought that a Ford was so far behind that he really had to do something dramatic to shake up the numbers. And there was support for Anne but some of the pollsters had numbers showing that a woman at that stage would not do well

and would really be a drag on the ticket and so on. Our meeting ended up with three recommendations: Anne Armstrong, Howard Baker and Bob Dole. It was really left to Jerry Ford. He didn't want us to vote on it, but he ended up making that decision himself and selected Bob Dole.

DC: If Ronald Reagan hadn't entered the primaries against President Ford, do you think the outcome would've been different in November of 1976?

RG: It's hard to say. I think it would have been better. It ended up that Ford just barely lost.

DC: Yes.

RG: At the time we're taping this, Dole is way behind Clinton, but not as far behind as Ford was behind Carter at a comparable period. And that closed up very quickly and lots of people say that if the campaign had lasted another week, Ford would have won.

DC: Looking back at the presidency, what kind of president was Jerry Ford?

RG: Well, I think he was an ideal president for the time, under the circumstances that we had. Somebody that people liked and trusted. There was a lot of cynicism about government at that time. The Watergate was a very traumatic experience for the country and one that we still haven't recovered from. We're still recovering from it. And I think in so many respects, Jerry Ford was just the ideal president.

DC: You perhaps came fairly close to being appointed to the US Supreme Court twice in a sense, once while Jerry Ford was president, and once afterward had he been elected president. Would you care to comment on that?

RG: Well, of course there was the vacancy that developed when Douglas resigned and the question was who should Jerry Ford appoint with the election coming up? And what goes around comes around, I told Jerry Ford I didn't think it was time to appoint a crony.

DC: Hearkening back to the good old days of Abe Fortas.

RG: That's right. That it was bound to be controversial even though I had lots of friends in the Senate. Just the fact that he would appoint somebody as close to him as I was, would be seized upon I'm sure, and made controversial. He leaned very heavily on the Attorney General Lovey who made a recommendation and came up with Paul Stephens. At that time he was a very noncontroversial appointee who went through and may not have helped Jerry Ford in his campaign, but didn't hurt him.

DC: A lot of people have said that had Gerald Ford been reelected or elected in 1976, that you would have in fact been appointed to the next Supreme Court vacancy. Do you believe that probably was the case?

RG: Well, it's pure speculation obviously.

DC: But if you were to speculate, you'd speculate yes.

RG: I think that the loss by Jerry Ford affected me in a variety of ways. The other way, which you're probably going to ask about too, is the leadership of the Senate. I think the fact that Jerry Ford lost, made a difference in terms of my standing and stature or whatever you want to call it in the Senate at that time. Not much, but just a little.

DC: And that's all it took. Because you had defeated Howard Baker before by two votes, and this time-

RG: And this time I lost by one vote.

DC: By one vote for the leader's position.

RG: Right.

DC: You decided then sometime after that, that you would not seek re-election to a third full term in the Senate even though you were still really quite young, 54, 55. Why did you decide to get out of the Senate?

RG: We get back to this thing of term limits, doesn't it? Not necessarily imposed term limits but the natural rhythm of things. And after 12 years in the Senate, and having lost the Senate leadership battle, I started to talk to myself about do I want to spend the rest of my life in the Senate? One of the problems that, especially as senator from a state like Michigan, which is closely divided politically, is the terrible burden of raising the large amounts of funds that you have to raise to run. And running back and forth all the time trying to keep 9 million people, more than that satisfied so that you've spoken to their group enough. There's no question that there's a burnout that finally develops.

RG: And I guess I must say that I was burned out and I came to the conclusion that I'd like to spend more time with my family. There might be other things that I would like to do besides serving in the Senate, which I enjoyed. And there came a point where I made the decision not to run. And I announced it. I guess one of the big mistakes I made later on was to change my mind and to try to run anyway.

DC: Why did you change your mind?

RG: Well, certainly a part of it was that I had people from the Republican party who thought that it would be much better for the ticket if I were running and would I run again. But I also had time. After time, you get over the problems that you had of burnout and so forth, and you start to look at things from a longer perspective. And I guess I really did finally come to the conclusion that I had made a mistake and that I should have run. But it was a mistake to change my mind because it was too late then.

DC: Right.

RG: And the media wouldn't accept that.

DC: Right. Yes. In fact, you got back into the race when? Was it April, somewhere in there?

RG: It was pretty late and a lot of money to raise.

DC: Right.

RG: And so it didn't work.

DC: Right. Do you think, and of course I know this is idle speculation, but do you think had you gotten in the race in the first place and stayed there, that it would have made an appreciable difference in the outcome that fall?

RG: Well, I like to think so. I'd like to think that if I started early and organize a good campaign that I could have won again. Yes, I think so.

