CENTER FOR ORAL AND PUBLIC HISTORY
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

Orange County Politics Oral History Project

An Oral History with MARIAN BERGESON

Interviewed

By

Kira A. Gentry

On October 29, 2013 and November 13, 2013

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Marian Bergeson at her home in Newport Beach, California, 2013.

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NARRATOR: MARIAN BERGESON

INTERVIEWER: Kira A. Gentry

DATE: October 29, 2013

LOCATION: Newport Beach, California

PROJECT: Orange County Politics

KG: This is an interview with Marian Bergeson for the Orange County Politics Oral History Project. The interview is being conducted by Kira Gentry in Newport Beach, California, on October 29, 2013. Thank you so much for taking time out of your schedule to be interviewed today. We really appreciate it.

MB: Thank you.

KG: So, to begin, would you tell me when and where you were born?

MB: I was born on August 31, 1925 in Salt Lake City [and didn't live there] for long. My parents moved to Los Angeles months after that, so I really consider myself a lifelong Californian.

KG: So, what was it like growing up in California?

MB: Well, a lot different than it is now. Of course, it was a day that everybody idolized Shirley Temple, the Dionne quintuplets. We didn't have television. We played in the streets. As soon as the lights went on it was time for us to be home, and we had to be home. We frequented the libraries. That was a special time for us. We played jacks on the floor. I remember that was kind of the game of choice in those days. No Bears Out Tonight, which is the fun game we played at night as long as the lights were not on. But, it was a different time.

Of course, it was a building time for Los Angeles. We moved to Westwood in 1930 just at the beginning of the development of UCLA [University of California, Los Angeles]. Then it was always thought that we'd go to UCLA. In fact, it was similar to what UCI [University of California, Irvine] was when we moved to Newport Beach. So, we watched the growth of two cities really, Newport and Westwood Village. Westwood Village was a great place to grow up. It was a small community at that time. When I go back to visit it is hard to believe that it's the same place, but it was a fresh and growing community that offered a lot of opportunities. I

remember we used to walk to school. I went to Westwood Elementary School, grammar school. We were the first graduating class from the middle school there, and then we went to Uni High School, graduated with Norma Jean Baker. You remember who that is? We didn't know who Norma Jean Baker was for several years after that.

But, you know, it was a different time. It was during the war. I actually grew up during the Depression and, of course, knew what it was like to see people hungry and soup lines and going around begging for food. My mother used to always set up a card table in the backyard and offer people sandwiches. These were our neighbors, you know, and people that had suddenly run out of a job and didn't have food on the table. So, I remember those times. It was hard, and it was hard to see people that were actually starving. And then, of course, during the war it was a different time too. When I was going to school the boys graduated, so we didn't have much fun. No football games, no proms. Everything was done in the afternoon because all the lights were capped so that we didn't have any lights showing at night. That was dangerous because we never knew when we were going to get bombed, and, of course, those were very uncertain times.

KG: So, what did your dad do?

MB: My dad was actually in—he worked for Associated and had service stations, and he was actually employing. So, we were fortunate in a way because we were actually able to give jobs to people. It was certainly not a wealth (laughs) that we were accumulating, but it was a way that we were able to survive during very difficult times. I know some of our relatives came and stayed with us during that period of time as well. I think you learned to be conservative. You become very conservative. I remember my mother would send me up to get a loaf of bread. We lived near a store, Van de Kamps as a matter of fact, and I dropped a dime coming home. She sent me back to find that dime. I looked for hours, and I never did find it. I mean, you were that conscious. But then, you know, ten cents, you could get a lot of food for that. You could buy a loaf of bread for ten cents. I remember we used to go to the movies. For ten cents you could have two features, a cartoon, a news, what they called a Fox Movietone. You get all the news, about six months later I think it was, but they would send us broadcasts of what was going on in the war and things of that type. And, you'd have serials like Buck Rogers. A lot of those things have come true. They were never, never land at that time. But, for ten cents, you know, the parents could drop us off. That was a babysitter for five hours. (laughs) It worked wonders in those days and very entertaining.

KG: So, how many brothers and sisters do you have?

MB: They are all still living. I have a brother, and I have two sisters.

KG: Okay. So, where were you in that lineup?

MB: I was the eldest. I guess I was always sort of—we didn't have babysitters in those days except for the family, so I always ended up being the babysitter. I remember when my mother had the last one I thought, I'm just really tired, (laughs) but we were a very close family. It was a Mormon family and very, very attentive to Mormon activities and very family oriented. It was a good time for many of us because of the closeness of the family, but there were hardships. You look back on it, you know, it's hard to realize that we went through a lot of the trials and tribulations that we did during those days, a lot of sacrificing. I remember we couldn't have silk hose—of course, they'd never heard of nylons in those days—because they were all going into parachutes. And, we used to kid because in high school if you could find somebody that had gasoline on their breath, that would be somebody you'd want to go out with because they had siphoned gasoline out of their dad's car (laughs) because you couldn't get gas. Gas, of course, was rationed because they were used for the troops. And Hershey Almond Bars, when the war was over I couldn't get enough Hershey Almond Bars. They were unheard of during the war. They all went to serve the troops. Everything was for the troops. In fact, boys that were not in uniforms in those days were just—you figured they all had flat feet or something.

KG: Now you said you had some brothers. So, were they—or a brother. Was he in the war?

MB: My brother was in the Navy for a short time. He was younger than I was so he came in at the end of the war. My husband was a B-29 pilot. Of course, that was before I knew him. I met him after he was in the service. He was actually an instructor, and he instructed most of his tenure while he was in the service.

KG: Okay. So, what do you remember about when Pearl Harbor was attacked?

MB: Where was I? I was coming out of church, and I remember, you know, I didn't realize—because Hawaii didn't sound like—you didn't get the significance of it really. I was, I think, a junior. Forty-one, I would have been a sophomore in high school. I didn't get the significance, but I remember my mother was crying. I realized because I had cousins that were older—and the significance of that is I did lose one of my cousins. He was lost. He was a B-17 pilot. They never found him. They never recovered his body. He was lost over the ocean someplace. My aunt never gave up hope. She always knew he was going to come home. But, my mother had this premonition, you know, and she was just so concerned with the war. It took a while, I think, for the children really to realize the significance that, that war was bringing upon the United States. And then, of course, there was the concern then with the coast—because we lived right near the ocean—that we very likely could have been bombed as well. So, you know, everybody was in great fear and trepidation of the threat of also being as close to the shores as we were living.

KG: Uh-huh. How aware were you of what was taking place in Europe prior to Pearl Harbor?

MB: We were aware of Germany invading and bombing Europe but not drawn into it until Pearl Harbor. We lived in Westwood. We were probably, I don't know, three or four miles from the ocean. That's when they called blackouts. Everything was blacked out, and you couldn't have any lights that you could see from above. I remember one night, which is a night I'll never forget, they had all the searchlights trained on an object. They never did identify it, but it was considered a foreign object. Everybody was prepared for a bombing. And we were all, you know, terrified that this was going to be one of those things that happened in the United States. It didn't materialize, but I remember everybody was looking at the searchlights that were all trained on an object in the sky, [like] you see in the movies thinking, This is home. How can this happen?

KG: Um-hm. Now what did you know about what was happening in Europe?

MB: Uh, well, you know, you had followed it, and it was a long way away. Of course, communication was not like it is now certainly. You know, you'd get reports. Like I say, you'd see a Fox Movietone when you'd go to the movies, and you'd see maybe two weeks away from what was going on in England. And, there wasn't a lot in school. You'd get news broadcasts that there was a war going on, but it was always somebody else's war, you know. It was not really identified nor were they communicating a lot in our—we didn't really have the kinds of classes in those days that related much to current events, even though we would get some, but not really what was relevant to the day-to-day activities in Europe at that time. And, of course, the Holocaust and all the things, we had no knowledge. I mean, that came much, much later when things were discovered after the war.

[00:10:48]

KG: Uh-huh. Yeah. So, growing up who would you say were your role models?

MB: Well, you know, role models were—frankly, I lived in an area where everybody loved the movie stars. I mean, movies were everything. I remember going to watch Shirley Temple. I think probably one of the most interesting times I had was when I was at a Republican Convention and sat next to Shirley Temple. I mean, it's just a real person and so nice and just a lovely lady and to think that this was—I just idolized Shirley Temple. Then I would, you know, going to these previews we used to have at the Westwood Theater there, stand in line just to see her walk by in her little white jackets. I had the doll, Shirley Temple dolls, and you know, at the movies a lot. And, I loved dogs. I had a picture of every breed of dog. So, I mean our models were kind of fairytale type things rather than individuals. I always wanted to be an aviatrix for some reason. I saw a movie with Myrna Loy and she was an aviatrix and I thought, Gee, that would be great. My dad would take us out to what they called National Field, which is now part of international airport. We would sit there on the fence and look at these airplanes, and I'd get so excited. (laughs) And now, I have to say when they go over my house I'm not quite so excited, but it was just thrilling to see these airplanes. Of course, they were pretty early models of

airplanes, but, I mean, those were exciting things. And, we'd get in the car some days and take—you know, we used to love to go for rides. My mother loved to go on a ride. We had radios in cars in those days and this is—we'd all pile in the car. We had an old Pontiac. Our first car actually was a Hupmobile; that was way back when. And then, finally, we modernized into a Pontiac. We'd go for rides, and that was really—now you stay away from that (laughs), stay away from any kind of traffic, but these were the fun things that you did as a child.

KG: Now I didn't ask you, what are your parent's names?

MB: My mother was Clara Hunter Crittenden. My dad was Ivan Crittenden. They were both from Utah. My dad really did not have a formal education because he went away and joined the service in World War I, and he actually did service overseas. My mother was college educated and was a teacher. I think that's sort of where I got my bearings for education. I sort of followed and had that education genetic syndrome, but she was a wonderful teacher, fantastic, and really loving caring and wonderful mother. She probably was my inspiration in many ways because she was such a strong woman, you know, a leader, very, very active in the community and did a lot of good things. She was the one that always took care of people. When anybody was in trouble they always came to see Clara. And it was Clara, Clara Hunter Crittenden. She was quite a woman. We did a roots trip with my brother and sister when we went back and visited a lot of the country where they came from. There was a castle in Scotland, which is the Hunter Castle, and as long as the family maintains possession it stays a castle. Otherwise it becomes part of, I guess, the government there. But, we still have our castle there. It's kind of nice to say we have a castle some place, not that we could have it for a retreat. (laughs) It's a little too far.

KG: (laughs) It's your claim to fame, you have a castle. That's really neat. So, you said that—it sounds like church was a very important part of your childhood.

MB: Uh-huh.

KG: What church did you go to?

MB: Well, we went to a Mormon Church which, actually in those days, there were not a lot of them. In fact, I remember kids would come up to me and say, Do you have horns? (laughs) Mormons were kind of thought of as weird and strange. I wasn't quite sure why because I never quite understood, you know. I thought we were okay. (laughs) But, we went into Los Angeles and it's a long—in those days, because you didn't have all the traffic and problems, it didn't seem like it was very far away, but it was in Los Angeles. We did go to church every Sunday, and then, of course, eventually, as our families grew up we had a church closer so we didn't have to go that far into Los Angeles.

KG: And, has that remained a constant in your life?

MB: Up until—well then, I went to UCLA, and I was having so much fun my family decided I should go BYU [Brigham Young University]. So, I ended up at BYU. That's where I graduated. Most of my undergraduate was actually at UCLA.

KG: Okay. So, why UCLA?

MB: Well, it was in our backyard in a sense, and it was always sort of assumed that that's where I would go. My brother went back to the University of Utah for a while, and then he came back. He went to medical school at SC, but he did his residency work at UCLA. His father-in-law came out from Rochester, New York, to be the Dean of Medicine, so it was very convenient for him to do his residency work at UCLA with his new bride. We sort of paralleled with our education. He was younger than I was, so we still remain very close.

