

David McGuire

John Kincaid (JK): We are here with David McGuire to talk about Robert B. Meyner. Also present are Diane Shaw, archivist at Lafayette College and Director of Special Collections, and John Kincaid, Director of the Robert B. and Helen S. Meyner Center for the Study of State and Local Government. Maybe you could start off, Dave, by just —

Diane Shaw (DS): It's August 29, 2018.

JK: It's August 29th.

DS: You've got to get that in there.

JK: It's a Wednesday, and it's 10:25 in the morning (laughter). Maybe you could start off, Dave, just by giving us a brief biographical statement of yourself before we get to Robert Meyner.

David McGuire (DM): I'm here because I was an elected delegate to the Democratic National Convention of 1968 in Chicago; it was there that I first saw and met former Governor Meyner. He was part of the delegation for the State of New Jersey. About myself, I'm a native Pittsburgher. I grew up in the steel town of Homestead, moved to university, to the City of Pittsburgh across the river, and grew up, attended Central Catholic High School in Pittsburgh, was a student at St. Vincent College in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, where I was a chemistry major, and did graduate work as a chemistry person. I started my graduate career at the Johns Hopkins University in Maryland and subsequently moved back to Pittsburgh, at the University of Pittsburgh, where I received my Ph.D. in chemistry, I think, around 1963. I did a post-doctoral fellowship at Brookhaven National Lab on Long Island, New York, which was one of the former atomic energy places. I started my teaching career at Rider College, Trenton, New Jersey. It started as Trenton [Business College] but it moved into the farm fields and became a massive place. Now it's Rider University. I was there two years; then I moved to New Jersey upstream, so speak, going north and started a career of teaching at Upsala College in East Orange, New Jersey, where I taught for about 18 years, at the end of which I left the teaching profession due to circumstances of a personal nature--divorce. I got a job with a patent technology firm, called Patlex Corporation, which became famous for having pursued the long-running litigation of a patent as to who was the original inventor of the laser. Those cases were pursued positively and, eventually, Gordon Gould, Ph.D. in Physics, was finally, after 20 years, awarded that distinction. In that category, I worked for Patlex around the country and also went several times to Israel on company business. Then I left there and joined not Patlex Corporation but — I'm blocking. I'm sorry, I just can't remember.

JK: It may come back to you.

DM: Yes, it will in a bit. So, I was there for about nine years. Oh, it was Louis Berger, an engineering firm, which was pretty extensive around the country and overseas. I did scientific work, particularly environmental work. That's pretty much what I did there. Then I retired in 1999 and moved from Washington, from Gaithersburg, Maryland, where I had been doing some of my work, and settled in Bethlehem [Pennsylvania] for about five years, then moved to

Allentown. Meanwhile I've been very active in the Sierra Club. I was former head of the Sierra Club in the Lehigh Valley region. We had 1500 members. Along the way I participated, as I almost always did where I was, in political citizen activity and when necessary, ran for office, etc. It was not a goal. It was something that I simply did. And when necessary, I ran as an individual or usually with a cluster of people, etc. To put an end to, I thought, all my political activities, I served a two-year term on the Allentown City Council. That's pretty much my bio.

JK: It's very impressive. What's the spelling of the Patlex Company?

DM: Patlex, as in patentum lexum, P-A-T L-E-X, PATLEX. Down in West – I'm forgetting the name of these towns – Westville, there's a train stop there. I can't remember it. That's where the law firm is.

JK: I just wanted to get it clear for the spelling on the transcript.

DS: Dave, had you known Governor Meyner before the 1968 convention or was that your first time to meet him?

DM: Yes, which means I didn't know him personally in any sense, but being a reader of newspapers and having come to New Jersey. Actually, because I was reading things like the *Washington Post* or the *Baltimore Sun*, etc., along the way, I had learned about him. He was a progressive governor, and he was unique in those times, it seemed to me. I understood, in that he came from the far western end of New Jersey whereas almost all politicians, Democrats or Republicans, came from the east-coast side of northern New Jersey.

JK: How did you end up being a delegate at the 1968 convention?

DM: That had to do with how the delegates were selected. A good change in the regulations of the Democratic Party for this election was that instead of just having a big listing and everybody put their names down, the procedure, as I recall, was certain well-known and well-earned reputations for the Democratic party were automatically named delegates. Among them was the governor, Richard Hughes, a very good governor by the way. Being a former governor was how Meyner was on the statewide ticket. But the way they broke this all up, remember there were three principal candidates at the time: Hubert Humphrey, Eugene McCarthy, and –

DS: Edward Muskie?

DM: I'm missing – Robert Kennedy.

DS: Kennedy, of course.

DM: Our election, our primary, was held in either, I think – do you know when Robert Kennedy was assassinated, the date, by chance?

JK: I don't remember that off hand.

