

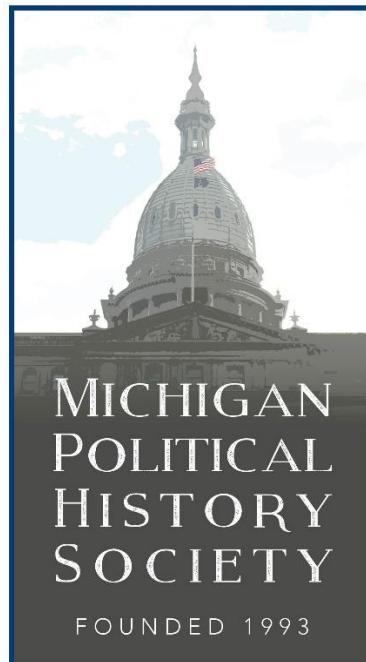
# THE HONORABLE ROBERT DANHOFF

Interviewed by

Bob LaBrant

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Bob LaBrant: I'm Bob LaBrant for the Michigan Political History Society. I'm speaking today with Judge Danhoff, whose career in law and public service has spanned over 50 years. Judge Danhoff has had a distinguished career as a United States attorney, Constitutional Convention delegate. At the Constitutional Convention, he was the chairman of the committee on the judicial branch.

Bob LaBrant: He was a candidate for attorney general. He was in the Romney administration, the legislative and legal advisor, and then for 23 years, a judge on the Michigan Court of Appeals, 16 of those years as Chief Judge.

Judge Danhoff: My wife and I went all the way through school together from the beginning, and we got married after we got out of college, and when I got out of college, why, we first settled in Muskegon. The early life politically, well, interesting, I can remember my parents were both active politically, particularly my mother, and sitting on a wagon, I think, holding a flare, and they used to call them torch light parades in little downtown Zeeland. Saturday night was a big time. And so my parents were active politically in the Republican Party. When you come from that side of the state it's Republican.

Judge Danhoff: So it goes back a long way. After my father passed away in '58 and my mother still stayed active and she was vice chairman of the Republican County Committee in Ottawa and served on the county Board of Canvassers right up until she died in 1975. So I had a really sort of a background of political activity from the time I was in high school and there on.

Bob LaBrant: What attracted you to the law?

Judge Danhoff: Oh, I basically, I don't know it just seem very interesting. There were other Danhoffs who were in the law from early on in high school I took debate and things like that and sort of looked to a legal career. After law school we moved up to Muskegon where I went into private practice. But I immediately got active in the Young Republicans with a bunch of young lawyers, some of which were just out of school as I was because they been delayed by the war and we got active in Muskegon County and we eventually, I remember in '52 we took over the county convention from sort of the old guard.

Judge Danhoff: And we were all Eisenhower people. That's the first big political campaign that I got into. The older guard was more for Senator Taft. And I could remember going by myself to Chicago and that convention. A friend of mine had been down there, he was an alternate delegate. I slept on the floor of his room in the Steven's Hotel. And we went out to the stadium and watched part of the proceedings wherever Everett McKinley Dirksen pointed to Tom Dooley and said, "You have led us down the primrose path...."

Judge Danhoff: And then I got a call one day in the United States' Senate race. As you know Senator Arthur Vandenberg had died and Blair Moody Sr. had been appointed.

Bob LaBrant: Blair Moody was a newspaper man wasn't he?

Judge Danhoff: He was in Washington and Governor Williams had appointed him to the United States Senate and there was a primary going on from John B. Martin who was the Auditor General at that time. And a congressman Charlie Potter, who came from Cheboygan. Well, of course being from Muskegon most of the Republicans were with Martin. I sort of had not committed.

Bob LaBrant: Where was Martin from?

Judge Danhoff: Grand Rapids.

Bob LaBrant: Oh Grand Rapids.

Judge Danhoff: He had been a state senator and was Auditor General. Pretty well known name there. But I got a call one day from the County Chairman who was a young friend of mine and said, "This fellow Potter's coming to town and we got to have somebody. Do you think you might be interested in his campaign?" I looked around and Charlie Potter was a World War II war veteran. Had both legs shot on or gone by just like John Swainson, except his were above the knee was a congressman.

Judge Danhoff: And I met the man and I saw running with Eisenhower seemed to me and Blair Moody being the incumbent, be a tough race. And so I said, "yes" and I signed onto the Potter campaign. Potter beat Martin in a primary and got elected. With that came the opportunity. Senator Potter was given the leeway of picking the United States Attorney for the Western District. Senator Homer Ferguson was the senior senator. He said he'd take Detroit.

Judge Danhoff: He chose Wendell Miles who was the prosecuting attorney of Ottawa County, his father was a circuit judge. I was only three years out of law school but I knew of Mr. Miles, Wendell Miles went to see him in Grand Haven. Said I would be interested in being Assistant United States Attorney and I waited about a week and he called back and said, "Well, if I get confirmed then you're in." So I left private practice and I commuted to Grand Rapids and I went to work for the Assistant United States Attorney. We covered the same territory they do today.

Judge Danhoff: We had two assistants, U.S. Attorney and two assistants. Today, I think they had something like 31 assistants and we covered the whole deal with the three of us. So I left and I started in the U.S. Attorney's Office as Assistant United States Attorney, three years out of law school. I was pretty good. And I remember the article in the Muskegon Chronicle read, "Local Attorney Starts New Job and Has New Son." And my second son had been born on June 28th and I started the first week in July.

Judge Danhoff: So with that I got into the U.S. Attorney's Office. And in those days, not so much today, they are civil service. But it was strictly a political appointed office. I mean you were Republican, so the whole administration changed. And so we replaced Joe Deeb and two assistants and Wendell and I later, a gentleman by the name of Roman Snow, Bud Snow. It turned out eventually that all three of us became judges.

Judge Danhoff: Roman Snow became police judge, circuit judge. I went on the appellate bench. Wendell Miles was first circuit in a Federal District. But that was my first so-called political job and I stayed with that through all the '50s and enjoyed it. I enjoyed working with the FBI, the Secret Service.

Bob LaBrant: What sorts of prosecutions did you have to do?

Judge Danhoff: Oh, we had everything and in those days we were not departmentalized. Whoever walked in. I prosecuted a bank robbery after the fact. I prosecuted the immediate Republican Muskegon County Chairman for mail fraud. Whose daughter and my son started kindergarten together. I went to Judge Miles, later Judge Miles and said, "Maybe you want to take this." He said, "No, it's yours. You started it."

Judge Danhoff: And he plead guilty and it was a mail fraud deal. He had a catalog deal. But those types of cases, plus civil cases. Auto accidents, bankruptcy, tax collections. It didn't make any difference because we were so small you just did what you did.

Bob LaBrant: In the days before I-96, how long would your commute between Muskegon and Grand Rapids take?

Judge Danhoff: That would take a good 30 minutes. It's a lot shorter now. Maybe 15 or 20 at the most with parking. But that was on the old road. But once in a while I had people, you'd be surprised there were other people, some gal worked for the Labor Mediation Board. For a while I commuted with the aircraft recruiter, the Air Corps recruiter who was in Grand Rapids. But I stayed there all the time. I almost moved but then I thought politically, Muskegon were my base. And so we had two children eventually. Earliest part of 60 my oldest daughter was born and Judge Wendell Miles came along and said, "I'm going to seek the Republican nomination for Attorney General in this state." That would be in 1960.

Judge Danhoff: And so he had to resign when he got that as United States Attorney. And immediately there were two federal judges to appoint because there was no time and justice. And one of them was Republican nominee and one was a Democrat nominee but they appointed me to be the United States Attorney.

Bob LaBrant: And so that was going into 1960.

Judge Danhoff: Yeah, that takes us about through the '50s. And again, we were active politically because of the Hatch Act. I couldn't be over it. I couldn't belong to the party. I couldn't become a delegate. But we still went to the state conventions, Judge Miles and I. So I stayed active. Early in 1960, before I became U.S. Attorney, I decided maybe it was time for a change. That was going on seven years. I decided I might run for probate judge. We had an incumbent who had resigned to make some more money. Went into the bank as trust officer.

Judge Danhoff: Governor Williams had appointed a prosecutor, three, four term prosecutor but I checked the results on it. This is nonpartisan. So Justice Department cleared it from the Hatch Act because it wasn't partisan. I analyzed a lot of votes and decided that I would have a good opportunity. Because in a nonpartisan area, in the Democrat areas the fall off in some places was 90% between a partisan and a nonpartisan.