KG: What's his name?

MB: Dr. Ivan Hunter Crittenden. He is retired now. He has dual residency. One in Redlands—he started a pediatric cardiology department out there. In fact, he was very much involved with the initial transplant, infant's heart transplant in diagnosing. He did a lot of work at UCLA, but they initially started the pediatric cardiology work. He also lives at Deer Valley. We love to go to Deer Valley to visit him, so more fun. Yeah, it's a great place up there, so we enjoyed that.

KG: Now what about your sister? Did she also go to college?

MB: My sister—well, I have one sister, Carolyn Tyler, who lives in Pacific Palisades. Her husband is an architect, and whenever we need help with any of our ideas we call on him. (laughs) She's very strongly involved with the Mormon Church. My other sister, Sue Cannon, is as well. My brother is not so much. I mean, you kind of, I would say continuing, you know, activities involved with the church. Sue, my sister that's younger than I am, she has not been very well. But, she gets along pretty well. She lives in Utah. We recently had a family reunion, and she's doing well. But, you know, we have a close family. We love to get together.

KG: That's good. Now did your sister also follow in your education footsteps and go to college?

MB: Did what?

KG: Did your sister go to college as well?

MB: Yeah, uh-huh. We've all had our college degrees, and then my brother, of course, he's gone a bit beyond. He's always been our—you know, we've all looked up to him. He's been kind of the big brother, even though he's actually younger than I am. He looks older than I do.

KG: (laughs)

MB: And unfortunately, he has signs of Alzheimer's which, you know, it's kind of hard to see having always been such a brilliant mind. It's kind of hard, but this happens to so many now that, unfortunately, it's something that I think society has got to deal with.

KG: It doesn't make it any easier though.

MB: No, it doesn't. It certainly doesn't skip over any family or anyone regardless of whatever.

KG: No, it doesn't. So, why was it so important to you to get a college education?

MB: Well, I think my mother always just felt we were going to go to college, and, of course, in my day it was not all that customary for women. I mean, in a sense I was a failure because I didn't get married. (laughs) You're supposed to have a husband by that time, and women were married much earlier. But, during the war, of course, it was different too, and it took me a while to get through college because I had to support myself to a great extent. In fact, I had a job at the Bank of America as a teller, and they made it very clear that when I took that job it was temporary because women were not supposed to handle money. We were only going to do this during a period of time that the men were away, and then as soon as they came back that job would have to go to a veteran. I mean, there were so many predetermined stereotypes as far as the jobs that women could take, and when I went to school, you know, you could be a nurse or you could be a teacher or a social worker. You were pretty much limited to those roles, and that was temporary because, inevitably, you were going to get married and have a family and live happily ever after. Well, of course, during the war a lot of women did take the positions because the men, of course, were not there, and Rosie the Riveter prevailed. Those jobs went to women, and many women stayed employed because they found out that getting a salary and being independent had its advantages. But, it still is more difficult because it's true, when men came back the jobs were then pretty much taken back according to where they felt that this is the realm of a man as opposed to a woman.

[00:21:24]

KG: How did you feel about that?

MB: Well, it always bothered me a little. (laughs) I felt I could shell out the money as well as anybody. (laughs) And, in fact, you know, the next step for me, when we moved to Newport Beach—well, I got married. We had two of our children in Westwood, and then my husband had a position—well, he took a position in Newport Beach, but I was teaching at the time. In fact, when I graduated from college I took a job as a teacher. That's where I graduated as an elementary teacher. We moved to Newport, built our house here in 1959—still live in the same house. When we moved here it was really an opportunity, because it was a brand new community, to get

involved in many, many types of things because, for one thing, we didn't have a library. And I thought, Gosh, you know, my kids love to go to libraries. We'd take them down there, and they'd spend all afternoon picking out their favorite books. So, we went around house to house and got $25 contributions and went to the Newport Beach City Council meeting and said, "Hey, we've got $12,000. Build us a library." So, that's how Mariners Library came about.

That's how I actually got involved in politics, you know, with getting involved with community activities. So, we built our library. Then I became President of Friends of the Library, and I said, "Well, we need to have children's activities," so we built the Children's Program. Then, "Well, let's have some drama to throw in," so we built the Children's Theater Guild. And, we have that, and we have Nancy Ebsen and Buddy Ebsen who helped us who were neighbors. So, we sort of initiated that kind of program. Then we needed some music so we got involved with the Upper Bay Philharmonic and thought, Now wouldn't it be great if we could start providing scholarships for kids to go into some of the music programs? So, it sorted of accumulated, you know, and then I ran for the school board. I remember when I got on the school board the superintendent said, "Well, maybe we could use a woman. Somebody should know something about kids." And I thought, You know, I think that would be a nice thing for the school board.

So, a lot of the things that I had done had been associated with children because I really felt that, you know, my time should be spent on doing things for what, I thought, were good for kids, and my kids would benefit. Everybody's children should have what I think is good for my kids, as well as everybody else's. So, with that we continued to grow the programs with the schools and then running for the board and getting involved with the activities of the school district, so I thought, Well, I need to get something that's going to put me in a position to give me a leadership role on the board. So, I decided I wanted to find out about finance, school finance. I talked to everybody. I went to the county Department of Education and got all the information I could, and pretty soon I found out that I knew more than most of these gentlemen on the board that were mostly CEOs. I mean, they were very important people in the community because this was a newly unified district, and it was a lighthouse district. It's where Costa Mesa and Newport Mesa had merged into a—I had been on the Newport Elementary and there was a Costa Mesa Elementary and then there was a Newport Harbor, which was covered both of them, and all these merged together. It was a painful time because there needed to be a lot of what you would consider collaborative efforts bringing together all these administrative faculty together, get an internally consistent salary schedule, and then the administration, which you had to condense, some had to go. You know, very painful and difficult.

It took a lot of financial understanding of how, so I decided I'm going to learn what I can, which I did. Eventually, I got on the delegate assembly for the state consortium of school boards, and eventually, became the President of the California School Board Association. That put me into the arena of the state legislature, and I used to have to go before the state assembly, particularly because they were dealing with a lot of the issues at the time, those bills were that we were dealing with. One of them was involved with collective bargaining and having been a teacher and knowing pretty much, I didn't like to see what was happening with teachers because I felt

teachers should treated as professionals. I hated to see more of the labor union type of thing developing. I just thought I wasn't sure this was the way to go and there should be some better way of getting management and teachers together so you could prevent any abuses if they occurred but not to get this confrontational situation.

So, I went before the committees, and I remember being invited—Jerry Brown had just taken over as governor, and I went up there. Well, he invited us up for dinner. Well, you know, here I am! I'm pretty naïve, and I thought, Dinner! Oh, we could see the candelabras and [have] dinner with the governor. (laughs) So, we get up there, and we're in this little cubicle. (laughs) We had this shrimp tempura, which was like plastic, and rice that was so soggy you couldn't—(laughs) And then, they had tea. You couldn't do too much to the tea. That was pretty good. So, he had CTA [California Teachers Association] in one room and us in the other, and he was rushing back and forth to see us. Well, what he was offering us was nothing, so we just said, "No, this just doesn't work." Okay, we'll do it in the legislature. So with that, because I was president of CSBA [California School Boards Association], I got brought into a lot of the discussions. They weren't giving us any management rights. There was nothing. We were just kind of obscure. So anyway, that's how I got involved with the legislature. I was going around and was dropping into Republican Clubs about how we needed to protect—and I felt teachers were professionals. I had always felt that way, you know, that this is something that we really need to preserve. So, I sort of gained some recognition in the community. Well, all of a sudden, there was an opening in the assembly when Bob Badham, who had been the assemblyman, decided to run for congress because there was—you'll probably get a lot of this from Lois Lundberg because Lois was head of the Republican Party then—because there was a good deal of difficulty when the congressman was indicted. He had to go to prison for some problems that he had. It was Andrew Hinshaw. So, Bob Badham the Assemblyman decided to run for congress, which left the seat open, and because in those days they didn't have term limits, there really wasn't anybody waiting around. They were scrounging around trying to find who is going to run in Bob Badham's seat. They came and asked me, and I said, "No way." I mean, I was so turned off to Sacramento. And then, they kept encouraging me, even the guys. Well, there had never been a woman running for anything, you know, for the legislature, particularly. The smoke filled rooms and so forth.

So anyway, I thought and I talked to my family and they said, Yeah, do it. You really should, you know. So, I thought, Okay. I decided, well, I'll try it out. So, I went around, and, of course, it was interesting with that campaign because the first thing they would ask me, What does your husband do? You know? They'd get into all these things about, how old are your kids? I mean, all these questions that were so sexist. How is a woman going to be able to handle this, this PTA lady type? Eventually, I gathered enough support, and I went to all the right people. They checked into all my credentials. So, I really had good backing. And then, this man (laughs)—I can't call him a gentleman—he decided he wanted to run. Well, a lot of people, because it was an open seat, decided they wanted to get in. A lot of them were just people that, you know, they wanted their names on the ballot for whatever reason. And this one gentleman, who everybody knew him in this area because his wife was a *Penthouse* model, and not only that, she was a centerfold, and we just kind

of took it as a joke, you know, because it was just not cool. This was the most traditional Republican district in the world. So, he decided to run. He never showed up for any of the campaign forums. He never did anything to show that he was really interested, and they said, Well, he doesn't like to speak in public. I thought, He wants to run for the assembly? But anyway, we didn't pay any attention. Well, in the meantime, he had hired a very strategic management firm and put a lot of money into it. They had strategically removed my name from the bottom of the ballot by putting his fireman from his boat—because they had extended the filing deadline and found somebody who had an initial that came after mine. A lot of this is kind of complicated, but it was strategically done in such a way where my name would be eliminated from the bottom of the ballot, which is the favored position, the top or the bottom. It draws votes just because people don't know enough about it, and they just pick and choose based on placement of the ballot.

[00:31:20]

So anyway, to make a long story short, he won by as many votes as he drew from me, and, of course, I just thought, If they can elect somebody like that I don't want anything to do with politics. And so, the nominee went to Sweden—his wife was a Swedish model—and brought pornographic materials and got caught and picked up at customs. This was all over the press. Here is the Republican nominee who's, you know, picked up for smuggling in pornographic materials. So, you got to write a write in. You've got to run a write in. This was historic. I mean, this was in all the newspapers all over everything. And I said, "Absolutely not. I'm not going to do this." And they said, Well, you've got to come down and just in the event that you—there was a deadline. It was like twelve days before the election. So, I went to where they register our vote, because I was working for a firm, and we were conducting a decision analysis. (laughs) The irony of what I was doing! "You've got to. You've got to you know." And even people from the press were calling me. So, I said, "Well, I'll just get my name in." Of course, the next day, headlines, Bergeson sails in and so-and-so sails out. So, they formed—I had over two thousand volunteers. We had a write-in campaign. Well, somebody who was working on this fella's campaign wrote a letter to Ronald Reagan saying that this defeated candidate was trying to ace out the Republican nominee—or this woman, this dissident, was acing out the nominee to the party, and so [he] sent out a letter in his favor. But, you know, we got I think it was forty-eight thousand write-in votes. We didn't get enough. The Democrat was elected (laughs) in this most Republican—I mean, it was the strangest thing. So, I actually lost the election twice. But, it was such a strange thing, and it was probably the weirdest election ever managed. Everybody started in my campaign right after that, and actually, we did get a letter from the White House apologizing. They had no idea what the situation was when they wrote that letter.