DM: It was 1968.

DS: In the summer, yeah.

DM: He was killed the night of the –

JK: The California primary [June 5, 1968].

DM: The California and the New Jersey primaries were the last ones to be held. New Jersey had a modest but bigger than average number of votes compared to other states. And of course, the prime winner was New Jersey – excuse me, the California vote. The California vote was winner take all. The New Jersey primary was broken up into people like the former governors and congressmen and so on. What was interesting was they broke it down into congressional districts so that New Jersey may have had 10 votes at the time, 10 Congress persons, and so every congressional district was allocated a fixed number of votes. I believe ours was 10. Within each, the benefit of this was that you didn't have to go on the statewide ticket, which was typically dominated by the three major Democratic counties, which were Essex County, Hudson County, and Middlesex. I knew the x was on the end, but I'd already said Essex. My brain is not what it used to be, short-term memory. This was very good because it meant there was a lot of interest in each of the three candidates, and Hubert Humphrey was there because President [Lyndon] Johnson had bowed out after the New England primary. President Johnson won, but he had such a poor showing and Eugene McCarthy had such a big showing, it was maybe 55 – 45. President Johnson realized it was not going to be his time to be reelected. He had already served the remainder of John Kennedy's term, was elected on his own right, and was trying for a second term. How does this follow along?

DM: How did I get there? It's because our county, which was Union County, stretched from the farthest east, which was against the river and across into New York, etc., all the way out to the west. It had hard-core, blue-collar places all the way out to affluent far western suburbs, and everything in between. Therefore, there was quite a mix taken in the entirety of the county that would appeal to all three of those types of candidates, namely standard Democrats, Robert Kennedy type of Democrats, and Eugene McCarthy types. So far left, middle left, close to the center, etc. When we put together a very active campaign, one of the best I was active in, I was what, 35, 36 at the time, but I had already been involved for at least ten years in various ways in political campaigns.

DM: I was brought up in a family. My father was a physician. My grandfather was a lawyer. He was the first generation of Irish immigrants in our family. Our grandfather, the original immigrant, came in 1858. My grandfather was born in 1868. He had five or six or seven siblings. I can't remember now. But the key thing in all of this was when he was 12 years old, he, my grandfather, was put to work, which was pretty typical in all those places. He wouldn't finish his high-school equivalent until the 1880s, 1890s. So, grandfather went to work. Put to work, got involved in, and the work days were 12 hours, 7 days a week. He worked in the mill. As he got older and older, he got more burdensome, heavier deals. I worked in the steel mill in the 1950s to make money to go to college because my father, the doctor, was a pediatrician in Homestead. Homestead was a place where 95 percent of the people, at least, probably hadn't

even graduated from high school. They worked in the mill or businesses and factories associated with the mill. My grandfather got involved – remember, he hadn't finished high school or anything, so he was what, 5th grade, 6th grade, he was taken out. He, my grandfather was originally working, I'm still doing research. I'm trying to find where he would have worked because he probably lived on the far side of Pittsburgh and worked in the steel mills around there. The huge, big steel mills were yet to come into the Monongahela Valley, etc. He seemed to have been active. He married. He started having children.

DM: My father was born in 1898. But grandfather got involved in what at the time was the self-improvement movement that was going on across the eastern part of the United States. They were called lyceums or what the equivalent would be. Somehow, he got involved in that. He obviously had picked up reading and writing. Somehow, he was still involved in that, and then he ended up in Homestead at the time where the Carnegie first big steel mill came. The blast furnaces were across the river, farther down at Rankin and so on. You've heard about John Fetterman, who's now running for lieutenant governor on the Democratic ticket? If you ever hear him, he's a very good speaker. He's about 6'7", like this. He doesn't wear a suit or a tie or anything. I'm overdressed. But he now is at the place where the Carnegie blast furnaces first were held, in other words, to make steel you need iron first. You make iron in a blast furnace, and then you take it to the open hearth and get done there. Somehow my grandfather ended up in that Homestead belt of Carnegie. And yes, he was one of the union leaders. He was involved in the famous Homestead strike. What's interesting is he was married at the time and had children. As much as he was aggravated and involved in the union effort, when the strike actually came and all the workers were locked out, he still had a family to support. A lot of the men did. He and a lot of other men simply jumped on a train, went to Ohio somewhere, got a job so they could have some money, and waited till the strike was resolved. Then they came back. Of course, he was on the blacklist. He couldn't get a job back. But, being friendly and having friends on the way, namely as he was always clear to specify, a Welshman who was the foreman who liked him and knew he was a good worker, signed him up under a different name. Somewhere after that, he started doing the equivalent of a high school education at what is now Duquesne University in Pittsburgh but that was called Holy Ghost Academy, I believe [Pittsburgh Catholic College of the Holy Ghost]. That was the name of the religious order that was there. He then became leader, probably executive secretary, of the Lyceum group. I'm still trying to find that out. He made the magnificent salary of \$1000 a year when probably the average for working in the mill was probably \$400 a year max. Then he got his law degree, set up his practice in Homestead, at the University of Pittsburgh, when it was known as Western University of Pennsylvania. I was brought up in that kind of thing. Always vote. Always being taken by my parents to the voting booth. And realized, and being told that you're supposed to vote and you should think about what you're doing and all that. Eventually I got involved in that. I think the first outward thing I really did, not counting grade school or high school, was other school. The story's there, but at another time. It may cost you a beer to get the whole story (laughter).