DC: At the end of 1978 you left the Senate, but the call of politics came back again in 1982 and you ran for the State Supreme Court. Who encouraged you to make that run?

RG: There's a guy named Spencer Abraham I think, was party chairman and they ... But I always have had obviously interest in the judiciary, and as a lawyer the pinnacle of success in the profession is to be on the court. So I was always interested. I was doing well in the law business, but somehow or other I yearned for getting back into public service. I always enjoyed public service. I like to do what you think is right rather than being the hired gun for one side or the other. So I was talked into it and I was glad to do it. As it turned out, I ended up having to run against Patty Boyle. At first when I got into the race, it didn't look as though that would be the case. But for some reasons that are rather complicated, it ended up that I had to run against Patty.

RG: She, with Soapy Williams' strong support, put on a terrific campaign and she won. And as I look back on it now I'm kind of glad she wants. She's a real good justice of the Supreme Court.

DC: But two years later you again were nominated and you were victorious.

RG: And Dennis Archer and I were running along with about 18 others. There was a strange situation here because anybody could get on the ballot by going down to the secretary with one petition or something like that, and they were 22 candidates. And Dennis and I came out the top two, I got on the Supreme Court and served for like eight years. A lot of people ask me, "Well, which do you like better?" And I like them both. They're entirely different, the service, but the Supreme Court is a very challenging and I think satisfying way to go. I wrote 120 some odd opinions and dissents for the court, worked very, very hard, I don't think I've ever worked any harder than I did for the Supreme Court.

RG: People don't realize the extent of the responsibility and the weight of the power that the Supreme Court has. A lot of people don't, even some lawyers. The Record Eagle editorialized before the last election that the eight most powerful people in the state of Michigan are the governor and the seven Supreme Court justices. And I think that's true, and yet people read their papers and they can't figure out who to vote for, which is really too bad.

RG: I want to make one more pitch about the supreme court and election of the Supreme Court. I think one of the worst things that we have now is that it's bad enough when congressmen take PAC money, which is special interest money. But at least congressmen are supposed to know in advance what they're going to do. It's not surprising that the groups that support their position would help to finance them, but a supreme court justice isn't supposed to say in advance how he's going to vote. And it seems to me that special interest PAC money has no place in the Supreme Court races, and I've been preaching that for a long time and I hope something will be done about that.

DC: You also had the distinction of being the only Michigan person In the 20th century to be both a United States senator and a state Supreme Court justice. And I think that with the possible exception of senator Vandenberg, and it depends a little bit on how you view his position in the Senate, you are the only Michigan member of the Senate to have a leadership position perhaps in the history of the Senate.

RG: Well, as far as anybody has been able to come up with in terms of research, it does appear to be that way, yes.

DC: That's a marvelous, marvelous legacy and a marvelous record. Looking back now that you have retired from the state supreme court, not having run again in 1994-

RG: You know why? Because there's a state constitutional provision. It says after you're 70, I know I don't look like I'm 70, that you can't run for judicial office. And that's the reason Soapy went off the court and ironically I took his place on the court. But I think one of the great things that I want to acknowledge publicly

is the graciousness of Soapy Williams. Being there when I was sworn in, making very nice statements about me and all the way through our history, he and I always got along very well and I'm always glad to pay tribute to him because he deserves it.

DC: Looking back on your career, what do you regard as your greatest accomplishment?

RG: Perhaps the negative result, if you look at it that way, of keeping Fortas from becoming chief justice. And it hasn't been recognized as being that important and historic, but I think it should be, and in time it will be because really that was a turning point and a change as far as not only the history of the supreme court is concerned. It gave the opportunity for Warren Burger to be appointed and the Burger court came into existence as a result of Fortas being defeated. And the course of the Supreme Court didn't radically change to the right, but it came back to the middle. I think most people would agree with that.

RG: And I think the other effect was upon the Senate. The Senate itself changed as a result of Fortas battle, which I've already said. Now the Senate looks at each one of these very, very carefully. Some people think too carefully. I don't think you can be too careful about selecting supreme court justices for life.

DC: Coming full circle in this interview, you started out as a very young person in politics. What advice would you have for a young person who is interested in politics?

RG: If he's got a good wife who's willing to support-

DC: Which you certainly have had.

RG: That's right. He should do it. The country needs people at all levels. You may not want to start at the congressional level like I foolishly tried to do and somehow accomplished, but to be active in the local government at a different level and then move up. The country depends upon those young people coming forth and serving. And it was a great experience, one that ... There was a lot of disappointment, a lot of heartache and losing is an experience that is character building I think. I would be the first to admit that. But taking the risk and getting in the arena and trying to do the right thing and trying to serve is a wonderful experience and a satisfying experience that I would encourage young people to take on.

DC: Thank you again for sharing your memories and insights with us. RG has indeed had an exciting and remarkable political career. Michigan and America are richer for it.