But anyway, that was how I got elected to the assembly. That's kind of a long drawn out deal of some, you know—which we established Marian's Mafia. It worked for the candidate, I think the only write-in campaign that was ever successful for congress, and that's when Ron Packard was elected to congress in North San Diego County. The same people that worked on my campaign worked on his. Part of

it was an Orange County District. It was one of those no one counted or, you know, it was part of two different counties. So, that's kind of how I got elected to the assembly.

But when I was elected, of course, you know, it was a different sort of situation for women at that time, very different. There were other women in the assembly at that time, and there were other Republican women at that time. But, it was very chauvinistic, and the women were not given a great deal of attention. It was highly partisan. In fact, there were actually more Democrats representing Orange County at that time than Republicans, and it was following Watergate, so because of that it was much more polarized. The senate was far different, and when I had a chance to run for the senate, of course, I readily accepted that. The senate was a phenomenal. I mean, it was a terrific experience. I always loved the senate. I had a chance to run for congress, and I turned it down. That was before term limits. I'm not sure—I mean, I may have made the same decision, but I did, I loved the senate. It was great. I had an opportunity to chair a major committee, the only Republican at that time, and I always found that I was able to author many major bills simply because I founded my success on relationships, not necessarily on partisanship. I found that I could get good Republican bills through that had common interest with Democrats simply by forming relationships and not trying to be combative. I think the legislature now is far too partisan and far too polarized, and I think that it prevents good policy because there are ways that both parties could get together and decide on issues. If it was wedge issues, I mean, you know, you just recognize they exist and you go your way and you usually are not going to win. I remember those that preceded me, they said, Marian, you learn one thing when you go to the legislature. There is only one thing that counts and that is, counting is what counts. So, you've got to know who your votes are. If the votes aren't there you just don't bother. But, you can make votes by—you know, in certain ways. I always felt you don't have to give up your principles, and you don't have to give up your values. And somehow if you vote with the Democrats you are giving up. You're not. You're finding a commonality of issues that really are basically true and sound.

A good example of that, and probably the first bill and the best bill I ever authored, was income taxing. Most people didn't understand it because it's bracket creep. At that time people were pushed up into higher brackets when they'd get a cost of living increase. That's when they were paying more in taxes. Willie Brown and Jerry Brown, the Democrats, loved it because government was collecting far more money simply because people that were, your wage earners, were getting raises, and they were paying the government more, not getting the benefits for their families. And, I found Democrats who were just as upset about that as Republicans were, except that their leadership hated it. So, I got some Democrats to help me with that and even Jesse Unruh came in and testified on behalf of my bill. For a Republican—this was my freshman year as a minority woman. I mean, I got that through the legislature simply by with working both with Democrats and Republicans. Well, Jerry Brown vetoed the bill. So then, I worked together with Howard Jarvis, and we got an initiative. Howard Jarvis became ill, and so I had to go on the road, went to all the television stations. I remember Gray Davis followed me around to every one of them to try and kill it. But, I got support through the media, and we got that approved

by the electorate. It's the best income tax reduction bill that's ever passed, and I thought, You couldn't do that if you went up there with this, I'm going to vote no if it's a Democrat's bill regardless. So, I mean, it really depends a lot on the ability to understand how to make the system work in your favor and work for the favor of the things that are important to the people that you represent.

So, that's an example where I think—and other bills, another bill that was important to my district was beach liability. You know, at one time, this was when I was in the senate, there were some accidents that occurred in the surf where a swimmer would run along, and they'd dive into this surf. They'd go in head first, and they'd hit their head on a sandbar and become, you know—unfortunately, they'd break their back and become paraplegic. And, they were winning judgments against the city because it was considered an improved condition. The reason it was considered an improved condition is because there were lifeguards on duty, and so they could eliminate their liability if they were to eliminate their lifeguards. And, I thought, you know, If that isn't stupid. (laughs) So anyway, I went to work on that. The trial lawyers hated it because, of course, if you got a judgment that is a good thing for their business. We finally got that through. And, I remember the judiciary, the chair of the judiciary, said, "That bill is never going to get out of my committee." I got it out of the committee because I got another coastline legislature, David Roberti, who was president of the senate, to come in and testify because he also had the same problem with his city. That was in Los Angeles, and they were having the same problem. The Senate Judiciary Chair, he resigned that night, but he quickly took up his chairmanship the next day. (laughs) Again, it was because you find commonality of interests. It's where you have to be able to [find] what really is the common purpose of the policy that's the best interest of not only Republicans but the Democrats as well.

[00:41:19]

KG: So, what was your family's political ideology when you were growing up, and how did that factor into your choice to be a Republican?

MB: Well, you know, it's interesting that you say that because my family was very political. My mother was a dyed in the wool Taft Republican, and my dad was a dyed in the wool Roosevelt Democrat. Every election they always voted, but they would always cancel each other's vote out. But, I mean, we would hear a lot of discussions, so when I went to UCLA—and we couldn't vote until we were twenty-one. We couldn't register to vote. I've always been very thoughtful about how I wanted to go about doing things because it was something that to me was important. You know, I always felt voting was important, and the whole democratic process to me was always intriguing. I always felt that self-responsibility really had such a bearing on what was successful. I always felt education was very important, and that self-responsibility to me—and that was the thing that was always my guiding principle. I still feel that way, you know. I have problems in some cases with my own party with some of the positions and that, but I still feel the overriding self-responsibility.

And, I believe strongly in education. When I first went to Sacramento education was not considered a priority at all by the Republicans. In fact, the short straw went to the Republican that served on the Education Committee because it was not a juice committee because it was a CTA—you know, you had to be on the union side in order to get any kind of a contribution. So, juice committees were sought because they were the ones that produced the campaign money to get re-elected and to help other Republicans get elected. I mean, that's just the way the way the system was geared to work. I couldn't understand it. In fact, I felt like I had to audition to get on the Education Committee because to me it was so important. And then, interestingly enough, while I was still in the assembly, George Deukmejian who was not particularly strong on K-12 but very strong on university education—they had a rally in Newport Beach. Well, it wasn't actually in Newport Beach. It was at Orange Coast College on education, and it was surprising. They filled the stadium with people who were concerned about public education and what was happening in our schools. He sent some of his people down here, and the response was so overwhelming it definitely got his attention.

And then, at the same time, California Business Roundtable came to the education committee and were protesting the fact that California schools were turning out functionally illiterate kids who couldn't—they didn't know how to answer the telephone, they couldn't put out intelligent memos, and that if they hired them they had to train them. It was a real indictment against what we would consider social promotion and some of the issues that kids were going through school and entering into the work force at lower levels. So, you've got to do something about our schools. That sort of, I think, kind of primed the pump, if you will, to take an interest in what was happening in education to recognize that work force development, that our economy was dependent upon sending educated people into these careers. It wasn't until the CEOs really started cranking down on the legislature and putting money into education that the Republicans kind of awakened themselves to the fact that yeah, education is important. Up to that point there had been vouchers. You know, that would be the way. And, I believe in choice. I think that as long as parents are involved that they should have a choice, but they need to get involved. As long as they are supporting their kid's education, and they are willing to back what they are doing, I think that that's important. Sometimes competition makes schools better, whether it's public or private or whatever, and for that reason, I have never opposed vouchers. I just think the public schools, because that's where most of your kids are going to be educated—and the same thing, I'm a very strong supporter of charter schools because I think you need to have that flexibility. I believe in local control and being able to engender local creative juices to flow and to be able to create and to motivate and to really inspire and get good teachers into the classroom, I mean, to me that's the way things work. The more that you can do that, the more government can incentify. They should incentify and not manipulate or not mandate.

KG: Well, this is going back a little bit, but since we're talking about education, why did you decide to become a teacher?

MB: Well, you know, I guess probably it was about the only thing you could have graduated with at that time, you know, realistically. And, as I had always enjoyed working—of course, you know as the oldest child I figured I had a hand in raising the kids, my sisters and brothers. Not really! My mother was wonderful and she was just so—she was such a wonderful teacher herself. I do think that you look into the inspiration that your parents provide, and I think my mother had a lot to do with it. And she was so creative in her teaching. I don't think I could ever be as creative as she was, but I think it gave me the inspiration of how important it was to be able to have that factor. I know when, after I did teach, how you sort of lose yourself with kids. I mean, it's a way of—it's therapeutic actually because you can see the influence that you have. If you have a problem, you forget about your problems because you suddenly—you realize what a great responsibility you have in shaping the lives of others. I think it's sort of a genetic kind of thing too. The same way, you know, my daughters—I assume you know about the tragedy of one of my daughters? They both were just—and I have a daughter now that's principal, and she loves kids. I mean, they just have that innate—so, you know, I think it kind of goes with you. Someone once told me that teachers are born not made. But, I think you can create; I think that teachers can. But, I've known teachers that have all the subject matter in their head, but if they can't translate it, if they can't engage kids and provide the ability to inspire and motivate kids, no matter how much information you have, it doesn't work in the classroom. Hopefully, I was able to do a bit of that. I always hoped I did. Once a teacher, always a teacher.

KG: (laughs) So, you said you went to UCLA for most of your undergraduate work, but then you ended up transferring. What was it that was so fun about UCLA that you just forgot about the classes?

MB: (laughs) Well, I had a Catholic boyfriend for one thing, (laughs) and in a Mormon family in those days that was just not the thing to do. I mean, the differential of religions was a very big issue. Nowadays, you know, I think those things are, I mean, any more than racial, there are a lot of changes that have taken place with the generations. Now, you know, it doesn't make that much difference. In those days it did. And, it was sort of like if you continue at UCLA you can stay home. We'll help you out with your tuition where we can. If you go to BYU, well, we'll take care of things for you. (laughs) Frankly, I think I realized probably it was better for me for a lot of perspective. I was enjoying life a little too much. (laughs)

[00:50:12]

KG: So, how did you meet your husband?

MB: At BYU. (laughs)

KG: So, it was meant to be.

MB: Yeah, so it worked out.

KG: That's really good. So, you guys, just to kind of pick up on that a little bit, you met at BYU, and then how did you get back to California?

MB: Well, we stayed there for a while, and then I convinced him that his opportunities are better here. We both moved back here, and we moved back to Westwood and lived there for several years until he had an opportunity. He worked with McDonnell Douglas, and then he came down here for what they called Ford Aeronutronic. Then he came to Philco. I don't know what it is now, but they've changed. They are various different electronic activities. Then he went back to Boeing and then retired. But, we decided that this is a better place. Westwood was changing a lot in those days too. I mean, it wasn't the Westwood that I grew up in. It was becoming much more—well, the growth had hit and traffic and a lot of the things had just changed. It was becoming much more urbanized. I always liked it—it was always my hometown—but we just felt it was someplace that was new, different, and opportunities, so we moved here.

KG: Okay, this is going way back, but I was curious. When you talked about working at BofA and you were handling the money and when the guys came back they would essentially move you, did you have to move to another position when the war ended?

MB: Well, I was only working there part-time. This was while I was going to school. No, I remember V-J—was it V-D or V-J Day I guess. I was working at the Bank of America, and they just declared it. I remember everybody just dropped everything. We went to Hollywood and Vine, and I mean, everybody went crazy. You were running around. You were hugging and kissing. You didn't know anybody, but it was absolute pandemonium of the greatest kind, hugging and crying. It was just an unbelievable time, because you realized how—I mean, it was such a period of sacrifice. We lost—I mean, you'd go out with a fellow, and one I had been out with several times, he was on a mission to go to Japan. He was a flyer, and he was killed. I mean, these kinds of experiences, you just—and the emotions of everything were just so incredible. When it was over it was like—you know, you can't imagine the emotions that you go through with something like that, just to think that you were going to live again. And when people talk about war—and they don't know (laughs) unless you've been through something that's so personal and you've seen so much of it that has touched you with your family, because as I say, we lost a cousin and a very close cousin. He had my picture with him, and you can really identify in a different way than people that.