Judge Danhoff: And the Republican areas it might fall off 15%, 20%, 25%. I figured if I could work that I could have a shot. Even though he was the incumbent. So then of course, along comes the presidential fight in 1960 and Nixon and Kennedy were nominated. My mother was a delegate to that one. I got a big long picture with Jerry Ford from 5th District that was Ottawa and Kent.

Bob LaBrant: That was in Chicago.

Judge Danhoff: That was in Chicago. So now I'm the U.S. Attorney and I figured to myself, well, if I don't get elected judge and if Nixon makes I get a pretty leg up, I'll be U.S. Attorney. Miles leaves and says, "If you don't make it as judge." He said, "If I get elected Attorney General maybe I'd like to have you come along as my deputy." So now I got a three horse parlay going into it's called a trifecta, I guess in racing. One should come in the money, don't you think?

Judge Danhoff: No such luck. Nixon loses an extremely close race to Kennedy. Closest race until the last presidential election. Danhoff loses the probate judgeship by less than 300 votes out of 41,000. Had a recount in two counties. Miles loses to Paul Adams, later became a Supreme Court Justice. And I'm out of the money. But in that same November election, the people said, we're going to take a vote in April to call a Constitutional Convention. And you look back and all the things that I planned fell through, but here was one that I hadn't even hardly thought of that came through.

Judge Danhoff: And that was the time that we called it the Gateway Amendment, which George Romney and his Citizens for Michigan were very active. Along with the League of Women Voters to get the signatures. They had to get that on. And it passed and not by that much. I looked it up the other day. Ottawa County, most rural counties voted against it.

Bob LaBrant: I think Muskegon voted against it.

Judge Danhoff: It was the metro area that carried the day. Wayne, Oakland, Macomb and even Gus Scholl, AFL-CIO said, yeah, he was supported calling a convention. He thought probably and he was right that there would be better apportionment.

Bob LaBrant: Included in the Gateway Amendment there was a change in which the delegates to the convention would be elected. Each State House district and each state Senate district would elect a delegate. If the people approved the call in Apr of 1961. After the call was issues why did you choose to run for the Senate rather than a State House district?

Judge Danhoff: First of all, my background in Ottawa was very good. I was of Dutch descendants from Ottawa. My name was well known in the Republican Party not only for myself but through my mother. I figured in Muskegon having just lost a very close election that previous November I was fairly well known. And the area in which I lived in Muskegon was represented by a Democrat in the House. I lived outside the city in those days so that would maybe a tough deal. We had two reps in Muskegon, one was Republican and one was a Democrat. Of course the Ottawa reps, so I figured if I could win that Republican nomination for the Senate seat then I'm in.

Judge Danhoff: Well it turned out that I put the word out that I was going to run and nobody else got into the Republican primary.

Bob LaBrant: So you were unopposed.

Judge Danhoff: Well almost but now I don't get replaced as U.S. Attorney. I don't hear from the President. I don't hear from Justice. His brother is the Attorney General, Detroit's replaced, Chicago, nothing happens to me. And so one day and it's getting close, I got to get my petitions and get filed. So I sent a wire to Attorney General Robert Kennedy saying, as of next Monday, I quit. Well, that all whoa, what's going on. And a fellow by the name of George Hill who had been a prosecutor in Marquette was Chairman of the Public Service name was in and I knew George, U.S. Attorney team.

Judge Danhoff: So George said, "What did you do?" I said, "Well I quit. Why?" He said, "McNamara's been calling me. FBI's in here. They called back, "Can you wait one more week?" So I did. And George came down and I got going and in fact he hired me on as his special assistant, which we had done before in '53. So I had a free ride in the primary. The only money I spent was on a postage stamp and said, "Here." And I think I ran an ad saying, "thank you."

Bob LaBrant: When was the primary election? In April the voters approved the call for the Constitutional Convention.

Judge Danhoff: Yeah, in August.

Bob LaBrant: In August was the primary.

Judge Danhoff: I looked it up the other day was September 12th of '61. And so now I figure I'm in.

Bob LaBrant: So we're forty years almost to the day.

Judge Danhoff: Right. And so in fact we met the call to convention in October 3 of '61 and we're having our 40th reunion October 3 of 2001. And so the election comes along and all over the state, it's a special election. Muskegon County, both delegates are Republican. Even though they're close. I mean the district was Democrat. Bill Hanna wins, John Seyferth, former mayor. Of course we win the Rep and I win. You go into Wayne County, five or six seats that were held by Democrat. The Democrats figure if we can win every seat that's Democrat, we will not have a majority but we'll be very close.

Judge Danhoff: Because in the Senate, you see the Senate was horribly, well, there were three or four Senators in the UP. It was frozen in the old Constitution. Oakland County had one senator, Kent had two. But when the dust all cleared we had 99 Republicans and 45 Democrats. Overwhelming and nobody in their wildest dreams from the Republican side figured, what can we do? And of course, I resigned once I filed and so now I'm elected to the Constitutional Convention and one time I get a call from Grand Rapids. Well John B. Martin becomes the delegate. Paul Goebel, former mayor, Walt De Vries and I get a call that George Romney is going to be in Grand Rapids to meet the delegates.

Judge Danhoff: I had never met the man.

Bob LaBrant: So you had not been active in Citizens for Michigan or anything like that?

Judge Danhoff: No. I knew about it but I was not active, primarily didn't interest me and it wasn't activity like that in Muskegon anyway. Glenn Allen, who I later worked with was very active. But anyway, I went down and I met Romney and he seemed very congenial and very dynamic type of individual, mover. But so we convene in Lansing, our called into a caucus and Saturday I think it'll be the 30th of September by George van Person who was in the State Chairman of the Republican Party, who later headed the MMA, former Speaker of the House.

Judge Danhoff: His father was a minister of my church in New Zealand for 20-something years. You talk about the little things. Little things that happen to you. Because I'm 36 years old I on 50-something lawyers and we caucus all day at the Civic Center, which was part of the old Elks Temple, next to part of Michigan National, to pick our candidate for President. Candidates George Romney, President of American Motors. John Hannah, President of Michigan State University. Dr. James Pollock, very well-known political science professor at the University of Michigan and Edward Hutchinson, at that time former State Senator, later congressman.

Judge Danhoff: Those are the four. We agree to a 2/3 rule. That is 66 votes for our nominee. Candidates agree anybody who gets 50, the rest of them cave. We caucus all

day Saturday and we don't come to any conclusion. Romney leads 40 and up and back, George is announcing. Nobody gets to the 50%. Mostly running Romney, Hutchinson, Hannah, Pollock. I would call it a more conservative rural Republican. Romney and Hannah splitting the metro. Pollock getting some support from a new academician.

Judge Danhoff: But we had nothing. We had urged Steve Nesbitt to run. I say, we, the 9th District, we had caucused one.

Bob LaBrant: Tell our viewers who Steve Nesbitt was.

Judge Danhoff: Steve Nesbitt was the former Superintendent of Schools and was the Vice President of Gerber Baby Food in Fremont. And well known in educational circles. I think he served on the State Board of Education. And we had urged Steve to become a candidate for the presidency. Judge Earl Pugsley, retired circuit was from Hart and he was the oldest delegate by the way.

Bob LaBrant: How old was he?

Judge Danhoff: Late 70's. Because he had retired over 70 from the bench.

Bob LaBrant: Was Jack Faxson?

Judge Danhoff: He was the youngest. Gil Wagner from Lansing was the youngest Republican delegate. But Steve said, "No I don't." And on Monday, we said, "Steve, we got a deadlock, will you run?" Finally, he said, "Okay, if somebody else gets into the act then you can place my name in nomination." Well after one or two ballots I remember I think it was Rockwell Gust, who was a Detroit attorney. One of those who won in a Democratic district came and said, "We got this deadlock. We're going to nominate Bill Cudlip, Dickinson Wright McKean and Cudlip, regent University of Michigan.

