

Finding Aid
California State Politics Oral History Project
OHP_206

OH 6186

Narrator: MARIAN LA FOLLETTE (b. 1926)
Interviewer: Brenda St. Hilaire
Date: February 15, 2021
Location: Costa Mesa, California
Language: English
Project: California State Politics
Audio Format: digital
Length: 01:46:41
Transcript: final; 30 pages
Ephemera: photographs (3)

Abstract:

An oral history with Marian La Follette, former California State Assemblywoman (Republican). This interview was conducted for the California State Politics Oral History Project at California State University, Fullerton, and the Lawrence B. de Graaf Center for Oral and Public History. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about La Follette's political background. Specifically, this interview discusses topics including La Follette's upbringing in the San Fernando Valley (Van Nuys), the child of hardworking parents; mentions college years at UC Berkeley, including an interaction with S.I. Hayakawa; recalls becoming an elementary schoolteacher and seeing firsthand the challenges within the Los Angeles School District due to its sheer size; talks about deciding to run for the newly-formed Los Angeles Community College Board of Trustees as part of the "sensible seven" (and the only woman) and subsequently serving two terms; recalls how she met her first and second husbands; briefly mentions her failed campaign for California State Controller; explains decision to run for California State Assembly in 1980 and subsequent victory; remembers serving as vice chair of Transportation Committee, assigned by Willie Brown; shares a story on the challenge of finding reliable staff in Sacramento; fondly recollects how Democrats and Republicans were more inclined to work together during her tenure, as opposed to what happens currently; recalls raising money for the Wildlife Waystation for Animals, a sanctuary in her district, and how she could not have done so without bipartisan support; provides brief memories of working with Sally Tanner, Marian Bergeson, Willie Brown, and George Deukmejian; recalls attempt and failure to break up L.A. Unified and how its continued largeness has only served as a detriment to the students; discusses decision not to seek reelection in 1990 due to her husband's illness (she was succeeded by Paula Boland, OH 6215); shares about retirement and life after politics; provides opinions on current politics, the role of women in politics, and advice for women seeking office.

OH 6214.1

Narrator: SALLY TANNER (b. 1926)
Interviewer: Brenda St. Hilaire
Date: November 2, 2020
Location: conducted remotely¹
Language: English
Project: California State Politics
Audio Format: digital
Length: 01:36:56
Transcript: final; 22 pages
Ephemera: photographs (3)

Abstract:

An oral history with Sally Tanner, former California State Assemblywoman (Democrat). This interview was conducted for the California State Politics Oral History Project at California State University, Fullerton, and the Lawrence B. de Graaf Center for Oral and Public History. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about Tanner's political background. Specifically, this interview includes discussion of Tanner's upbringing in East Chicago, Illinois, as the youngest of eight children to a chef (mother) and plumber (father); coming to California with her family, after high school; mentions how she became a riveter, and later a messenger, at Lockheed; talks about attending Art Center School of Design and subsequently working in art departments and advertising for local newspapers and department stores; mentions marriage and divorce, and shares a story of how she birthed her first son in a car; recalls joining a local Democrats club and slowly beginning her local political activeness; talks about decision to run for California State Assembly (succeeding Harvey Johnson); campaigning as a single mother with two sons; demographics of her district and being embraced by the Latino community; arriving in Sacramento and the kindness of Governor George Deukmejian; recalls her passion for environmental issues and how one of her first bills was to ensure clean drinking water, and later, clean air; serving as chair on the newly-created Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials Committee, assigned by Willie Brown; and finally, remembers co-founding the California Legislative Women's Caucus with Rep. Bev Hansen (OH 6216).

¹ Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and a subsequent protocol of social distancing that began in March 2020, this interview was conducted remotely using *Zoom* communications software.

OH 6214.2

Narrator: SALLY TANNER (b. 1926)
Interviewer: Brenda St. Hilaire
Date: November 9, 2020
Location: conducted remotely²
Language: English
Project: California State Politics
Audio Format: digital
Length: 01:41:56
Transcript: final; 20 pages
Ephemera: photographs (3)

Abstract:

A second oral history with Sally Tanner, former California State Assemblywoman (Democrat). This interview was conducted for the California State Politics Oral History Project at California State University, Fullerton, and the Lawrence B. de Graaf Center for Oral and Public History. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about Tanner's political background. Specifically, this interview includes discussion of Tanner's co-founding the California Legislative Women's Caucus with Rep. Bev Hansen (OH 6216) and how they used their influence to support and pass bills; mentions legislative friendships with representatives Marian La Follette, Rebecca Morgan, and Marian Bergeson; formation of the Woman of the Year program; her working relationship with Governor George Deukmejian; creating the Tanner Consumer Protection Act, also known as the "lemon law" with regarding to automobile purchasing; recalls the first time she carried a bill on the assembly floor; decision to not seek reelection in 1992 (she was succeeded by Hilda Solis), influenced by the introduction of term limits, an issue with which she did not agree; recalls how she discovered the Northern California town of Ferndale, where she decided to retire; expresses her passion for fishing; touches on challenges faced while in office and the role of faith in her activism; provides opinion on current national politics and the 2020 election; and finally, shares advice for women seeking political involvement.

² Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and a subsequent protocol of social distancing that began in March 2020, this interview was conducted remotely using *Zoom* communications software.

OH 6214.3

Narrator: SALLY TANNER (b. 1926)
Interviewer: Brenda St. Hilaire
Date: November 23, 2020
Location: conducted remotely³
Language: English
Project: California State Politics
Audio Format: digital
Length: 00:31:15
Transcript: final; 7 pages
Ephemera: photographs (6)

Abstract:

A third oral history with Sally Tanner, former California State Assemblywoman (Democrat). This interview was conducted for the California State Politics Oral History Project at California State University, Fullerton, and the Lawrence B. de Graaf Center for Oral and Public History. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about Tanner's political background. Specifically, this interview includes discussion of Tanner's first jobs as a young woman; her advocacy for incarcerated women; recalls surviving a few traumatic events while serving as legislator, one in which she was held up at gunpoint; shares her fondness for Senator Kamala Harris and her future position as vice president; and finally, discusses her concern for equal pay and how women (especially those serving in office) need to continue to advocate for the issue.

³ Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and a subsequent protocol of social distancing that began in March 2020, this interview was conducted remotely using *Zoom* communications software.

OH 6215.1

Narrator: PAULA BOLAND (b. 1940)
Interviewer: Brenda St. Hilaire
Date: January 28, 2021
Location: conducted remotely⁴
Language: English
Project: California State Politics
Audio Format: digital
Length: 01:37:24
Transcript: final
Ephemera: photographs (8); bio (1); field notes

Abstract:

An oral history with Paula Boland, former California State Assemblywoman (Republican). This interview was conducted for the California State Politics Oral History Project at California State University, Fullerton, and the Lawrence B. de Graaf Center for Oral and Public History. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about Boland's political background. Specifically, this interview includes discussion of Boland's upbringing in Granada Hills, California, the daughter of two beautician business owners; recalls the heavy role modeling of her independent, forward-thinking mother; remembers being active while attending San Fernando High School; mentions marrying too young, right out of high school, then having two children, and years later enduring divorce; explains her foray into local real estate and joining the chamber of commerce (where she was the only woman), which led to more political involvement; how she hustled as a single mother, working several jobs and side businesses, but also found time to volunteer in several local political campaigns; how she formed a mutually-beneficial community partnership between the chamber of commerce and the Los Angeles Police Department; shares how she met her second husband; describes the formation of the United Chambers of Commerce, a unifying body of various San Fernando Valley-based chambers; describes the decision to run for California State Assembly in 1990; recalls the primary and general campaigns, raising money and having helpful allies and powerful endorsements that led to victory; and finally, reflects on the culture shock of being an elected in Sacramento, which meant more time away from her family.

⁴ Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and a subsequent protocol of social distancing that began in March 2020, this interview was conducted remotely using *Zoom* communications software.

OH 6215.2

Narrator: PAULA BOLAND (b. 1940)
Interviewer: Brenda St. Hilaire
Date: February 4, 2021
Location: conducted remotely⁵
Language: English
Project: California State Politics
Audio Format: digital
Length: 01:21:52
Transcript: final
Ephemera: photographs (8); bio (1); field notes

Abstract:

A second oral history with Paula Boland, former California State Assemblywoman (Republican). This interview was conducted for the California State Politics Oral History Project at California State University, Fullerton, and the Lawrence B. de Graaf Center for Oral and Public History. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about Boland's political background. Specifically, this interview includes discussion of Boland's 1990 campaign for California State Assembly; recalls initial days serving in the California legislature; remembers early issues and goals, specifically, changing the statute of limitations regarding child rape; talks about the pushback she received for supporting such a bill, particularly from the Catholic Church; recalls the passage of the bill and how it served as a watershed moment that led to high-profile cases; sheds light on the heavy emotional toll of carrying such a bill forward; explains how she carried forth a separate bill that mandated a legal obligation to report knowledge of molestation; again, receiving pushback from the Catholic Church; recalls how she wrestled with her own Catholic faith throughout the ordeal; reflects on what it was like being one of the few women members of the California legislature; mentions condescending treatment from male Democrats, while male Republicans seemed more inclusive and welcoming; recalls how she made it clear that she "wasn't going to take" any form of disrespect from assembly members; recalls a tense confrontation on the assembly floor with Representative John Vasconcellos and how they amicably resolved it; shares candid opinions regarding fellow members of the Women's Caucus; comments on an unforgettable gesture from the Women's Caucus that occurred after the Northridge Earthquake; and finally, discusses aspects of the Women of the Year program.

⁵ Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and a subsequent protocol of social distancing that began in March 2020, this interview was conducted remotely using *Zoom* communications software.