And, of course, now it's even tougher because in those days everybody had to have a uniform. It was just something that was a status. If you didn't have a uniform on then everybody would kind of look at you, what's wrong with him sort of thing? There were women that were going in but not so much. It was primarily for nurses, but you didn't know that many women that were in the war. Of course, now you do have both sexes. War, it's an awful thing. I wish we didn't have to have it.

KG: Um-hm. Okay, we're going to go ahead and take a little break and change out the tape on the recorder. [recording paused] Okay, we're back from a break, and what

we decided to do is continue this interview in a couple of weeks so Marian can make it to a meeting. So, thank you so much for taking time today to talk with us, and I look forward to meeting you again.

END OF INTERVIEW

CENTER FOR ORAL AND PUBLIC HISTORY
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

NARRATOR: MARIAN BERGESON

INTERVIEWER: Kira A. Gentry

DATE: November 13, 2013

LOCATION: Newport Beach, California

PROJECT: Orange County Politics

KG: This is the second session of my interview with Marian Bergeson for the Orange County Politics Oral History Project. The interview is being conducted by Kira Gentry in Newport Beach, California, on November 13, 2013. So, I thought what we would do was go back a little bit and pick up on some things that we didn't touch on as much before, and then we'll carry on with the rest of your career. So, why don't we talk a little bit about the affect that your politics and your political involvement had on your family. What was that like for them?

MB: I think they were generally excited about it. They actually walked precincts and distributed literature during my campaigns. Even my husband did, and that surprised me. He was very supportive. I remember him going up and down the hills of San Clemente, which was not an easy trek. The kids really enjoyed it, too. I mean, they were of high school age, and so they were old enough to understand politics. They were only interested—initially, I think that when I was on the school board locally they were more concerned because they used to have to get the calls that would come in at night. I remember my son saying, "You know what? My wife is never going to be a school board member, and I'm not going to be a school board member either." But, I think it was just because they didn't quite understand. It was more like an interruption kind of thing. Generally, the family was supportive, and I think when they were old enough to understand and to feel part of the process, that inclusiveness, I think, was important to them.

KG: What kind of a balance did you have to strike between your home life and your political involvement?

MB: Well, you know, I really didn't go to Sacramento. I mean, I didn't go to Sacramento until the kids were grown and they were off to college, and so it really didn't disturb our home life. Most of my activities were involved with kids during the time that I was home and the kids were growing up. And, in fact, that's what stimulated my

interest, was getting involved with children's activities. They were generally—I mean, it was much more family oriented. And, I have to say that when I first ran for office you had to be very careful not to include your family because it would be viewed that you were neglecting your family somehow if you had kids in your brochure, your own kids. It was okay to have everybody else's kids because it showed that you were involved in your community. Your own kids, you know, you had to kind of keep them out because you didn't want to in any way indicate that you'd be neglecting them. That was the big thing with Republicans in those days.

KG: Now, you say that was a big thing with the Republicans. Was it different with the Democratic Party?

MB: Not so much. I think the Republicans tended to be a lot, you know, moms belong home with their kids. I think it was much more—Democrats were more into, they had a right to be involved in politics and careers and that. It was generally a trend at that particular time, and that's where I had to sort of buck, I guess, the culture of the party. And, in a sense, even Democrats, I think, too, they really hadn't progressed to that point because you didn't see a lot of Democrat leaders that were women either. Women were just not thought of in that way. They were thought of as being homemakers, and those kept their mouth shut and weren't supposed to do anything except do what our husband's told us to do. (laughs)

KG: So, speaking about that topic of women in politics, why do you think it's so important for women to be involved in the political sphere?

MB: Well, you know, I think that anybody that's interested should be involved in politics, and I think that women have a very distinct role to play. I mean, after all we have been involved in many activities in the background; we understand, oftentimes, the sensitivity to issues that men perhaps don't have. And, quite frankly, I think for many years women didn't do it just because we didn't think that we could. Once you gain the confidence and knew that you had the ability to get out there and fight against the odds, which it really was in those days. Remember, this was in the early sixties and seventies. You know, if you wanted to do it you could, but you just had to get out there and show that you have the ability. I would have to say probably one of my earliest supporters indicated to me—we were at a conference, a school board meeting—he said, "You know, you really should think of getting into politics. You think like a man." And, I thought that was actually pretty good. (laughs) Gee, I can do that. Those are the kinds of things that actually build your confidence, that feeling that, you know, why shouldn't you? You have no reason not to become involved and do things that you believe in. And, the things that I believe in—of course, I've always kind of centered on education so those are the issues that I think I carried through in my political life—was primarily through education.

KG: So, how do you think things are different for women in politics today as opposed to when you were in office?

MB: Well, it's a lot easier, of course, and you see many women that are mayors. Actually, there were mayors in Newport Beach when we moved here in 1959 but not usually the case. Particularly now you've seen in Orange County where a lot of women have become involved in politics early on, so you know we built the bench, you might say, for women to run. I've always encouraged them saying it's great because we need that. At one time I know I was the only GOP woman senator, and I think that it was kind of tough going. I just felt like there's so much that women can offer. And, it isn't often that you're sending up the most qualified men either. I just think it's not a question of men or women. It's who really has the best policy capability, because a lot of men did great things for women, so it really is just taking the abilities that either men or women have. Women have a heck of a lot of ability that has to be recognized and, I think, encouraged and supported.

KG: On that note, I know we're kind of jumping ahead, but I did some reading about the Marian Bergeson Excellence in Public Series that you have. So, how do you feel that you've been able to contribute to helping women be more involved in politics?

MB: Well, you know, I had such great experiences. I loved every day that I was in office. It was really—well, there were some days I was kind of discouraged (laughs), but, I mean, I just felt that it was something that if I could help other women—and frankly, it was also because of what they call The California Women's Leadership Association. They were involved now with a different type of women's political organization. It would be more oriented towards the career types because oftentimes women's organizations, the GOP federated groups, were women who really—you know, they'd have their meetings from 10:00 to 2:00, and they were really volunteers, wonderful volunteers, but feeling that we needed to structure a woman's organization that was more oriented toward the career type. So, out of that organization and following utilized the model that they had with Richard Lugar's program in Indiana and set up the independent Marian Bergeson series, and I was delighted that they decided to use my name for it. We've had great leadership and worked with the organization to really develop the type of program that offers real in depth study of what Sacramento and Washington has to offer. Because it's not just for women that want to run for office but those that want to become involved in politics to better understand the system, the process. They meet real live people that are involved. Not just legislators or representatives in Washington, but they actually meet the people that make things happen, a lot of the staff. They find it exciting, and I don't know of any that haven't. In fact, many have gone on to run for office or to become very much involved in other kinds of political activities. And, you know, I think anything that we can do to encourage women to use their talents in a way where they benefit the political process—because I think that if women don't become involved that it seriously hurts the Republican Party. I don't think that we have been attracting women to the poles, and I think that we need to provide that incentive and access. I think the more that we can get women involved, the better the image as well as the activities and the involvement will be.

[00:10:00]

KG: Do you see a difference in how men and women lead in terms of politics? Like their leadership strategies, is there a difference between men and women?

MB: Not so much anymore. You know, I think both sexes can run some pretty aggressive campaigns. It was a lot easier I think—they didn't have the technology when I was running to be, frankly, quite as nasty and aggressive as far as they are now. Some of the brochures and blogs and the things, I think, are very difficult. And, I've seen men's activities that have been pretty much the same as some of the women. I frankly hate to see that. I think we need to have honest debates and we need to have integrity in the reporting and we need more face-to-face types of activities so people know who they're voting for. And, that's one of the things that doesn't happen now. You're programmed according to what your manager or what the technology has found in looking at voter patterns. So, you're sort of manufactured to what's going to be electable, and I think that it's the way it is. That's what we have been able to produce through technology. It's just an evolution. The first time I ran it cost me $50. (laughs) And then, when I ran for the lieutenant governor I had to raise $3,000,000, which was a lot of money, but it wasn't enough to win the election. But, I think when it comes to the ability of men and women to get elected it's pretty much the same. I don't think you can find a lot of differences. Some women will refrain from getting into—and some men will say they feel like they don't want to come down too heavy on a woman, but I've seen some pretty rough campaigns irrespective of sex.

KG: So, speaking of funding how would you go about raising funds for your campaigns?

MB: Dial for dollars. (laughs) You just spend hours on the telephone. You have to do that, a lot of that, personally. And, of course, when you are running for office you have a lot of campaign activities. Luckily, I only had one really tough campaign, which was my first one, and then after that rarely had a campaign opponent. But, I never ran like I didn't have an opponent. I always thought it was a good time for me to go before the public, to really get a chance to get out and meet people and kind of had an interface with what was going on. During that lieutenant governor race where I did have to raise substantial amounts of money, I really loved that kind of campaign because I found out so much about the state. I had represented a district that went from the L.A. county line to the Mexican border, the Colorado River, so I did know a lot about the state through all the issues that I had to deal with. But, I think really to get out—and I could always find a bit of humor. I know one time I was in a hotel, and I was trying to get dressed in a hurry for my first meeting. At the end of the day I looked down. I had a brown and a blue shoe and I had earrings that didn't match and I thought, If I'd had a woman consultant with me they would have told me. (laughs) But anyway, those kinds of experiences, it was fun, and I think when you get out and meet people most people are very pleased that you're there. You don't find a lot of hecklers. You know if they're there, they're there to support you, so I enjoyed campaigning even though I had some pretty tough opposition.

I ran against Leo McCarthy, who was an incumbent, and he was a very decent opponent. In fact, when he won the election he asked me to swear him in. (laughs)

And, just not sure about that! So, I thanked him, but I did go to his swearing in ceremony, and thought, That's very cool. Anyway it was a robust campaign, and the issues were brought out. In the primary I ran against John Seymour. I don't know whether I went over this before, but I ran against a fellow senator, Republican, who had pretty much the same voting record that I did. Suddenly, he changed his views, particularly on abortion. That view went out: "I'm the one that's pro-choice," and made a big deal out of that and thought this was going to win the election because it poled well. We both had the same voting record, but he lost the primary, not because of the popular issue, but lack of integrity. People feel that they want to know that there's a level of trust, and I've always felt that people will vote for a person that they can like and trust. It's a feeling of likeability that they can trust that person to do what they say they're going to do, and it's gotten worse now because I think it's irrespective of party. People will vote for the candidate, not so much for the party. But, I think that showed to me that, you know, you can't suddenly switch your positions just to please whatever you think the poles are showing that particular day.

KG: So speaking of something like abortion, which is obviously a very hot topic when it comes to elections, what other issues were important to your constituents and to the Republican Party when you were running for office?

MB: Well, taxes are always important, and, of course, I always said it's the structure of government that we need to worry about. What is it that you want and what's it going to cost and how are you going to pay for it and how are you going to do it cost effectively? And, that may change, a realignment as far as how you pay for it, but taxes—and, you know, people would say, Don't raise taxes. Well, it's kind of hard to really express, and that was one of the reasons why it became the litmus test because you don't know what those taxes are going to be. You could eliminate a whole slew of taxes on one side, you know, maybe to put that someplace else. Anyway, that became pretty much of an issue and pretty difficult to explain, particularly with education. A lot of the education issues became somewhat controversial, but I could answer most of them. And, most people would agree with me because I always felt that most people, when you actually talk to them, you find that most people are in agreement with about 80 percent, and there's maybe twenty percent—abortion was always a hot topic. They had not gotten into some of the social issues that they have now, you know, gay rights and all that. I don't think that was even considered in those days. But, abortion became the most difficult for me because being a woman—actually, Leo McCarthy was a strong Catholic, so he had the same issues so there wasn't that difference that we were dealing with. But, I always felt that a lot of those should not be the primary issues. When you look to government you really look to, what are the purposes of government, and I felt that government was exceeding its role, that we needed to provide more ways that the government could be a facilitator, more capable of making it work for the government rather than for you. Not to you, but for you.