Judge Danhoff: Well good man. With that Steve said, "Okay." So we got somebody from Hillsdale to nominate him, Ken Prettie. As I recall it was an hour in. Our first ballot Steve gets like 30-31 votes, which is pretty good. But I'm no expert at that time but I know enough that if you got a dark horse that if a dark horse stops you got to move forward, you stay the same or slide back you're dead. So we all sort of fanned out. I went out to attorneys that I knew from the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Judge Danhoff: Frank Millard, the last Republican Attorney General with Flint, I talked with him. I happen to know there was a fellow by the name of Kent Lundgren. Well Kent had been a State Commander of the American Legion. My mother was very active. She was State President of the American Legion Auxiliary in 1940. So he knew her and we went out. And Don Seyferth, former mayor, he went out to contact mayors and municipal league people. Pugsley went after the other five



circuit judges. Walt De Vries came around and he was supporting around and he said, "Well, what are you going to do?"

Judge Danhoff: I said, "We're going to move. Not knowing." And we went from 41 to 42 and so now we can smell it. So we really went out and pushed. I think it was on the third, maybe the fourth. Steve got the magic number 50. Well Hannah, gets up makes it unanimous, Pollock, Hutchinson, reluctantly Romney. Very reluctantly. So now Steve is it. And we agreed ahead of time we're going to divide the committees 2-1 Republican, give the Democrats a Vice Chairman, give the Democrats a Vice President. They were meeting at the Kellogg Center. We were downtown. It was getting later in the afternoon so Steve Nesbitt offers a vice presidency to Hutchinson and he says, "Yeah."

Judge Danhoff: He looked around and he couldn't find George Romney and he saw me and he said, "Bob, will you go find George Romney and tell him if I would like him to be the vice president will he take it?" I said, "Sure." But I couldn't find him but I found Art Elliott who was from Oakland Republican County Chairman. I said, "Where's Romney?" He says, "Oh, he's in there in an office talking." Well, I later found out he was talking with Van Dusen, could be Martin. "Why?" "Well," I said, "Nesbitt wants him to offer him the vice presidency and wants to know if he'd take it?"

Judge Danhoff: Oh Art said, "Yeah." And go in the office and he's in there and in there and in there comes back, "Guys well what's the answer?" He said, "I couldn't get an answer. He's thinking about it." I go back to Nesbitt I said, Steve said, "What'd he say?" I said, "I couldn't get an answer. He didn't say anything. He's thinking about it." Well, now we're agitating to go out to Kellogg Center and Steve was not happy.

Bob LaBrant: Little perturbed.

Judge Danhoff: Well, we're getting a little anxious. He said, "You go back and tell them he's got one minute, or he's going to somebody else." Well, it would probably go to John Hanna, you see. Steve was trying to get the conservative group and the moderate group to put him in it. I went back, ] in and out, yeah, he'll take it.

Judge Danhoff: I found out later that Romney was harboring some sort of an idea of coalition with the Democrats, and he had worked on it, and to their credit, I think people like Dick Van Dusen, who later served him as secretary, and John Martin said, "You can't do that." We were elected partisan, the caucus has spoken.

Judge Danhoff: So, he takes it, George Van Person puts together a committee to go meet with the Democrats. I think he'd conferred with Steve, and lo and behold, one of the names he mentioned is Judge Danhoff. Why? Because I think I knew him and it was fine. So, I helped Steve out, and we have no idea what we're gonna do, we haven't even organized it.

Judge Danhoff: But, I had helped Steve get elected as president. So, now people come down after our first day. We convene here on Tuesday. Jim Hare reads the deal and beforehand somebody says "well you helped prepare Resolution, I think it's number three or four. First one was for Steve. He's nominated by the Republicans, Democrats. And the second one is for Fred Chase to become our secretary. The third one or fourth one I wrote up is to stay in Lansing cause we were autonomous, we could have gone to Mackinac Island, any place we wanted. But Jim Hare had put together and got some money and fixed up the civic center, but on the comb that wasn't a place to go. I think Howard Stoddard may have had a sum in that. And under Governor Swainson's, so anyway I sponsored that gym and Mr. Harris, Secretary of state came to me that same day. He said "Boy, you took a load off my mind, I'm glad to get that through because I got all this time and money invested."

Judge Danhoff: And so that was my acquaintanceship. Well then we all put down what type of committee we wanted, and we had divided up and there was a committee on administration, Headed by Walt De Vries. Walt later served on Romney's staff and so we do that. Steve had total control over the appointment, just like the speaker of the House he had full control but we all helped him collate things, we didn't have any staff. We were hiring secretary stealing from the legislature, they were getting mad at us.

Judge Danhoff: I helped Steve do that and he had an office in the civic center, off the auditorium and I was in there talking. It was on a Monday night, we met like 8 o'clock and then Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday mornings. We got fifty-four lawyers somewhere. Last republican Attorney-general, six former circuit judges, presidents of the state bar. He said "I'm going to announce the committees tonight, I put you on judiciary or committee on Judicial branch." Which I wanted, I said "Thanks very much." I always remember because it's a real pivotal point in my political career. I sort of turned to leave and he said, "I made you chairman." And I said "You made me chairman?". He said, "Yeah", he said "I know". I'll never forget it." Some of those are gonna say you're too young, maybe not]. But he said, "I think you'll do okay, you'll do fine."

Judge Danhoff: Well, now I'm part of the leadership of the Convention and our committee was twenty-one in number, seven democrats. All lawyers but one. Sydney Barthwell was a black democrat, nice fella. He was a pharmacist from Detroit. We had been haggling in Committee over something one day and he walked in with the largest jar of aspirin I had ever seen. Put em right down in front and said "I'm tired of getting headaches from all you lawyers."

Judge Danhoff: But that allowed me, politically, to work with a committee. We would meet with Steve, the committee chairman, how we're coming. From that, to be quite honest from you, I got some very good press. I remember those days the press was primarily written press. Television was just coming into its own. The only television interview I had was I think WKAR had a fellow there which you couldn't get back in Grand Rapids. But I got a great article in the Booth newspapers by Bill Calsey about my committee would finish on time. Jim

Robinson, after it came out. Jim Robinson later was with the free press, he served for Soapy Williams press age in the '66 Senatorial. Died only a couple years ago. I hadn't said a good word about republicans in years, came out with something, a friend of mine called me said "You gotten Sunday, you got the free press. He said, "Go buy it." So, I rush over to the store and there's an editorial on the editorial, something about when the good awards are passed out, Judge Danhoff ought to get one.

Judge Danhoff: With all the contacts I made, why we go in and George Romney now announces to become candidate for Governor in February '62. If George Romney had been president of the convention, he never could have run for Governor. Or if he had, he would have torn the convention apart. Because from then on in, as far as a Democrat delegates were concerned, he was always suspect. Looking at becoming candidate for Governor. Even as far as real conservative republicans, cause they viewed Romney as sort of a moderate, not that they didn't like him.

Judge Danhoff: There's a great deal about what offices are gonna be appointed, what offices are gonna be elected. Well most of us were for cutting it down, the democrats, since they held all the state elective offices, they wanna keep electing. Highway commissioners, state superintendent, auditor. We wanted to get rid of it. Some of the conservative republicans didn't wanna change that. So, there's the great compromise between George Romney and D. Hale Brigg, which the upshot of it was, the Governor-Lieutenant and Governor run together. That was not opposed. Then the auditor-general be appointed by the legislature, we'd have a state board of education, they would elect the state superintendent. Highway commission would replace the highway commissioner. You would elect a secretary of state and Attorney-general.

Judge Danhoff: There were a number of us who said, you appoint in the federal system, you appoint the attorney-general, why not here? We wanted independent. Why the secretary of state, I don't know. The secretary of state's office basically, it's not a policy making office. It's like a county Clerk, they collect records, driver's license, auto accidents, driver's license, license plates. They run elections. That was the compromise that came through.

Judge Danhoff: Well the press said that D. Hale Stole Romney's pants.

Bob LaBrant: Bob, tell our Audience about D. Hale Brake.

Judge Danhoff: D. Hale Brick was a former state senator who later became the State Treasurer for a number of years. Was a candidate for Governor in '52, I think. Did not make it up until we abolished the election of a state treasurer, he was the last republican elected state treasurer. Very much oriented towards township government, very fine man. Did not look like he had a sense of humor, but he had a great one. He really did. Came out of Montcalm County. His son was a professor at MSU, Department of Agriculture, for a while. It happened that D. Hale granddaughter and my daughter became the best of friends at East Lansing High School, Alyssa.