OH 6215.3

Narrator: PAULA BOLAND (b. 1940)
Interviewer: Brenda St. Hilaire
Date: February 8, 2021
Location: conducted remotely⁶
Language: English
Project: California State Politics
Audio Format: digital
Length: 02:43:42
Transcript: final
Ephemera: photographs (8); bio (1)

Abstract:

A third oral history with Paula Boland, former California State Assemblywoman (Republican). This interview was conducted for the California State Politics Oral History Project at California State University, Fullerton, and the Lawrence B. de Graaf Center for Oral and Public History. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about Boland's political background. Specifically, this interview includes discussion of Boland's years in Sacramento, during an era that was bipartisan and honest; talks about relationships with fellow electeds from both parties, including Speaker Willie Brown; explains term limits and its negative impact on legislative efficacy in California; talks about her relationship with Governor Pete Wilson and his massive effort to fix California's debt with tax raises; remembers her committee assignments and how she became chair of public safety; recalls Proposition 13 and how it helped home owners; details major pieces of legislation that she introduced, including a one-strike-and-you're-out law for sexual offenders, confidentiality protection for jurors, the Grandparents' rights bill; recalls her bill to separate the San Fernando Valley from the Los Angeles Unified School District, in an effort to form its own district; how it passed through legislation and the voters, but was ultimately voted down by the State of California Board of Education; similarly, recalls her efforts supporting secession of the San Fernando Valley from the City of Los Angeles; recalls how she termed out in the state assembly but felt her work was not finished, and therefore ran unsuccessfully for state senate (lost to Adam Schiff); how she was appointed to the Narcotic Addicts Evaluation Authority, working out of Norco State Prison with drug offenders; discusses her work on the L.A. Charter Commission and how she was "sold out" by Mayor Richard Riordan; reveals charter reasons why the City of Los Angeles is so expensive; why she believes in public safety, particularly support for LAPD, and how it became her focus; shares how the current disdain toward law enforcement is a potential danger to all; provides her opinion of Los Angeles District Attorney George Gascon; shares her definition of political courage, how the COVID pandemic altered her political perspective, and how current politicians need to care more for the whole than just themselves; talks about fraud in California's Employment Division, which indicates a larger problem with state workers; and finally, shares why she is not a feminist, provides advice to younger politically-driven women, and gives high praise and gratitude to her legislative staff.

⁶ Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and a subsequent protocol of social distancing that began in March 2020, this interview was conducted remotely using *Zoom* communications software.

OH 6216

Narrator: BEV HANSEN (b. 1944)
Interviewer: Brenda St. Hilaire
Date: February 11, 2021
Location: conducted remotely⁷
Language: English
Project: California State Politics
Audio Format: digital
Length: 02:35:05
Transcript: edited; 60 pages
Ephemera: photograph (1)

Abstract:

An oral history with Bev Hansen, former California State assemblywoman (Republican). This interview was conducted for the California State Politics Oral History Project at California State University, Fullerton, and the Lawrence B. de Graaf Center for Oral and Public History. The purpose of this interview was to gather information about Hansen's political background. Specifically, this interview includes discussion of Hansen's upbringing in Northern California, as the daughter of a rancher/dairyman (father) and schoolteacher (mother); recalls her childhood duties on her family's ranch; remembers being active in high school as an organizer, student council representative, and athlete; talks about attending college at Cal Berkeley in the midst of the Free Speech Movement and how she often felt like an outsider being a conservative; mentions marriage, five children, divorce, and becoming a single mother; recalls often working two jobs as a real estate agent and political field representative for State Senator Jim Nielsen; her decision to run for California State Senate, and how she was not supported by the Republican leadership initially (which changed once she was elected); how her kids helped her campaign by walking precincts; how she balanced home life and political life once she was in Sacramento; talks about the camaraderie of women in the California legislature; recalls cofounding the California Legislative Women's Caucus with Sally Tanner (OH# 6214) and how they used their influence to support and pass legislative bills; comments on the deterioration of bipartisanship and therefore not as much gets done in politics; shares memories of serving with other women representatives in Sacramento; the Woman of the Year program; shares about her working relationships with Willie Brown, George Deukmejian, and Pete Wilson; recalls how her district was redrawn, which influenced her decision not to seek reelection; how she was proud to work with so many talented people, including Delaine Eastin, Ross Johnson, Ken Maddy, and John Burton; the impact of term limits on the legislature; how she transitioned into lobbying after her assembly term was over; ways in which the California legislature has changed since she served, including the issues currently plaguing the state; the current exodus of the middleclass from California; speculation on where all the political moderates went; the impact of COVID-19 on politics; the effect of Trump on the Republican party; the impact of Kamala Harris' election as vice president; and finally, shares advice to women seeking political involvement.

⁷ Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and a subsequent protocol of social distancing that began in March 2020, this interview was conducted remotely using *Zoom* communications software.