KG: So, going back a little bit, what was that transition like to go from local politics to Sacramento?

[00:19:15]

MB: Well, of course, you know, mine was much—because I went to the assembly, and the assembly was—I always kind of kid because I was a kindergarten teacher, and I always said that was what really best prepared me for dealing with the state assembly. I mean, it was just kind of a game with everyone, you know. There was very little policy development. It was after Watergate and recovering because the Republicans had been, as it is now, there had a super majority and so very difficult for the Republicans to do anything because they were pretty powerless. Then Prop Thirteen came along, and that propelled a lot of Republicans actually into office. However, at that time there were more Democrats representing Orange County than there were Republicans, which a lot of people don't remember. But, I think it was raucous. (laughs) And, it was lonesome because there were so few women. The male legislators would go out partying with all the hopping from the bars. It was much more of a party life for them. So, it was very lonesome, and, of course, I missed my family, even though they were not necessarily all home. I mean, we communicated a lot by phone, but we didn't have anything other than phone. We didn't have all this apparatus they have now.

Eventually the women got together, and we had dinners that we would go from home to home and kind of lay back and have fun and really kind of exchange our own kind of personal views. You might call it a little gossip. (laughs) But, it was entertaining, it was fun, and that became, sort of, the relief that most of us had. We'd find a colleague that we'd go out to dinner with, and eventually that evolved into a women's caucus. These were both Democrats and women. We didn't get into partisan issues. There's some issues that you know are going to be partisan, but we then formed a caucus after we'd had this rather informal dinner meeting situation. Our first issue, actually, was around insurance for child care centers because it was impossible to get insurance because of liability issues at the child care centers, so we had a bill. I know some of the gentlemen tried to cash in on it because it became a very good bill, but the women stuck to it. It was our first bill, and that kind of gave it the power we felt we needed and went forward to form a women's caucus. It was made of a bipartisan group, and it was very effective. We made a pledge to ourselves that we're not going to get into issues that we know are strictly partisan, and that meant some of the women's issues, we'd stay away from them. You know, strictly women's social issues, abortion, and so forth, but it was a beginning. I think it was healthy for us because we felt like we had more of a voice there. And, we did. They'd come and talk to us and say, We need a vote for this and that, you know, and we'd go in as a caucus. I think that was the beginning of the women's caucus. Unfortunately, it fell apart.

My most unfortunate experience was when Governor Wilson appointed me as Superintendent of Public Instruction when Bill Honig got into difficulties and lost his position. I went over and I talked to—this was when I was in the Senate, actually—I went over and talked to Speaker Brown, who I'd had a good relationship with, on a not necessarily—I mean, in the legislature you get to know people and you have relationships and you know where you disagree. And obviously, there's some issues that you're going to sit and yell at each other. Not necessarily yell in your voice, but

you're going to be very strongly opposed. And, Willie and I had our differences, but I went over. We'd just gotten back from the trip on the new European currency. They were looking at how the euro would affect the trade of California because we were so important to trade with the Pacific Rim, with Japan and China and so forth, and how the euro was going to affect our trade relations. So, when I went in and talked to him I said, "I hope you'll be okay with my appointment, Willie." And, he said, "Bergeson, as long as I'm Speaker of the House no Republican is ever going to be appointed to a constitutional office." I mean, he made it clear. And, I just kind of thought, Well—because I'd had the endorsement of every newspaper I figured clear sailing, and it was the worst experience I've ever had. He set about to derail this. The speaker put the woman in charge, Delaine Eastin, who was going to run for the office—she was a very strident Democrat. They packed the committee that Willie had complete control over, and the committee was the one, the conference committee, which was hearing my appointment, which had to make a decision, and then they remediated. Of course, it went out of committee without any difficulty. They put me through the traces, which was just horrible. And then, when they went before the floor—and, of course, at the beginning all the women who were in the women's caucus thought it was wonderful to have a first-time woman superintendent and so forth. This was while I was already the Secretary of Education, but this was the other, the Superintendent. I went before them and I stood there and every woman got up and testified against me. It became a caucus position because Willie Brown—when it comes a caucus position you have to follow the leader or you lose your committee chairmanship or whatever goodies you happen to have. And, in this case, of course, it just—in fact, one of the women came over afterwards, and she was actually in tears saying that, "That was worst thing that I ever had to do." I had several letters later apologizing and so forth, but nevertheless, I had to stand there during that hearing, and it was pretty tough. It really was. So, the Republicans withdrew from the women's caucus. I think they've since rebuilt the relationship, but that was politics. That's raw politics. That was the assembly. The senate would have confirmed.

While serving in the assembly, it was all about power, who you would vote for as far as the minority leader, and I was usually in the "rump caucus." I voted wrong. So, in fact, when they were trying to—I'm trying to remember now, but when we were looking at some kind of a realignment of districts—and before that they were trying to find a new Democrat leader. Some of the Republicans wanted to go with some Democrats to elect Willie Brown thinking that they would be able to get some margin of support for their project and purposes and so forth. There were several of us who didn't go because my feeling was as soon as he gets his own forty-one votes together he doesn't need the Republicans, and he can do anything he wants. And, of course, that happened. Those who voted against him at that point became part of the rump caucus, so we were sort of in the doghouse. You get appointed to committees that are—and I was appointed to the Labor Committee. And, of course, for a Republican to be on the Labor Committee, you know, was just not—it wasn't a juice committee, let's say, for a Republican. But then, also in those days the Education Committee wasn't particularly considered a good committee by Republicans because Republicans were strongly in support of, not necessarily public education, but they

were looking more at vouchers and other ways. So, sitting on the Education Committee was not a juice committee either because it was run pretty much by the unions. So, I ended up with all these committees, but I learned a lot. I was also on the Criminal Justice Committee. So, of course, I'd put in my bills and I'd go over and I've never—I went to Leo McCarthy, who was then the Speaker, and I said, "I can't get any of my bills out." He said, "You're not supposed to." (laughs) So, I realized you're sent there, and I thought, Why should I just be their part to make a quorum? But, this was part of the politics. The Republicans were sent there to make sure that they had both sides represented, but it was obvious that you were never going to have your way because the votes weren't there for you. You just simply were there to show that they had Republican representation. But, I learned easy that you find that counting is all that counts in voting. You've got to count before you vote.

[00:30:00]

KG: Was that difficult for you to know that you were voting against the party platform?

MB: Well, I wasn't voting against my party platform; I was voting against their's. No, I think that having—I wouldn't get on those committees. You're simply there to show that they have Republicans, and you're always in the minority voting. So, you may be following the Republicans in most cases. I mean, when you're on a Labor Committee, particularly, which is dealing primarily with unions and labor issues, which is contrary to most republican thought, to the republican philosophy, your vote isn't going to be anything but in the minority, and that was the case. In Criminal Justice it was the same way because you're voting more for the law and order type of legislation. If you put in those bills, if your bills are there, they're not going to get out of committee. It's pretty obvious because you're on the wrong side of the majority. But, you know, I learned a lot because I think every day that you're in the legislature—because I always did my homework, and I always studied up on the issues—you really gained a good deal of information. You get the background of why and how things are happening. A good example of that, on the Labor Committee I remember when they were providing for higher benefits for public safety officers. It was then that a lot of the issues that are now surfacing on the pensions and that—and they were giving higher pensions at an earlier age. So, the big issue was how do you define a public safety officer? They would define that by whoever carries a gun. Well then, pretty soon the probation officers came before the committee. The dog catchers came before committee. You know, the process officers. I mean, everybody that had an interest in getting some access to those kinds of benefits. So, that's how that increased and increased. And, you could see the prison guards became extremely—this isn't so much in ours but in the Gray Davis administration, [they] came before these committees because they came into a committee that was there and Republicans had very little [influence]. But, being there and understanding and listening to the testimony, you learned a lot about the background and what was happening and how they were gaining that kind of power that they were enabled, which then went to the local districts as well.

KG: What about this idea of being in the doghouse? How did that affect your relationship with your fellow Republicans?

MB: Well, I didn't have the enjoyment in the assembly that I did in the senate. And, I love the senate. I mean, there really wasn't a doghouse because you were independent. You were Republicans. I mean, we were free to vote our republican philosophy as it was, and it was not so much of the power struggle as it was in the assembly. You can't say it wasn't non-partisan, because it was very partisan, but at the same time you had four years. You could develop good policy. I always liked to take tough bills because it gave me an opportunity, a challenge really, and you could get your bills through based on relationships. I mean, good policy, generally, you could engender the kind of people, the kind of support that you needed in order to get the bill through, and I think that that was so evident in the senate. You just were in a more collegial—people would always congratulate you when you did well, whether it was a Democrat or Republican. We even had an Independent, Quentin Kopp. He was a character. I don't know whether anybody remembers him nowadays, but he became a judge and eventually, chair of the high speed rail. I mean, working with him was a pleasure. He was on my Local Government Committee. I was chairing the Senate Local Government Committee, which was probably one of the major standing committees, and it gives you an opportunity really to delve into issues that I can see now that helped me in understanding a lot of the things that are being done and a lot of mistakes that are being done that probably will continue to be done. Unfortunately, there's not enough of an understanding or even respecting the past. It's always, It's my way. People that come in, they want to do it again. Education, whatever it is, it seems that it always has to be done again in the eyes of someone that thinks that they have a better way of doing it. And, I think if you can take the views of the past and put it into the vision of the future, then I think you've got a very workable situation.

KG: Well, talking about something like that, how do you feel about the idea of term limits?

MB: Well, I didn't support term limits. I was again one of the Republicans that didn't because I felt if someone isn't doing their job the first time they shouldn't be reelected. I don't believe in giving tenure to a legislator just because they've been elected to a district that belongs to *them*. I feel strongly that the district belongs to the voters and to the people they represent. And, this is where I think I had some difficulty because I felt that I owed more to the people I represented than I did to the caucus. They were the people that sent me there, the voters sent me there, and I felt that I had to respond appropriately to the wishes of the people there. A big issue, of course, was something like off shore oil drilling. Republicans took a different position, and I was on the outside with that. But, I mean, everything in this area depends upon our tourism, quality of life. People move here because of the beauty that we offer, and frankly, I think seeing a bunch of oil wells out there was not going to be in the best interest of the people that I represented. Nor did they. The people would be very concerned if I had voted otherwise. I think too much is made of

partisanship, and with term limits, it's made it more partisan because people were looking more toward their next election, what are they going to run for next rather than really paying attention to, listening to—they need to listen to, at the present time, how to respond to that with legislation or with just coming and listening, spending time with their constituents. They often have their staff do that, which is fine, but I think it's the presence of the legislator that makes a difference. I think when you're trying to get them to understand that you care about them—and relationships have always been key to success, whether it's the legislature or whether it's in your local communities.

KG: How would you stay in contact with your constituents?

MB: Well, of course, it was tougher because we didn't have the internet. We didn't have a lot of ways. I had two Mondays and two Fridays. I'd come home on Thursday night, and I had an event in the district on Thursday night. Then I'd go back into the district. I would work completely during the weekend and then back to the capitol. I'd go up on Sunday night to get ready for my meetings on Monday. But, every chance I could, I mean, I was on the run making public appearances, and I think they appreciated that. People come up to me, even little kids, and they say, I remember you came to my house, you know, grown people. But, I just think it was more personal, as much as I could give of myself, and I gave a lot as far as time. It was just complete as far as the effort, but I just thought it was important to do that.