Judge Danhoff: So I got to know D. Hale, but he was conservative, township oriented for a while was I think head legal council for the township Association here in Lansing. But he was not unreasonable. I know one of the things that I was concerned about was the fifteen-meal allocation. Maybe you don't remember, but every county would have an allocation board. Well the old boards of supervisors were run by the rural counties, the sparsely populated. The cities had very little say, which we changed it to allow the county government. They would haggle who would get the last half meal or something. Some of us went. D. Hale was one of them, we said, "Look, you ought to change that." Out of which came the idea that the county as you have in Ingham can now vote and fix the allocation up to eighteen meals, and it stays that way 'til it's changed by vote. The counties would be hassling for a slice, the townships, school districts, whatever.

Judge Danhoff: He was not totally obstruction, but he was conservative. I enjoyed working with D. Hale and worked with him after in the Governor's office. So one night we met and D. Hale came with a pair of jeans or bib overalls, came to George Romney because the press said he had stolen his pants. And we went from there.

Bob LaBrant: Would you tell us when the convention met, would it meet from Tuesday's through Thursday's?

Judge Danhoff: We normally came in on Monday night, 8 o'clock. We worked 'til Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday and Friday 'til noon. Now in the early stages we probably didn't go that long. But when we got into floor debates, we were there, we were on the floor. We worked it article by article, paragraph by paragraph. I assigned out to various people in my committees, the district courts, probate courts, circuit courts, court of appeals. Some things went through easily like judicial article, like court of appeals, there was no question we were gonna have it. Circuit Courts stayed the same, we agreed to abolish the Justice of the Peace and Circuit Court Commissioner, municipal Courts, but we didn't have time to lay it out. There's a lot involved in the fines, and who gets the money. So we said to the legislature, "You got five years."

Bob LaBrant: For our audience, could you tell us how the justice of the peace system operated?

Judge Danhoff: Well Justice of the peace were in counties and cities and they were a judge.

Bob LaBrant: But you didn't have to be an attorney to be a justice of the peace?

Judge Danhoff: Anybody. In some areas it was very profitable because you got all the speeding tickets and Justice of the Peace meant justice for the plaintiff because unless he found you guilty and fined you, he couldn't assess cost and the only way he made any money was on cost. So, the fine would be twenty dollar fine and five dollar cost. The JP got the five bucks.

Judge Danhoff: Probate Courts were paid on that sometimes, by orders you got. Well, we didn't think that was kosher and the bar was very active, so we abolished that. Bill Ford was an attorney, he was a justice of the peace in Taylor Township.

Bob LaBrant: He later became a member of Congress.

Judge Danhoff: Right. He told me, because he was my Democrat Vice-Chairman, I forget how many thousand dollars a year he made because he got all the tickets between Detroit and Toledo and U.S twenty-four and five. That's before I-75 is built, you see. But he voted for it, he said "I'm killing myself", because he won't to become a state senator in congress.

Judge Danhoff: We debated every debate, judicial wise, how to select judges. We went every way, up and down. Finally, it came down, Justices were not going to change. There was a concentrated effort by a number of Republican attorney's and almost all the Circuit Judges, to divide the supreme court into districts. Make Wayne County district elect two, and then five separate districts. Well that was a system then in Illinois, and we checked it and it was horrible because your parochialize the judges and if you're gonna appoint, if you're gonna elect, you gotta go state-wide. I opposed that and it came back on third reading, I think it had 45 names on it, probably one of the most I impassioned, maybe the only one I made. Out of the forty-five who signed, only forty-three voted. Two guys said your speech changed my mind. The quid pro quo elect the court of appeals judges from districts and that was the quid pro quo, which worked out.

Judge Danhoff: Was one of the reasons I got this article by Robinson saying I had gotten something through. Cause we could have had a deadlock.

Bob LaBrant: The Supreme Court at the time was eight justices.

Judge Danhoff: It was eight. And so what happened was if you appeal from the circuit Court, and split four to four you were firm, you had to get five votes to reverse. The idea being that the trial judge was the fifth vote. We had justices, almost all appeared, not all. Dethmers appeared, he was for the appointed plan, some sort of what we call Missouri. George Edwards came, he was all for election. It all depended how you got there, your background, you know?

Bob LaBrant: But your committee recommended that the size of the court be reduced.

Judge Danhoff: Once we got the court of appeals, we set the first vacancy caused by death will not be filled cause then we debated whether to go for eight to nine, or eight to seven. We finally checked other States, and seven for our size seems to work, and it does. And so we had that. The convention begins to wind down, Romney's gonna be the gubernatorial candidate. I decide to run for Attorney-General. I utilized my contacts from Con Con, very specifically.

Bob LaBrant: But this time Frank Kelly had recently been appointed attorney-general.

Judge Danhoff: Frank Kelly was appointed by Governor Swainson to be attorney-general I think on January 2, 1962. Paul Adams got elected the supreme court. So, on January 2 of '62, Frank J. Kelly, who nobody really heard of came from Alpena was appointed by Governor Swainson to be the Attorney-General. I decide to run with Romney, I utilize all my delegate contacts, which were state wide, Upper Peninsula, Wayne County. Romney did not sit down and pick his slate, per se. He did hold sessions with what he called leadership County Chairmen, District Chairman. Where was there consensus while my name was in there, going, going, going.

Judge Danhoff: Had one little fluff going on, Glen Allen from Kalamazoo, he wanted on the ticket. I'm from Muskegon, West part. The Governor want Bill Seidman, to be the Auditor-General candidate. Well he's grand rapids, now how much West Michigan you gonna have? Well fortunately, we had Romney from Oakland County, the Lieutenant-Governor candidate was Clarence Reed, who had been lieutenant Governor. Norm Stockmire was Otto's son wants to be on the ticket. So they go round and round, and finally they announce some of the Kent delegates, they weren't too sure whether Seidman was Republican or Dem. But see, Seidman had advocated an income tax, which Romney believed in.

Judge Danhoff: I remember Walt Russell was the chair with along with Paul Goldwell, became a good friend of mine. And they said around me, "Okay, we'll go with Seidman, but that's after Danhoff is nominated, because the Auditor-General followed the Attorney-general. So, I got nominated and we were in, had no money in the campaign. Basically, those days you ran hoping that the ticket. The polls looked good for Romney, very good up until the last weekend.

Bob LaBrant: That was the Cuban Missile Crisis?

Judge Danhoff: Yeah, we went through the Missile crisis. This is '62.

Bob LaBrant: Yes.

Judge Danhoff: Yeah that's right. Cuban missile crisis, plus we had a congressman at large going. It looked like Al Bentley was going to win and suddenly the polls began to shift, what looked like a two-hundred and fifty thousand vote Romney win is down. Romney wins by eighty-thousand. If Romney wins by two-fifty, three hundred, maybe I win. But I lose by about a hundred and fourteen or something. Seidman gets pretty close. Clarence Reed got very close to Lesinski. But anyway, Romney is elected.

Bob LaBrant: The fact of the matter is, you held Frank Kelly probably was closest electoral margin in all the years that he ran for Attorney-general.

Judge Danhoff: I used to write the candidates after that in '64, '66. I tell them, "Look, I started a 'I ran against Frank Kelley' Club. I got 48% plus the vote. If you do better than that, I'll buy your lunch." I never had to buy any lunch. The closest one was '66,

was Larry Lindemer and that was about a hundred and sixty-five, a hundred and seventy. But otherwise, Frank was up in the three, four hundred thousand bracket, you know.

Judge Danhoff: Actually, after that Romney gets in and the governorship, then he calls the election night. I'm in Muskegon. He said you know its close, he was sorry he would have liked to have me, but he said "I'd like you on the staff." But he said, "I'm going on vacation, I'll call you when I get back." So, I waited around, a couple, three weeks. Came back, I met him down, he had an office in Bloomfield. He said " I'd like to have you on the staff. Are you gonna become chairman of public service commission, cause their democrat had not been confirmed." Or he said "I'm looking for someone to work with the legislature, executive assistant for legislature."

Judge Danhoff: Well I thought about that and I said, "well legal advisor" he said "Van Dusen was coming but Van Dusen was only coming for a year." He was going back to the firm, Dickinson-Wright. I said "wow, if I go as executive assistant for legislative when Dick leaves, can I move to legal advisor?" He said, "yeah, that'd be fine."

Judge Danhoff: Public service commission, maybe become chairman, I'd be a big wheel in a vice president of consumerist power, or something like that.

Bob LaBrant: Detroit Edison.