And, of course, when they would come to Sacramento I would never miss an opportunity to have them to come visit. The kids, we'd always take pictures in my office. We had a pet, a big pink panther, and every kid that would come there would have a picture with the pink panther so that they could show that they had been to the senator's office. I remember one time there was a group of kids that came up and one of the—I was going home on the airplane, and the stewardess came up. She says, "I have to tell you, I was talking to the kids when they were out there." There was a whole plane full of kids, and she said, "Do you know your senator?" Well no, but we've seen pictures of her, and she looks just like Dolly Parton. (laughs) So, I thought, Well, I don't know whether I want to live up to that image, but anyway it's fun. That was a joy. I used to love to talk to the kids. It was always fun and refreshing. They were always so excited about being in Sacramento. Oftentimes I was on the flight with them. Coming up with them they'd be just bounding around the plane so excited, and coming home every one of them would be asleep. So, great experiences for them, and it was fun for us. I really did enjoy that interaction with people coming up to Sacramento and finding out what politics are all about.

[00:40:00]

KG: What kinds of issues would come up during those conversations? What was important to those people?

MB: Well, I'm trying to remember. There were so many because I represented such a diverse district. Water issues were the big issue in Imperial County. We spent quite a

bit of time with them. They're still big issues. I know when I went down there one time, I took one of my staff members. We went down, and the group that were representing the Salton Sea, they were tackle and shop owners. People that had their little shops around the Salton Sea were very concerned because there were thoughts then of lining the canals for export, which would have drawn money from the sea, which would mean they would no longer have the seashore. Those issues were tough. And, I remember it was about 106. We walked in and everybody was there with fists clenched like this. "That damnable woman from the foreign seaport." (laughs) And actually, I tried to explain to them what all the situation was. But, it's amazing, when I left they all came out and shook my hand, because when I went in they wouldn't even shake my hand. I mean, they were really militant. I think that it was one of the nicest send-offs when I left because I really won over—that to me was very gratifying because we had one of our fun times of going down to the Cattle Call. It's an annual event, with their fair and everything, and I got to ride a horse. I felt the horses attract a lot of attention. If you really want to be able to move the crowd you get on a horse and move from side to side. I was a judge in the pet show. They would all come in with their little pets that they had. This one little kid came in with a jar of something, and he looked up and he said, "Senator, does it matter if it's dead?" It was a huge spider. And, I thought, No, I prefer them that way. (laughs) But anyway, it was great because you just had some great experiences.

That was Imperial County. They had terrific problems and economic, and they were educating kids that were coming from Mexico. High unemployment. They make money from farming, take the pesos back, spend them in Mexico, and, you know, it was tough for them. The best thing they could think of was to get a prison, and so I was able to secure a prison for them. It worked so well they wanted another one. Then they wanted another one. (laughs) "I think we have enough." So, I think that that was probably—but it brought economy because people would come down to visit. It built the restaurants and the hotels, and it really did boost their economy. See, so many of the people that had the benefits of the farming, which is one of the most prolific farming areas in California, the land owners, they didn't live in Imperial County. They lived in La Jolla, and actually, some of them lived in Newport Beach. But, they didn't live there during the heat of the summer. We'd go down there in the heat of the summer. I mean, it was hot. Sometimes we couldn't even land because the temperature was so hot. We'd try to get over to San Diego, and, of course San Diego's problems were completely different because they were 90 percent import water with the Imperial County capturing most of the Colorado River entitlement and the brackish water coming from Mexico to the Salton Sea. So, I mean, you had very different issues with every area that I represented. Riverside was fast growing, and we helped them incorporate new cities. That's when Temecula and Riverside—or not Temecula but Rancho California and—maybe it was Temecula. (laughs) Anyway, we helped them when they incorporated. I had an office in Rancho California.

That's another thing, term limits required me to eliminate two of my offices, one in Imperial County and one in Riverside, because they cut out 40 percent of our staffing. So, it hurt our constituents. That was another reason I opposed term limits. I had made my office in Newport Beach, but, you know, these are the problems that—you know, you have to represent the interests. All of them are different and

somehow to try to bring relief and not to work against the interest but to help them solve their problems if possible. And, of course, in Newport Beach you have a lot of different problems, but they're more for government to get out of the way. I think that's where we try to encourage economic development and those things particularly for the Huntington Beach area, because I represented all the coastal area up to Huntington Beach. And then, all the development area that was going on in South County, that's when they were forming their cities, and that's when a lot of the women surfaced that helped to form the cities and became mayors. They're now running for office, you know, successful in gaining public office. We have one that's running for congress now. That's Mimi Walters. So, it really has been effective in getting women involved as cities are emerging and being incorporated because they're there at the ground floor and being developed. They understand the role of local government. I've always believed that everything really is local. I mean, politics really are local. They descend eventually, and the more that you have creative activities and people that have leadership qualities, the less government is apt to become involved. So, it's been good. I think from that perspective the districts that I've represented have probably been, to me, some of the most productive and I think some of the most exciting districts to represent.

KG: Well, talking about such a diverse district that you had, and it was such a large one, how crucial was your staff in keeping you informed about what was happening or issues that you needed to know about?

[00:48:28]

MB: I always had great staff, and I felt that, to me, is a key to a good legislator. In fact, I've always had—I've actually hired an Independent, may even have been a Democrat. I don't know. I never asked them their party. I always said, "When I get to committee I want to have the best information, correct information. I'll make the political statements, but I don't want to be embarrassed by having bad information," because I've always felt information really does have a lot of power. And frankly, that, to me, is one of the most critical issues, hiring staff, the most critical functions actually that any legislator has to perform. I remember when I was first elected to the assembly, I went up there, and I went into my room. I went into my office, and here's a desk, nothing but a desk. I sat down, and I thought, Here I am. I'm looking around, and of course, the first thing you have to do is hire a staff, you know. So, I interviewed and interviewed and interviewed and found some fantastic staff. I already knew who my chief of staff was because when I was on the school board I had been working—no, excuse me, this was when I was in the senate. When I was working in the assembly had the opportunity—no, wait a minute. It *was* when I was on the school board. See, I have to watch these things! When I was on the school board I was working with a legislator, and there was one staff member that I was so impressed with that I thought, If I ever need somebody this is the woman I'm going to hire. So, I hired her, and she was phenomenal. She had been working with the Democrat who had won the crazy election that I had talked about previously. She was phenomenal. I mean, it gave them the confidence that I needed that I had good

back up, and then we continued to hire. They've all been successful. My staff have gone into very successful whatever their line of work has happened to be. Some have gone into lobbyism work. Others have gone into—I have one that is now city manager in Newport Beach and fantastic. I think he's one of the best city managers around.

But, you know, I think that, to me, whenever people would say, I have to talk to the member, I'd say, "You talk to the staff because you're sure you're going to get your message [through]." Because the member sometimes gets so consumed with so many things, and you don't always have your notebook open. You don't have a little responder or whatever you have nowadays, iPad, to be able to put things down. And frankly, you know, I just have deep appreciation for the people that I hired, and I just can't say enough about them. They were so effective and did such a great job for me. So, when it comes to the volume of work that comes with a district like that—and the people that were heading those offices were also the same way. I had a woman down in Imperial County that did my office; she was Miss Rodeo. (laughs) She knew everybody in town and, you know, very communicative. She had a line on almost everything that was going on. So, you have to have that communication level if you're going to be able to understand the issues from a personal point of view. Not from even what you're going to read in the newspaper because we used to have clips—and I don't know whether they still do that. They probably don't have any problems. They just push a button and get them now. We used to actually have newspaper clips, and every time your name was mentioned they would get these clips they would send us so we would know what was going on. And then, we'd get the papers from every one of our districts, and we'd try to go through them. I remember one time on the floor one of the members was sitting there reading the paper, and someone came up, How could you read the paper so fast? He says, "That's no problem when you're only looking for one name." (laughs) So, I think the legislators of those days—I mean, names were very important and issues were involved making sure that they were getting the kind of press that they appreciated rather than the kind of press that might worry them. But, you know, we never had any to worry [about]. We always felt that we were working the public's interest, and as I say, we had fun. I guess there are times when you have to be little Machiavellian, but not to the point where I think that you're stepping out of bounds. I think it's mainly strategizing how you're going to be able to get your bills in a position where they can be supportable and get them to the governor's office, and he'd sign them. And, if you have a veto—actually had a couple of my bills overridden that had been vetoed. One of them was the indexing bill that I think I told you [about]. I mentioned that before. But, you know, it was fun. I really enjoyed it.

KG: So, what would you say was one of your greatest disappointments with your time in politics?

MB: One of the greatest disappointments was, of course, when I was rejected in the assembly by the assembly Democrats, primarily by Willie Brown. For me that was very disappointing, and I think I had a lot of support that came of that because people felt that it was done so unjustly. I mean, it was, really, the way it was handled. But, I

enjoyed being Secretary of Education, and I always felt that there was too much redundancy. We didn't need a superintendent. We didn't need a secretary. We didn't need a state board of education. We didn't need all the county boards. Somehow there needed to be a much more streamlined process. The governance of education, to me, was just out of whack. Still, there's too much bureaucracy. I believe in local control. I think the schools handle themselves better when you stimulate creativity, but that means you've got to have a strong board, the best superintendent in the world, and great teachers. I've always had faith in good teachers. The point is we've got to have good teachers, and if they're not good we shouldn't have them in the classroom.

KG: It's a good philosophy. Why don't we take a break and then change the tape really quick. [recording paused] Okay, we're back from a break. And, I guess I'm curious, what were your duties as Secretary of Education? What did you do during that time?

MB: Well, it was an exciting time because we were looking at establishing state standards. You know, at one time we were getting messages that came particularly from the business community. That California business roundtable came to the legislature and said, You know, you're turning out functionally illiterate students. We hire them. They don't know how to answer a telephone. They don't know how to write a memo. And, they were really concerned. Well, at the state level we didn't know where the heck we were because districts were not—we didn't have any type of reporting. We didn't understand the level of education of every district or level of success or failure. So, we decided that—and Pete Wilson was really the leader of this at that time—we really need to know what districts are doing so we can establish these standards and then would determine what every child should know at every grade level. Then we would develop the materials to go with that and teacher training so that they would have better understanding. It was kind of a three legged school: standards, assessment, and accountability. That was a lot of the primary function that we were given as Secretary of Education, when I was given that position and appointed by Governor Wilson. It was a very important time because it was a complete change of philosophy that you really needed to be understanding of what kids should be learning and understood by parents and by the community. It took a good deal of time. Many of the hearings as far as how the standards were developed—and those were done by professionals that were highly skilled in their field—probably set the mark as far as world class standards. I felt very proud of what we had done, and, you know, something had really changed a lot of the feelings.

The concern that came out of this was teachers were teaching to the test. Well, at first we thought, Well, they should be teaching to something, you know, so that we have same measure of what's happening. So, the APIs, the test to determine where students are, we had various levels to determine whether they were attaining those. Hopefully, all kids had to measure up to what we called the proficiency levels. I think we were right on as far as how we knew we really had to work hard, particularly with kids who came from low income, minority, even working with a lot of kids who were in special education. That meant great challenges in how we were

going to provide for all of the testing that went on and how it was going to be designed, particularly for English language learners. So, there were various divisions of testing, you know, how we were going to do it, but the expectations were raised for all classes of kids. This was in hopes that we could raise the expectations, not only to meet those expectations. I think that it has had a strong affect.

Now, of course, we're seeing a change again to the Common Core Standards, which are different—they're not really that different. There's a lot of misunderstanding, but some of the concerns that were evident during the time we'd been applying those standards, they were an inch thick and a mile wide. Actually, the alignment of the assessment has not been all that accurate to try to cover the areas. I always felt there would always be some tinkering anytime you try something that's pretty radically different. I always like, too, to see that we could provide more incentives for local creativity to meet the standards, that we shouldn't dominate those with more mandates from on high, state or federal, for that reason. So, I think that what's happening with the Common Core can be a good thing because it's giving kids more conceptual learning, more critical thinking where they have to better understand what they read so that they can—it's not just to quote memorization. Kids are learning to think and then to understand the why. We really need that, and I think that this is something that is good. I think that whatever the locals decide can be implemented in the Common Core—it's not as though it's all federally prescribed, because you use your own high standards. It's a question of the application of those standards. It takes a whole different application with teachers having to understand technology much better than they did before. Change is always difficult, but I think that out of what we did with the Wilson administration with the Secretary of Education, I think we really initiated this change and a good deal more attention to what education really needs to provide. Particularly, for those kids that have not had the opportunities nor the background, environment really, to learn and to be able to be free to progress and be off of the welfare rolls and provide the workforce we need for our economy. Education is everything.

[01:02:23]

KG: How supportive was the governor's office of these goals that you were trying to implement?

MB: The governor's office was very supportive. In fact, they were leading the way. I don't think that Pete Wilson has ever been given sufficient credit for what he did, particularly for K-12. Now I worked with George Deukmejian, and on the other hand, with George Deukmejian, to me, he did more for the university system than any other governor. He saw what had happened in Silicon Valley with transfer technology that they had through Stanford and Berkeley with their research programs and so forth. So, you know, I think each governor has a contribution in a different way, but as far as K-12, I think that Pete Wilson is absolutely one of the strongest supporters of educational reform and really trying to make that difference.

KG: You worked with a lot of different governors during your time in office, so what was your relationship like with some of these men?

MB: You know, with Jerry Brown, who was the first governor, he was different. He was very different, and he didn't really provide a lot of leadership at that time. We had a lot of different kinds of problems that we had to address, and it seems like it was difficult to get him to really focus that much. It was always, think small. I didn't have any problems with him except with my indexing bill, and we overrode his veto. But, I think if you look back I don't think you can see a lot of accomplishment. I think that he tried to emulate, in some ways, his dad. His father being Pat Brown, who was such an extraordinary governor and provided so much leadership, infrastructure, development with water and roads and things that he was able to accomplish. But, Governor Jerry Brown was not particularly, what I would consider to be, a governor that could show a lot of accomplishment in his particular era. On the other hand, I think that with Pete Wilson he was a very strong governor. He perhaps took a too aggressive position as far as immigration, but I think that his issue was always to strengthen California and to get people off welfare and to really get them back to employment. When he left office we had a two billion dollar surplus. That was quickly eaten up by Gray Davis who followed him, and Gray Davis was not what I would consider a very—no, wait a minute. It was Deukmejian. (laughs) Deukmejian is the one that followed Jerry Brown. Well, you have to excuse me for that.

KG: You're fine. It's a lot to keep track of.

MB: (laughs) Yeah. Deukmejian, I had known him as a senator, and he was sort of thought of as rather moderate in the senate. And then, he was elected attorney general, and he was very effective in that job. Then was handily elected governor when he ran, so he'd had a lot of experience. He was probably one of the most conservative when it came to really looking at issues. I know a couple of times he would—when I had bills he'd look at me and (makes grumbling sounds), "I don't know," you know. I thought, This is a slam dunk! But, he was a down to earth person, and he was a real person. He used to always criticize himself by saying he'd had a charisma bypass, but he actually had a terrific charm in that he was so engaging personally. I just really liked working with George Deukmejian, and his wife was the same way. He had a family that was the typical American family. He was down to earth, and he cared so much about things in a way that was very sensitive to doing the right thing. Had a tremendous amount of credibility. He was a good person, and he still is. I remember when we had an occasion we sent a limousine for him, to have him arrive, you know. He was the speaker, and he was terribly embarrassed. He didn't particularly like that. I think when you have somebody with that much integrity and really down to earth and cared so much about people—and he still engages that way. His wife, too. She was never one that picked up on a lot of the social life. I saw him not too long ago. He lives in the same house that he's always lived in, and I said that, "There's two of us." (laughs) So, he lives in Long Beach and is still living in Long Beach, which is great.

Then, after George Deukmejian came Pete Wilson, and, of course, Pete, I'd known him when he was in the assembly. The way I met him was when he was—I may have mentioned this in my previous discussion—he was the mayor of San Diego, and I was President of the California School Board Association. He was President of the League of Cities at that time also. That's when they were bringing public sector collective bargaining, so as school boards I was resisting that as he was as cities. So, we got to know each other during that time. And then, after the mayor of San Diego, he ran for the assembly, so we sort of connected and knew each other. We worked a lot with his staff when we were representing Imperial County because a lot of our issues were federal. Great staff, really worked well with him. While he was a U.S. Senator then he ran for governor. Always we really seemed to do well together, and I carried a lot of his bills. In fact, when I retired, I guess when both of us retired, he gave me one of the football shirts for UCLA, probably shouldn't be said, but thirty-fifth district, you know, big thirty-five on it, saying that when I retire they'd retire my shirt and a really nice commendation, too. He was just a great friend. We still see each other. In fact, I have a picture—he came to a reception for me the other night, and it was so good to see him. I mean, he came all the way down from Century City. I know when working with him he could be a pretty tough governor. His dad was—they're Irish—his father was a policeman, so he was pretty tough. It was easy for him to say no. Very easy. Working with him I learned a lot. We traveled around the state a lot together when I was Secretary of Education and then carrying his bills as governor. I know when we were working a lot of the issues, having represented the cities, we were able to, I think, do a lot to help and to engage cities in more positive way as far as trying to lift a lot of the regulations. Pete Wilson's administration had all kinds of catastrophes. We had fires. We had earthquakes. That's when we had the earthquake, the San Francisco earthquake. We had the deep recession when the aircraft industry laid off all the subcontractors. So, I mean, we had everything that you could have as far as a statewide dilemma, and yet, he was able to leave the state with a two billion dollar surplus.

[01:12:16]

KG: Now, I know you talked about this a little bit, but why did you decide to run for lieutenant governor?

MB: I was actually encouraged to do so. They felt that it would be great to have a woman lieutenant governor, and several people encouraged me to do it. My staff actually encouraged me to do it. And, I thought, Well, if anyone is used to the issues of the state, having represented the district that I represented, certainly there was everything that I could possibly glean from that I could respond to it statewide, and so I threw my hat in. Going against an incumbent I felt was difficult, and I recognized that the chances were that it would be very difficult. And frankly, Pete Wilson was not all that supportive. He was more supportive of my opponent, mainly because of the abortion issue, so we went over the cliff. (laughs) We plunged in, and as they say it was a great campaign. I really enjoyed it. I sort of had a free ride, too, because I could come back to my senate seat. So, you know, it was a risk, but—I mean, it was

a challenge. And, it was invigorating, but boy it was tiresome, too. One of the most difficult things you can do is run for office on a statewide level. I mean, you're moving—and we didn't have a way of communicating the way that they do now. I remember making one commercial; that's about all we could afford. It took me a full day to make a commercial. I thought, I now have great respect for people that make these commercials. We had kids in it and, of course, getting kids to conform to whatever you need to do—it was interesting because in looking at how you're going to program commercials we found that the best time to have a commercial is during the evening after Jeopardy and during Wheel of Fortune. (laughs) The Wheel of Fortune is the best time to run a commercial. There are more people watching throughout the state, which I found very interesting, because it wasn't during the football games, but it was during the Wheel of Fortune. So anyway, we had that, and then they'd run it on CNN and some of the others. But, I mean it cost so much when you run statewide. As I say we raised three million, but that really isn't sufficient. And, that was in 1990, so that was some years ago. Compared to now it would probably be a lot more expensive.

KG: How come you never ran for congress?

MB: Well, I had a chance to run for congress. It was my district, and no one else was going to run if I decided to run. And, I really weighed the—I went to Washington. I talked to everybody. They had it all set for me, and they were welcoming with open arms, literally. I came back, and I thought—you know, frankly, for one thing, I was chairing a major committee in Sacramento, and I just loved my job. This was before term limits, of course, and I thought, I have the best job in the world. Why would I give it up to run for congress? And then, I thought [about] the commuting because I always felt—my husband didn't want to go to Washington. He said, "I've swept enough snow off the driveway growing up," so he was not particularly interested. So, I would have to be commuting back and forth every weekend. And, the family sort of didn't want—the family was pretty much gone anyway. I just decided I'd rather stay in the senate, so I declined. I've often wondered now with term limits whether I would have enjoyed it, but I'm still not sure I would have liked that commute. I was glad to get away from the commute to Sacramento. So, probably Washington I'd be even more happy to get away from.

[01:17:25]

KG: That's a long flight to go back and forth like that. So, talk to me a little bit about the Orange County Board of Supervisors. Why did you make the decision to come back to Orange County?

MB: Term limits primarily. And, the Board—in fact, Tom Riley had been talking to me, who was the former supervisor, talked to me about running. And, I had thought, Well, the Board of Supervisors—actually, I had great plans for what I wanted to do because I felt the Board of Supervisors needed to be changed dramatically. I mean, the county government, because of what I had known from my experiences in

Sacramento—so I decided yes, why not. I didn't even have an opponent at that time. Then interestingly, John Moorlach got in to run for treasurer, and this turned into what I considered to be—I was also his co-chairman. I didn't know Citron, the current treasurer, that well, and I figured it would be okay to have a Republican there anyway. All of a sudden, it turned out very partisan, and I thought, I don't really want to get involved in that if I'm going to be on the Board of Supervisors. And, they had declared that there was some problems financially, that there were some backroom—and, I thought, Well, this is just something trumped up that they do in elections. I called my office in Sacramento, and I said, "Can you check out to see whether Treasurer Citron has all of the problems that they say he does?" They said, Well, he's been given all these awards and people have come and invested into the Orange County pool. That's the investment pool. As far as they could tell everything was fine. I talked to Ernie Schneider, who was then the CEO of the county, and he said, "No, they were doing great. Everything was fine." So, I went to John Moorlach, and I said, "Well, just take my name off your chair. I'll be happy to support you, but I'd just as soon not be co-chair because I don't want to get that involved in the partisan battle." Well, one month before I'm sworn in I'm sitting in my Sacramento office. Here's Supervisor Tom Riley on the television. "We've just declared bankruptcy in Orange County." (laughs) So, I'm thinking, What am I going to do now? I called Rules Committee, and I said, "Can I have my office back?" And, they said, Well yes, you still have two years on your term because it's the middle of the four year term. And, I thought, Well, I'd already hired my staff, and I thought it'd be kind of a cowardly way to back out now. So, I left Sacramento. I was sworn in one month after they declared bankruptcy. One of my political platforms was that we don't have media access in Orange County. It's kind of a media vacuum. So, my first meeting I go in, and there's television cameras from one end of the room to the other, from Japan, and practically every country. This is the largest bankruptcy in history for a county like Orange County. In fact, they actually had a recall out for me before I was sworn in, and my husband said, Where do I sign? (laughs)

It was a very tough time. It was a very unhappy time because people would come before the board, and they were very discourteous. They would shout names at you. Of course, I wasn't there, but they figured my legislation somehow had caused it. And, I made sure—in fact, I called my chief of staff and said, "I want you to research every single bill I ever authored," because a lot of it was local government, most of it, "and see if there was anything that would ever connect me." They spent days combing the files, and there was nothing. In fact, there was one that actually enhanced or put more teeth into what they had to do as far as being able to have oversight. So, at any rate, that was my experience. I was there for about two years and discovered I had breast cancer in February 1996. And then, I got a call from the governor the night I was going in for surgery, and he said, "Would you like to come back and be my Secretary of Education?" And I said, "Well, I think we better wait and see how things go." As it was everything went fine, but I decided we'd better wait 'til we get the clearance on the bankruptcy. So, it was helpful that we needed the legislation, and I could assist and kind of make sure things went the way that we wanted them to. We were working in a way that will allow for a sequester of funds from the vehicle license fee to help us to pay off the debt, the obligation. We had a

1.3 billion dollar hole that had to be filled and some of the funds where we—it was quite a process very complicated and a long process we went through. And then, of course, assuring that the debt could be repaid by getting some assurance through withholding some of our state funds. If you've been following the news lately you know because the county refinanced they got into some difficulty with that repayment process.