Judge Danhoff: Detroit Edison. Leon Cohen. And so I went on the staff and it really was great because I got to know the workings of the legislature. I worked with those fellows. So, years later, when I'm chief judge, I know my way around and they know me. Fortunately, we didn't have term limits. So, the people were there for a while, they got to know you.

Bob LaBrant: Back in 1963 was the Michigan legislature still a part-time legislature?

Judge Danhoff: Very much so. We came in that first year, Allison Green became a speaker. Very big fight in the Senate, Stanley Fair of a so-called moderate group took over by one vote. This was the old State senate and so heavily republican. I think in the House its one or two votes, it's very close. The first thing that Al Green does, he replaces Bill Conn as Chair of Taxation Committee, who had offered a comment report advocating an income tax, which upset the Governor appointed fellow by the name of Jim Folks. And I go to the speaker, and I did not know Al Green but my job. And Al was very honest he said "With the inner workings of a legislature, I'm telling you, I am for an income tax as long as Bill Conn is Chair of the committee it will never fly." And he got Jim Folks and he was right, it took four years, but we did it.

Judge Danhoff: But anyway, I worked with the legislature '63. The new constitution passes, that's our first big hurdle for Romney. Now remember, this is the first Republican Governor in fourteen years. Are we gonna be another Kim Siegler

we going up and down in two years, or are we gonna stay? We pass other things, Ford Canton, maybe you know, Ford Canton had to deal with who can draw unemployment if a plant is on strike in say Ford Motor, parts plant that makes all the ignition, who can draw unemployment? We solved that.

Judge Danhoff: The city income tax was a big fight, Swainson had vetoed the non-resident, the Bowman Bill. Romney said he was for it, helped him carry Macomb County. We worked out that he had 1% the city or up to half a percent for non-resident. But the Constitutional Convention barely passed, but it passed.

Bob LaBrant: In fact, it had to survive a recount, didn't it?

Judge Danhoff: Recount. It's a first all action I went to bed saying "All the work I'd done was for nothing." I got up in the morning, it was an April election, my wife says "It passed," I said "You're kidding." I was with the Governor late, John Mackey was totally opposed to it, he had a big party going in the Jack Tar whooping it up they had beat it, you know. Oakland and Wayne County came through. Gus Scholl sort of switched, he gained something on re-apportionment but he didn't like it enough, but we had enough support, league of women voters, overwhelming press support and it carried by about seven-eight thousand. Survived a recount, and so now we're on our way.

Judge Danhoff: November 1963, we're in Omaha, Nebraska at a Midwest Governors conference. Very significant. Romney and the Midwest Governors were going out to this strategic air command headquarters, we were going to have a tour of SAC. The May had left, we got on a bus with all the Governors, I'm on with Dick Milliman, the press secretary. Glen Allen was with us. He was going to Lincoln to look at the capitol because we were talking about building a new capitol. We get to the SAC headquarters. We're ushered out of the bus into a briefing room. A colonel comes along and says, "The president's party in Dallas has been fired on." We don't know what's up. They're on red alert. I can hear those B-52s, you could just hear them taking off one after the other. Well eventually, on comes General White himself and says, "The President is dead," Kennedy.

Judge Danhoff: But anyway, the conference breaks up to issue a statement. I was supposed to have dinner with an old high school friend who was a doctor in Omaha. I saw him the night before. I didn't even have time to call him. He sees me going up the ramp on a National Guard plane and says to his wife, "Bob is not coming to dinner tonight." We fly home.

Judge Danhoff: Now the whole '64 election which looks like a Kennedy re-election has changed you see. And so this begins to really change the landscape. We come into Lansing. We're flying a DC-3. We're coming in and had terrible winds. We hit the runway. We were going east, we hit and we bounce and come down again and we hit hard. And we bounce up and I know if we come down, the wheels are coming, too. Johnny Johnson was the pilot. He puts it back up, we turn around and he comes back.



Judge Danhoff: Bud Veslo is there waiting for the governor. He said, "I have the headline, "President Killed, Governor Crashes." I said, "Yeah, thanks a lot.

Judge Danhoff: Well now comes '64. We go to San Francisco. Goldwater is nominated, Romney is for Rockefeller, actually for Scranton was the nominee. He, Scranton, Rockefeller. Chaffee just died from Colorado. But Goldwater is it and we know that Goldwater is bad news here in Michigan from a political standpoint. Not so much ideology. Not that he was a bad man because he wasn't.

Judge Danhoff: But Walt De Vries begins to take polls and it just isn't gonna fly. Besides which you're running into a democrat state. The sympathy vote is going to go because people feel guilty about Kennedy and so they're gonna vote for Johnson. So we've got Goldwater which is not going to fly. And so we literally have to set up our own independent in East Congressional District Romney group apart from the county. And the big counties are all Romney for governor groups, volunteers for Romney. Whatever you wanna call them.

Judge Danhoff: I was given the assignment setting up most of the out-state congressional districts which we did. I had help from a gal that worked in the governor's office, Lucille. She was on the program. And we set them up. So we literally ran ads on how to split your ticket. Remember most people were voting automatics. If you vote, when you pull the straight democrat level, you push up for State Rep and pull down for Romney and throw the handle.

Judge Danhoff: I even got some money to a friend of mine in Muskegon to run and of course, the party people were very upset us. Poor Art Elliot is state chairman. He's trying to play it in the middle and it ain't flying. As he said in that program we had here, every time he got Romney ready to say something nice about Goldwater, Milliman, De Vries and myself would get him back. You can't do that if you're gonna within.

Judge Danhoff: Well we're down at the election night at the Statler and it comes in and it's exactly at a prediction. It's gonna be two-to-one Goldwater. We sat around the night before the election. What could we survive? Soapy Williams had survived 350, 400,000, Eisenhower. We said 7, 750 his max. Well we get the projected vote. It's a million. Full landslide for Johnson.

Bob LaBrant: And Romney is running against whom for governor?

Judge Danhoff: Neil Staebler.

Bob LaBrant: Neil Staebler, the congressman at large.

Judge Danhoff: Right. We had wiped that out. Neil was a great guy and a good politician, but he didn't have a lot of charisma. Let me put it that way. And anyway, so now we're waiting for those key precincts and lean democrat, East Detroit. They come in and finally were at 65, 66%. Johnson is 55% Staebler. We say we may live. Well

we lived. Johnson carried the state by a million one hundred thousand and Romney carried by 300,000.

Judge Danhoff: We now had a democrat legislature to deal with under Austin-Kleiner. One vote short, but Romney had survived. And there were those, including many old republicans said, "You're a Kim Sigler, a flash in the pan." There were certain democrats that could hardly wait for election day because now they were gonna have the whole state house. They had everything but the governorship.

Judge Danhoff: So Romney survived and we survived '65 and '66. And the democrats make some blunders. They spent way too much money. I had Joe Matt tell me they're nuts. He said they're crazy.

Bob LaBrant: Joe Kowalski was the speaker.

Judge Danhoff: He was speaker. Ray Dzendzel, was majority leader. Ray was a lot easier to deal with. He and Romney got along quite well. Kowalski and Romney didn't get along at all. I had to deal with, I'm trying to think what the number two fellow out of Flint. I got along with him. Because I was still active, although I was now legal advisor. I still after a while ran all legislation other than budget. After I retired, we got Bob McIntosh came in. But he left to take over commerce. He came in '64 and then government reorganization and he left.

Judge Danhoff: So I oversaw all legislation other than had budget. I picked up along the way after the first session of the legislature which ended in '63 by July 1, the appointment process had gotten bogged down. I'm not talking the big jobs, I'm talking the apple commission, the cherry commission, the potato commission, the apricot, whatever. You name it. Diploma boards we called them. This is big within the particular industry and they had gotten bogged down so the governor said, "Will you take that over?" So, I did.

Judge Danhoff: I forget. In 30 days time, I got something like 40-some people appointed, political clearance, background. So, I had legislature, I had legal and we go into '66 and it's looking good. The polls are good. He's popular.

Bob LaBrant: So Romney is looking forward to 1968 to run for president.

Judge Danhoff: Having survived '64, he immediately gets here's a republican from a major industrial state who survived a Johnson landslide. Life Magazine, all the magazines have it. Dave Broder comes to Michigan to check out this guy Romney. He goes to Mackinac and you're going up next week. Broder's up there with us and he says "We used to have a bar called Horn's bar and it was going pretty good one night. He said, "Who said these republicans don't have fun?"

Judge Danhoff: And so Romney is looking forward. And people forget, he later became Secretary of Defense under Nixon from Wisconsin.

Bob LaBrant: Miller.

Judge Danhoff: He said, "Well if Romney can carry, get some coattails." So, we go in '66. '66 comes along, it's Romney and Milliken. Now he's appointed Griffin. So he's gotta get him elected. We ran all our ads, Romney, Milliken and Griffin, put all their pictures on the same billboard. The reapportionment in the legislature was Austin-Kleiner democrats. The democrats had won almost all of the House seats. They took a House seat in Kalamazoo in '64.

Judge Danhoff: '66 comes along and the state House is within one vote of being 2/3 democrat. We had one big fight on exemption for veterans from the property tax. But Romney vetoed it and we held it in the House. We were gonna hold it in the Senate and then we passed what we wanted. But election night comes along and it is a republican landslide.

Judge Danhoff: I think for the first and last time, all eight educational folks are elected republican. Griffin beats Soapy Williams. Romney beats Zolton Ferency. Zolty was a great guy. We said, "Who ever heard of a governor named Zolton?" He comes from Transylvania, you know. But Zolty became good. He was state democratic chairman. I used to call him up if I needed a democrat appointing. I'd say, "Hey. I need three names of democrat potato farmers, real potato farmers."

Judge Danhoff: That's when Johnson came to town and couldn't even pronounce his name right out at Ann Arbor. The House which is Austin-Kleiner goes 55/55 republican. Five Senate seats are overturned. Emil Lockwood becomes the majority leader 20-18. Five congressional seats turn over, go from democrat to republican. And so Romney is big news going into '67. After '66, he's a force to be reckoned with.

Judge Danhoff: '67 dawns and now the big fight is the income tax and we get it passed. Very important from the fiscal standpoint of this state. It changed and to get it back, we gave some meaningful property tax relief. It wasn't just on your homestead. Whatever property tax you paid, if you met the threshold, you got money. And we also passed open housing from a civil rights standpoint. Very important.

Judge Danhoff: Romney was beginning to make real inroads into the black community and into the labor. The first civil rights commission were John Feikens and Damon Keith. The black vote was up into the high teens or 20s. Chenault was his first treasurer. The labor vote not necessarily, but from the trade standpoint, Palmer, we were making in-roads.

Judge Danhoff: We get the income tax passed and lo and behold, on a Sunday night, 23rd of February, I get this call about 3:30. We've got the riot. And I go down to State Police headquarters. And they have not asked for assistance, but our reports aren't bad. The raided a blind pig and the riot is on. That's about 4:00 in the morning. I go down. I'm at State Police headquarters. State Police go on alert. Cavanagh has still not asked for help. The police commissioner, Fred Davids, is talking to Girardin.

Judge Danhoff: I finally make contact through Girardin with the mayor and about 7:30, I call the governor and he was home in Bloomfield. It was Sunday. I told him what was going on. I said, "They may need help." I said, "We don't know." I said, "It was checked on. The State Police is in full alert. I've checked on the National Guard. Most of them are in Grayling. The battalion is in Grand Rapids. We've got one battalion training in Detroit whether we need them or not."

Judge Danhoff: Remember, we had Watts, we had Newark, the Vietnam War. We had protests. Things were hot. And so he said, "Well, I'm going to church, but if you and the colonel decide to move, go ahead." Finally, we put what we call a sweep through the affected area. They thought if they could surround them, it would burn itself out. Once they got any peace force in there, the place was going. Just it was blowing up. And I get a call from the mayor, saying, "Hey, I need everything I got."

Judge Danhoff: We sent in the State Police or half of them. Maybe got 2200 State Troopers, well 1100 that's all they could spare. We get over to Colonel Schnipke, head of the Guard, said, "Keep that battalion ongoing there." We get some intelligence going, "We do not have enough manpower police wise. Because Detroit is distinguished from Newark or Watts, did not confine itself to one area. It's starting to blow up all over.

Judge Danhoff: So we get the National Guard. Now those poor guys are up in Grayling. They've been in the field. We throw them on a truck and we run them all the way to Detroit. They arrived at night. We get the Guard in Grand Rapids. They put them on city buses to get them to Detroit. We open up high schools to house these people. We've gotta feed them, you gotta clothe them. And Romney is now down at police headquarters.

Judge Danhoff: The governor says, "I want you here." So I took off in the late evening on Sunday in a helicopter with Chuck Harmon. We're supposed to land at some park.

Bob LaBrant: Chuck Harmon was the governor's press secretary.

Judge Danhoff: Press secretary. Yeah. We were supposed to land in the park. He puts us at Cobo Hall at the top and says, "I can't get into the park. I'm afraid of wires." We fly in. I see these hundreds of fires burning all over, here, here. We land. There's nobody there. Downtown Detroit is deserted. We finally find our way down. Chuck says, "Where are we going?" I said, "We've gotta get over here on Gratiot. We're going up to Beaubien in the police station."

Judge Danhoff: There isn't anybody. There isn't even a drunk. There wasn't nobody. All of a sudden, a squad car pulls up. There's four plain clothes men in there, two of them sitting with shotguns. A guy throws out a badge. He says, "What are you two guys walking the street? Don't you know there's a riot?" I said, "Yeah. We wanna go to police headquarters now." I told him who we were. "Okay. Get in."

Judge Danhoff: We get there. They are composing a wire because now we've got enough we can't even with the Guard control it. Breaking out on the west side, down river. It's horrible.

Bob LaBrant: And at this time, how many days has the riot been going on?

Judge Danhoff: It started early Sunday morning about 3 o'clock. This is now Sunday night.

Bob LaBrant: Sunday night. Okay, about 24 hours.

Judge Danhoff: Yeah, going into Monday. We gotta have troops. There's no two ways about it. We need more manpower. And we're throwing people in jail, putting \$100,000 bond up. I had written executive orders, curfew, no gasoline dispensed, only five gallons into your tank, no liquor sold in three counties. I made fortunes for guys in Livingston County and St. Clair who were selling beer on Monday by the case at three times its value.

Judge Danhoff: And I get there and the governor and the mayor are composing a telegram to the president requesting assistance. They've contacted and they're now in contact with Assistant Attorney General. The Vice President was in contact with the mayor. They gave me this wire and they were talking to the Assistant Attorney General. And it says, "We have an insurrection or rebellion." And I happened to remember there was an old federal statute that says the president cannot use troops unless there is an insurrection or rebellion. It goes back to the old whiskey rebellion.

Judge Danhoff: And if Congress is not in session, Congress is not in session. Something clicks in my mind that says the fire, look at the fire insurance. So I get Margie McGowan. She runs upstairs, gets the book. The standard fire insurance policy is in there. It says, "Perils not covered: Losses caused by insurrection or rebellion." I looked at the Governor and I said, "You sign this telegram, you're giving a defense for every claim out there."

Bob LaBrant: Your dad was in the insurance business, wasn't he?

Judge Danhoff: Yeah.

Bob LaBrant: He must have taught you well.

Judge Danhoff: And now, so I get on the phone with the assistant AD and I tell him that. I said, "You look at that telegram." We danced around, but we never used the words insurrection or rebellion. We got the troops, they came in. I came back. Detroit was burning. Lansing was hot. We had emergency in Grand Rapids, Saginaw. The most traumatic experience. The president comes on the air that night and Governor Romney says he can't control, Governor Romney needs this, Governor Romney. He never once mentions Cavanagh.

Judge Danhoff: The governor leaned over at me and he said, "Well, he stuck it in and broke it off right then." Add that to the so-called brain washing incident and Romney's presidential deal is gone. And so Nixon is elected in '68 and calls Romney and says, "I want you to be Secretary of Housing and Urban Development." That has no real interest to me. Justice was going to be run by Mitchell, which I didn't think was too bad, but I didn't like Clandees. I'd seen him in action in '64. Michael gets defeated for the Supreme Court by Thomas Giles Kavanagh.

Judge Danhoff: I stayed at the Jack Tar that night. My wife came and went home. I got Chuck Harman. I says, "What's cooking?" I said, "Mike O'Hara beat." I said, "Aw, come on." I said, "They're two Irishmen." Mike is down 40, 50,000. Well now Mike is going to go up to the Supreme Court. Giles Kavanagh is going up to Court of Appeals. In August of that year, we had put a bill on the ballot to give the governor back the appointive power to fill vacancies. Passed overwhelming. Con-con in a fluke of partisan anger had taken it out.