Then when things were pretty much cleared up with the county I thought, I'd like to go back to Sacramento because that would be great. That's my first love. So, I went back. Everybody said, Why would you give up a good job on the Board of Supervisors? Well, for one thing, one of the things I wanted to do was to do away with the Board of Supervisors. (laughs) I felt that the Board of Supervisors really represented something of the past. The land barons no longer existed, and it was primarily to deal with parcels of land and the land usages that you had to deal with in order to get proper alignment to fund what kind of planning you wanted to do with the county. So, the kind of structure was not appropriate for delivery of services, which was what they do now. I thought they could use a county administrator and then have council districts that represented and have their offices in their cities rather than having a central office where it was difficult for people to get to anyway. Parking was difficult and expensive for a lot of people. They simply didn't have the funds to be able to come, to be able to air their grievances, or to be able to participate in the process. Everything was a four-to-one vote so I wasn't very successful with that. But, you know, I still think that a lot of changes need to be made in order to really streamline the process and get around to how best to deliver services and to spin off a lot of the services to the cities that now provide those too, you know, permits and so forth because of the redundancy that now occurs. Anyway, when I went back to Secretary of Education, I was much happier there, and things went well.

KG: Back with your first love, your passion. So, you served there for quite some time, and then at some point didn't you transition to the transportation—

MB: Well, at one time it was felt that—in fact, it was one of the ideas, and I talked to Arnold Schwarzenegger when he was running for governor. I said, "I think it's important that there be the coordination between the administration and the Board of Education—because those are appointed by the administration and the Secretary of Education—that you have the Secretary of Education serve on the Board of Education so that you have that understanding of the policy development process." And, he agreed. He said, "Fine." He appointed me to the Board of Education, so I was serving both at that time. Of course, when Governor Wilson left his office, then I was no longer a secretary. His cabinet was dispersed, but I was still on the Board of Education. That was when we actually implemented a lot of the framework for the new standards. That was a good carry on, and it was a good transition. It was kind of interesting because Gray Davis was then the governor, and he had the right to appoint the Board of Education. He had the right to replace me because my term was about up. And, little did most people understand that Gray Davis didn't particularly want any Republicans. He wanted all Democrats. So, I guess with the Children and Families Commission, which was Prop 10—that was the tobacco tax that went for

preschool programs. It was Rob Reiner's program. In the legislation the opportunity to appoint was left to Pete Wilson for whoever's going to head up that, so he told Gray Davis that he was going to appoint me to that position. Of course, Gray Davis was upset because that was the plum he was looking for. Well now, maybe, you know, State Board of Education? So, there was a deal made, and (laughs) that's how Gray Davis would support me to the Board of Education. So, I stayed on until my term was up, and then I came back to Orange County and wasn't long after that that Arnold, Governor Schwarzenegger, called and asked if I would like to submit my application for the Transportation Commission.

Well, of course, transportation had always been a local government issue. I've always been interested in anything that develops the economy because that feeds the schools. As long as you've got good economy and you've got good workers through jobs that they learned and been proficient at because they have a good education—it's a cycle. So, I took that position. At the time, they had passed the bonds. It was 1B or something. Anyway, it was a great opportunity because it was a time to allocate funds, and I happened to be chair of the commission at that time. I remember we had about eleven billion dollars worth of requests, two billion dollars to give out. And, of course, everybody had their priorities, and that's not an easy thing to decide. When we had these requests, then we had hearings. They were tough to sit and to listen, and we had to return calls to practically every legislator. At any rate, it was a tough time. It helped the local communities such as Orange County because OCTA—that's the bill that I had carried to merge all the transit committees and so forth into one. Those are called self help counties, those who had their own transportation associations. It helped them to leverage both state and federal. Orange County's always been in good shape because they were able to leverage funds from the state. So, that was always a good thing for us to be able to do as well at the state level, to look for the money that was there so that we could actually complete projects and where you could gain federal funding as well. Transportation will continue to be a huge problem simply because everybody has a car. Some families have four cars if they have four drivers. How are we going to meet these needs? These are going to be real problems for the future. And, as I look at so many of us that are aging and getting to the point where we may not be driving all the time, what are we going to do to get around? These are the major problems you're going to be facing. But, I learned a lot. I think it was a great learning process for me. I thoroughly enjoyed it. I was appointed the second time, and then I felt that commute—I was getting to the point where I just think I need to stay home. I've done my business for the state. So, I retired at a time when it was convenient for me to find somebody that could take my place, and that's when Lucy Dunn was appointed. I think consequently she's carried on in a great way, so I think we're moving, hopefully, forward. But, it's a tough job anytime you try to build something and people resist. In fact, it's unfortunate because of all the money that's spent that's raised for transportation only about 40 percent of every dollar goes to actual construction. The rest goes to administration, and that means what you have to do for eminent domain, for lawsuits, the environmental reviews, and permits and so forth.

[01:33:26]

KG: So, what kind of organizations are you involved with today? Are you on any boards or—

MB: Well, right now I'm mostly working on nonprofits. I was initially with the Tiger Woods Learning Center and worked from the beginning, and that's been hugely successful. I like to see things grow and develop. When it's just raising money, then I don't particularly enjoy that as much. I'm on the PBS board here, which is PBS SoCal. We have great opportunities now because we used to be just Orange County. Now we've become much larger, expanded into L.A., down into San Bernardino, Riverside, and also into Santa Barbara. And then, the MIND Research Institute, that is great program, math program for kids. It's building on what we call spatial-temporal reasoning, and it's conceptual with JiJi the Penguin. They've created cartoon games, great learning program for kids. I mean, they learn concepts. It's something that they enjoy, and they're doing great. Great results from that. It's done with the creative genius of Matthew Peterson. He's just been able to create something that's pretty amazing.

And then, let's see, what else am I on? (laughs) I go to a lot of meetings, but I'm trying to kind of move away from some. I just moved out of the position of Chair of the Foundation of the Great Park, which is this conversion of the El Toro Air Base into a park. That's been a long time in process. I think it has great potential, but I have put ten years in. I figure that's good for me. And then, right now I'm working on the Environmental Nature Center, which is a children's program. We're working on a capital campaign to build a preschool, and that's exciting. It could be the only conservation type program for preschool kids in the country. Probably one of my most exciting new programs that I'm very much involved in is the Orangewood Charter Academy. We have a wonderful program going on in Santa Ana. It's new. Kids just started in September—this is 2013—with great results. The kids are loving it. We have wonderful head of schools. Teachers are all handpicked and very proficient in their curriculum. We try to get people to come visit because they get so excited. It's fun to see things grow. I love to watch success that you can incubate and watch develop and grow into something really good.

KG: Sounds like you're not slowing down at all.

MB: Well, I'm trying to. I really am. As I say, I resigned from both the Great Park and Tiger Woods Learning Center, so we'll see.

KG: (laughs) See where that goes. Well, just a couple of more questions to wrap things up, and these are more reflection type questions. What do you think of the current state of the Republican Party today?

MB: (laughs) Well, you know, I have to say that it needs improvement, and, quite frankly, that's one of the reasons that I feel strongly that women have to get more involved because I think women are turned off in many cases. I know a lot of the women I worked with are not—I mean, they're Republicans, but they're not involved in the Republican Party as such. They're either not voting or they're voting Independent or

they just don't have an interest in the party. I don't think that a lot of the mainstream Republicans realize that some of the messages sent is not really that effective to a lot of the women who I think would be good, strong, supportive Republicans. I think Republicans generally have to better understand and focus on issues on the economy and standards of living, education again, and, you know, what people really want. They want to be safe. They want to have communities that are well designed and the kids can be safe and they have good schools. You know, they have opportunities to advance in their professions and careers, even stay at home, whatever they want to do, so that they can have those kinds of opportunities. To me, that's Republican, you know. From the very beginning I registered Republican, twenty-one at school. UCLA, liberal environment. I've always strongly believed in self responsibility. I think the more that you can develop just around that, you know, providing opportunities so that you can develop responsibilities and give you the freedom to be able to advance and to carry on in your life so that you have those. I've always felt, too, if you're prepared and the door opens, you're going to walk through it. There's going to be another great thing for you to be able to engage in, to become involved in, whatever your aspirations.

[01:40:00]

KG: Um-hm. Well, carrying on with this theme of women, I think you talked a little bit about this a little more in your last interview, and you were talking about going to college and having your mother's influence on your life. Would you consider yourself to be a feminist?

MB: Not really. Not the burn the bra type. (laughs) You know, probably in some ways yes, because I believe in giving women the opportunities and including and encouragement and support, but I've never really felt that I'm out there to work against men because I don't think that men are all that bad either. (laughs) I think you have women and men, both are very capable, so I've never really understood what a true feminist is. I mean, I believe that women have a tremendous role, and they have a great responsibility to perform that role. They need to be encouraged, and they need to be given the support to do that. So, if that's a feminist then I'm a feminist.

KG: We'll define it that way. It sounds good to me. What would you say to somebody who is interested in running for public office today?

MB: Go for it. But, I think you have to become informed. Specialize in something so that you can be an expert. It's important. I mean, if you can really relate to the public that you have something that's important to them, that you can answer all the questions, and give them confidence that you know the right answers, I think that people respect that. It's one of the reasons why it's great for women in business to decide—women who have had experience in business, or even in local governments, to be able to get the right kind of response. But again, I get back to the fact that knowledge is power. The more that you can know and the more that you're able to convey that to the

public, and not in an erudite way, but understandable so that you translate that and engage people, I think that's what the public want and they understand. And, women have that ability, you know? I mean, they know how to talk to kids. They know how to talk to adults. They generally have a much more sensitive approach, and when they kiss babies it's for real. (laughs)

KG: What aspect of your political career would you say you're most proud of?

MB: Well, I guess the great legislation. I think you usually know that your legacy generally changes in a hurry, but I did have the opportunity of providing great legislation and was recognized for it. I think it represented the interests of people that I felt were really going to be able to—well, for one thing, adoption. I worked on adoption. I worked on an adoption bill, and I'm seeing the results of that of working with Kinship Center and some of the organizations that really do appreciate the fact that there's some certainty in the adoption process. So, those are the kinds of things that you feel that you've left your footprint and that you've made some difference in people's lives that are being helpful. So, when you spend years doing that, to me, that's the only—if you go up there to play games—I mean, it's fun when you do it, but I think the more that you can relate to the policy and the development of policy, and really feel that you've had opportunities—and that's why I encourage other women. Gosh, you know, what I've been given, I just feel like I've been so grateful. Go on, do the things that you want to do. Sometimes you just have to believe that you can do it.

KG: Well, on that note is there anything else that you'd like to add or perhaps [something] that I haven't asked you that you feel is important to share? I know there's a lot more that we could have touched on because, obviously, your career is so vast.

MB: Well, no. I mean, I really can't think of anything that you haven't covered. I've probably given you more information than you can ever use. (laughs) It's been a great life. I've been privileged. I really do appreciate the opportunities that I've had, and I'd like to see many more women being given the opportunity. It's a lot easier now than it was when I first started. So, just as I said, "Go for it!"

KG: Well, thank you so much for your time. I appreciate it.

END OF INTERVIEW