Judge Danhoff: It hadn't worked. We needed that. Bipartisan. I helped. We got through. Danny Cooper was great. Basil Brown because we needed democrats. Passed in August of '68, along with the 10-year commission, effective 45 days later. Guess who is going to be the recipient of that. So, the governor says, "Do you have interest?" I said, "I sure do." And so it was T. John Lesinski who had served as Romney's Lieutenant Governor and they didn't get along at all.

Judge Danhoff: I know T. John. He was the Chief Judge. He writes a letter, makes it public saying appoint Mike O'Hara, not Bob Danhoff because he figured I'm too much for Romney. But anyway, at that point I was sitting in the governor's office one day and the phone rang. I got up to leave. He said, "No. Sit down." I said, "Okay, thanks. Thanks Judge." He leaned over and smiled. He said, "That's one of your future colleagues urging me to appoint, Mike O'Hara."

Judge Danhoff: Well I got appointed to the court. The governor took off. I went on January 1, a little story there, but I was gonna stay longer. But to get in sync like T. John called it, I got appointed. Romney said, "But you've gotta help me." "Take care." So I was on the bench, but I was back in my old office on January 21 with his resignation in my hand and he would not submit it. He wouldn't fix the date. Don't ask me why. Bill Milliken is walking the floor waiting to become governor and Romney ain't telling him when.

Judge Danhoff: And he was in Washington D.C., had an office. Peg Little, his secretary, was with him. As I said in the program, we were talking away and she said, "Well," she said, "He just waved. Go ahead." She said, "He's getting in the limo to take him to be sworn in as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development." "He's either gonna become a secretary," she said, "or get hit by a truck. And either way, it's not gonna make any difference."

Judge Danhoff: He resigned. I went on the bench. So that began the last phase of my political history.

Bob LaBrant: The one that lasted 23 years.

Judge Danhoff: Which now spans working in the Justice Department, Con-con which is probably the most significant political event I had. I look back at it and it all stemmed from there, really. But even if it hadn't, it was a once in a lifetime deal. We had people who never again sought political office, Dan Karn, Charlie Follo was head of the U of M Department of Marquette, Jim Pollock. John Hannah never sought another political office.

Bob LaBrant: And it also spawned a new generation of political leaders.

Judge Danhoff: Tremendous. You go through it. We said with Romney with all the appointments we had, we had to have commitments, contribution and Con-con and all kinds of legislators. And Bill Ford. Coleman Young's first office was there. He went to the State Senate. Coleman Young was hardly ever heard of in Con-con. But Gary Brown later became a congressman. Glen Allen. All kinds of people. Eddie Hutchinson went on to Congress. So we had a great number of people who spawned careers.

Judge Danhoff: I went on the bench. It was a change of pace. The governor's office, my secretary said that she was driving her nuts because the phone wasn't ringing. People weren't scurrying in. It was more deliberate. But of course, I went right to work on deciding cases. And I'd always wanted to be a judge. As I said, I ran. For a why, I have no big reason, but I've always enjoyed that part of law. That's why I ran for probate judge when the opportunity came.

Judge Danhoff: And so I served and I had to run, of course, in 1970 for the balance of Thomas Giles' term. And he had a 10-year term because he led the ticket. He had served four. I got two. So I went for four and it was close.

Bob LaBrant: You ran against Donald Freeman.

Judge Danhoff: Right. From Flint. And remember, the district went from here east. Whereas my political strength was from here west. Name recognition. I got a lot of help from people, particularly in Macomb County. The democrat Con-con delegates, Joe Schneider, Ralph Liberato. And I carried Macomb; 5, 6000, that's better than losing. And I ran well, except that was a non-presidential year in '70, but Flint was on strike. GM was on strike.

Judge Danhoff: They were the only county to cast more votes in a non-partisan election in '70 than they had in '68 for president because the strikers to get their strike benefits had to tear off their registration and turn it in. So, Freeman just clobbered me and Flynn. I won very well here and in Washtenaw. Well, it got close the next morning. In fact, Tom Downs is in Indiana and I called Tom down and said 'hey, I may need you, I may have a recon'. He said 'it's okay judge, you got me". So I ran in '70, ran again in '74. Freeman ran again but this time it

wasn't near as which right now is with Bronson and myself. And, then I ran again.

Bob LaBrant: 1980.

Judge Danhoff: '80 and '86.

Bob LaBrant: And unopposed in 1986.

Judge Danhoff: '86. 1976, T. John walks in because I told you he had opposed my appointment. He said to me I had made many mistakes. I made one there, I apologize. He said "'you been good and I'm going to retire". I said 'what do you mean'. Well, he said 'I've got 25 and a solid income, buying a house like Lieutenant Governor, join a law firm, make some money and got kids'. And he said 'you've got to succeed me as Chief Judge. I said 'well, how about Tim Quinn?' He said 'Tim doesn't want it. Somebody else wanted it and he said he would do a terrible job. So, T. John went out and all his friends. I get elected Chief Judge in April of '76 and I get reelected. Every three years we elect in those days.

Bob LaBrant: And your peers, had a lot to do with it.

Judge Danhoff: Oh yes.

Bob LaBrant: The Supreme Court choosing some Chief Judge that your peers basically.

Judge Danhoff: Yeah, right.

Bob LaBrant: Voted for you.

Judge Danhoff: And so I got reelected in December of '76, December of '79, '82, '85, '88, until I retired. In '80 I ran again. Judge Bronson and I, a Democrat, prosecutor in Oakland County. We ran joint campaigns, which floored everybody, but they worked. The Oakland County is a heavily Jewish community and that helped me there. Chuck Levin was of great assistance. In Macomb County, even here in Ingham were Republicans so we ran joint fundraisers and things like that. In '86 we're unopposed.

Judge Danhoff: The court has its ups and downs. The case load is going up all the time but we were staying ahead of it. We pioneered a great deal of events. We pioneered so called research pre-hearing division. T. John started it, I expanded it. We pioneered all this computer use. I got a grant, I got one of the early computers in the appellate court was set up and working. Most of them didn't work. I was in a judicial data center because the Supreme Court said I had to and they weren't getting anywhere so I pulled out and I hired my own capability. CJ didn't like it but I got it working and then they got smart.



Judge Danhoff: I got my own money and my own computer. We pioneered that. Ron Zabicki was considered one of the best clerks in all the appellate in the country. When new courts started their people would come to Lansing to the court to interview Ron. I stayed there. In '86, the last time I ran, election day I got a call, to be honest from Joe B. Sullivan who just died. Joe B. had been appointed. Joe B. was a big confidant, ally of Jerry Kavanaugh, Circuit Judge, and appointed by Blanchard to succeed Vince Brennan. Joe B. was a good fellow.

Judge Danhoff: His son-in-law was Tom Lewand who was Blanchard's Chief of Staff. He said 'we got a problem on the case'. I said I thought it was administrative. I wondered what's the number. He said 'well, you going to be in your office?'. I said 'yeah'. 'I want to see you.' He drove all the way from his home. He talked about this case, an attorney had come to him by the name of Finn. He said that he had been approached by Jim Canham, who had been Circuit Judge but now had quit and retired. A lot of particular case that Finn had going in the Court of Appeals and that Canham told him that Bronson was saying he was the only friend he had and that he needed some campaign funds, although we didn't have a campaign. He relayed this to Joe B., not knowing what to do. They had a second meeting, I think the last meeting.

Judge Danhoff: The morning of election there had been a big rally the day before for '70 was a gubernatorial. Now, Canham had showed to Finn a copy of our pre-hearing report which said 'not for Judge Gillis' because his son had tried it in circuit court. It was an automobile case, a product liability. An accident happened in Kentucky. It was a conflict of law. Kentucky had changed and there had been a big verdict for the plaintiff. Ford was on a few, I think John Ford was their attorney. I've known John. I didn't know Finn. Finn at one time, I found out later, had been Assistant Prosecutor under Bronson. I said to Joe B, 'do you know Finn?' He said "oh yeah". I said "do you think he is a straight shooter". He said "yes, I do", which was good enough for me.

Judge Danhoff: Now, I have a dental appointment at 2:00. So I go at it now. I'm rattling this 'you're an attorney'. I've got a triple hearsay. I got allegedly what Bronson told Canham, what Canham told Finn, what Finn told Joe B. Sullivan, who told me. I got all kinds of actors on there. Is it Bronson, is it Finn, is it even Canham? I don't know. I remember I spent about an hour and I came back. I had made a lot of notes. I got Ron, the only one I talked to. I said 'you gotta know about this'. I took my notebook home. I called Jerry Hough. Jerry was the Colonel of the State Police, been on the detail. Jerry wasn't there, but Byker was and Neil. Neil said 'you got to talk to Major Smith. I made an appointment the next morning. Smith said, 'I'll come to your office', and I said 'no, no, 'I'll see you, I don't want a statement. I laid it all out to them. I said we got to find out or is it just bar talk. I don't know.

Judge Danhoff: That afternoon, he immediately called the Attorney General, Bob Ianni. Leon had left, Frank's Deputy. Stanley Steinborn came to see me. He turned it over to the State Police and that's the last I hear. That's election day, I think that's November fourth. November 14th, I'm up in deer camp. I deer hunt in West

Branch. I get up there at noon the day before and at the crook I said 'is there any phone calls'? He said, 'yeah, there's a call for a Judge Danhoff. And I said, "that's me." It was Ianni. He said it all came down. I said, 'what do you mean'. He said, 'well, we got to Canham, got to Finn, Finn finally said "I can't go any farther, I've got a client'.

Judge Danhoff: I think what they wanted was to give Finn marked money. He said we've gotten Canham. We got back from Florida, gave him immunity, wired him, gave him marked bills. He called Bronson, they met, he turned \$20,000 over to Bronson. Bronson walked out the door and, boom. The whole conversation is recorded. There are still some questions in there. Bronson keeps saying to Canham, "well, are you okay? Is this alright with you"? Oh yeah, I'm fine, I'm fine, I'm fine. I find out later that Canham knew about the case before it was assigned to Bronson's panel. Because Canham had gone to Chicago for the wedding of Tom Brennan's daughter, I think, where John Kruse was describing this case and people involved and telling them that Jim Finn had the case. Bronson is arrested. Now I call Soapy, who's the Chief Justice and we go from there. I called Ron right away, I call the Court Administrator. I call my wife, I said "the phone's gonna ring off but don't tell them where I am." I was just eating my dinner, my steak. The phone rings, it's my son who knew where I was. Just got a report that Judge Bronson was arrested, brought to Lansing, goes home and committed suicide.

Judge Danhoff: The next morning is the opening of deer season. Everybody is going out. I'm going back to Lansing to put together a statement with Ron. Yes, I had started an investigation, never dreaming it would go that far. Of course, his funeral. It was on Sunday, Jerry being Jewish, buried the next day at Kauffman. Traumatic, terrible experience, his wife, his boys. His brother was the district judge, wrote me a very nice letter. Canham is dead now, you did what you had to do. We survived that.

Judge Danhoff: The court increased to 24 in '88. I thought we were in good shape. We took a terrible budget hit for a while. I got part of it restored. At the same time, they were changing workers comp. We went from 18 to 24 judges. One of the big things that finally convinced the Supreme Court, for us to control our own oral argument. We were the only appellate court where if you asked for oral argument, you got 30 minutes you could go on. Then we had to give it to them. Now we can set up what is called a summary doc which most appellate courts have. One issued case, you get a proposed order with a report, you sign off. You get three judges, you don't have more. Finally, we could call up three retired judges. I sat on it now. We took 60 cases, we got rid of 56 of them. So you wiped out the back log. Guilty pleas were finally not made appealable as a right so that case load was going down and became manageable. I knew it had been a great time. Twenty-three years was going to be up. I anticipated there would be a contested election. I had been through a number of them. Attorney General, court, was 23 years on the bench. Here was a court that I helped create. Con-con delegates when they came back accused me of the only delegate who got job security on a con-con seat.

Judge Danhoff: I created the court. Glen Allen came on to serve later on. Here was my chance to serve with him. Served great people on the bench. Really on every court. Tim Quinn and Louie McGregor, later on, Dick Maher who just passed away, Joe B. Sullivan. In politics, at least most of the time I was there, did not play a part. Mike O'Hara was assigned to the Court of Appeals in Detroit. He used to remark 'what a difference between that and the Supreme Court. Here we talked the law. Sure we differed philosophically, maybe you can put that with a political label but it wasn't overt, Democrat, Republican.

Judge Danhoff: I served many Chief Justices, Soapy Williams, Mary Coleman, excellent first woman Chief Justice. Did a great job. She is the one that began to get this court reorganization movement under very difficult circumstances. Of course, my wife was happy. I had four kids. By the time I went on the bench I was spending a lot more time at home. They were in college but some of the were in high school. So, that 23 years beginning in '69, my son graduated Michigan State in '71, went on to law school. My girls were just going, I had one that was just nine years old.

Judge Danhoff: Working in the Governor's office you weren't home a lot, particularly when you've got riots, campaigns, going to Mackinac Island, entertain a bunch of legislators, fly home for two days and fly back. We were working on sales tax. It was a varying experience and I look back and it probably quite diffuse and a little bit different, I think considering. The con-con in particular. Romney, of course, was a very popular Governor, well known. He's got a building named after him. You can serve with Governors but it doesn't sometimes show you serve the Governor. Here was George Romney, got a building, presidential, the press loved him. Every time we went to the National Governor's Conference he was always one they interviewed. That was Harmon's job or Milliman. In working with the legislature, and when I became Chief Judge I worked the budget on my own for our court. The bills for a new judge, when I went to Dick Young or Bill Sederburg, I knew them on a one to one basis on my own. Not because I was appointed Chief Judge, they knew who I was. When I talked to them I not only had facts, they would believe me. I was always glad I took the job with the legislature. I always wanted to stay with the law, one way or another, Attorney General, even con-con. Sometimes you could lose that, taking this political job or that political job.

Bob LaBrant: So, Bob, in 1992 you made the decision to retire from the Court of Appeals.

Judge Danhoff: Governor called after Governor John Swainson died, office called and said "would you like to be on the historical commission?" And I said "yeah, I would". And then still on, got reappointed and we meet about every other month, six weeks, and I've been active there. Then one day, not too long before the last Gubernatorial election, the phone rings and "hang on, the Governor wants to talk to you". He said 'I'm putting together a blue-ribbon commission on casino gambling. Would you want to be on that?'. I said "well, yeah, if you want me to". He said "fine". He named some names, head of the FBI, Sister, she's head of the UV Mercy, Al Taublin, a big developer, a couple of high-powered ministers, Reggie Turner was on, he's gonna be the new President of the State Bar. He said

"would you be the chair?" So, I learned an awful lot about casino gambling. You talk about money. That opened my eyes. You have no idea the amount of money that goes through. You've just got to look at what happened to Soaring Eagle and the one in Manistee. I think one of the unfortunate parts is when you get all that money, you spend it. You don't produce anything from it. It's just money going from here to here, there's no goods or products involved. Sure, there are problems. The professor they had around Grand Rapids. Unfortunately, the public, it's here to stay.

Judge Danhoff: Now, some of them are going to start to go bankrupt, you watch. They had that in Mississippi and Louisiana. If we get saturated, some of them aren't going to make it. It was a very interesting commission to serve on. Public hearings, I had one down here in Lansing. A fellow came who had the Mirage. There was a real article. Surprisingly enough, he was right. Then a lot of casinos built in Vegas for a long time. He had one of the early ones. He had a smaller gambling area than most of them but he was the one to begin the dinner shows. The Siegfried and Roy deal and that boomed. Of course, that brings in gamblers. It also began to bring in more family people. The money. Always had people at Atlantic City. Atlantic City didn't bring back any restaurants. The people all stayed in the casino because they could eat practically free. In Atlantic City, you get off the boardwalk and it's dead. It's here, it was very interesting.

Judge Danhoff: I keep active, keep active politically. In fact, I sat back on the Court of Appeals in July. Had a judge who went down sick and is very ill yet. Gary McDonnell out of Saginaw. They called me so I came here to Lansing and got one last opinion. It really wasn't my case but I wrote a dissent which has not become a majority so I get that done and wind that up.

Bob LaBrant: It's been a delightful hour and a half and you've had a remarkable career in Public Service over the last 50 years. Thank you very much.

Judge Danhoff: Thank you. Enjoyed it.