DM: But I remember prior to around 19 – in the 1950s, a governor of Illinois was running for the presidential race. Very well-spoken. He ran twice.

JK: You mean Adlai Stevenson?

DM: Adlai Stevenson.

DS: Helen Meyner's cousin. She was Helen Stevenson Meyner.

JK: Yeah, there's a relation there.

DM: Anyhow, we were living in Homestead, as I said. My father was a doctor. He also was the doctor for the school system. Two of my aunts taught at the school. My grandfather, by then, was solicitor for the city. He had become one-term mayor of Homestead, or burgess of Homestead when they were Republican, when everything was Republican. He lost his race for reelection, which was a precursor to what was going to become the New Deal type of Democratic wave. As I said, being active in reading and learning about Governor Adlai Stevenson, I got together with somebody else and we went to the major corner in the city of Homestead, which was Eighth Avenue and Amity Street. There was a news stand there and people. It was a bustling town, bustling town. We started handing out literature for Adlai Stevenson. Well, we're now into the 1950s. The Democrats had this, as this was a highly controlled environment of the city. One night my dad came home after I was doing this and doing my other schoolwork and stuff. He said, "Hey, Jake" – all the boys in the family were called Jake – (laughter) "– Jake, I hear you've been doing some political activity." "Yeah dad, I'm doing this and doing that. Here, let me show you." He said, "Well, listen son; you know your granddad is here and I'm here. It'd probably be a good idea if perhaps you went across the river and passed out literature there. There's just not the right place for you to pass up this kind of literature" (laughter). I learned early about these things.

DS: That's a great story.

DM: That's how I started doing these things. Wherever I went, even when I was in graduate school, I signed on to be a Democratic committee member if ever there was a vacancy, and did that wherever I was. Eventually I came back to New Jersey. When I moved from, well, when I went to Union, Union City, Union Township, not Union County, Union County was there. Not Union City, which is up in Hudson, which was a totally corrupt organization of the yin yang. It was natural for citizens to get together, people reading and so on. We put together a group, which at that time was unusual. There were, I guess, eight or 10 of us in the original group. I was signed up for district committeeman already. I was part of the organization. Once everything was set out that the primary would be by county and it would be, for example, ten seats, maybe no more than a certain number for any party, but you could get a good chunk. There were, I roughly think, we had 10. The final results were, we got a full slate of five elected, but there were five others sprinkled for the others. We won for Eugene McCarthy but there were some old-line Democrats, let's call them, and they were more for Hubert, who was, I thought, a wonderful fellow. Never met him. The others were for Robert Kennedy. It was one of the best campaigns I ever organized, worked for, and so on. We had lists. We did three door-to-door things. We talked with all the crazy hippies around that time. The motto was if you're going to be working for Gene, the motto was Clean for Gene. No long hair, no beards, none of that stuff. I don't think I had my beard then; I'm not sure. But we did it. We kept records. We turned out an immense vote. We were gathered at 8:00 at someplace, counting the votes, getting them all in

for the district, the Congressional district which was all of Union County. By 9:00 or 10:00 our town, Union itself as opposed to the bigger city of Elizabeth and the far-out suburbs, we were the last ones to get the votes brought in. We didn't win it for Eugene McCarthy. Let me remember this. The way it turned out, we were the last district in and Eugene McCarthy had a lead, but it was a lead that could have been overcome by whatever came out from the municipality we lived in. We didn't win everything, but we won enough votes that we carried it through the whole county. So that's how they apportioned the vote and everything like that.

DS: I'm a little unclear. Are you talking about the election of the delegates, or are you talking about the actual election itself?

DM: Election of the delegates, the primary, heading into the convention.

DS: Okay, heading into the convention. That's so interesting. What were the dynamics like for the delegation once it was set? Who was the leader of the New Jersey delegation?

DM: Governor Hughes.

DS: How did that all play out? How many were for Kennedy and for – I'm sure you were going there. How many for Humphrey?

DM: There had to be a meeting of the minds, of the clear three factions, of all of New Jersey. Governor Hughes had an excellent background, was a really good governor but he also understood political things, politics. He had a very good right-hand person, the same kind of person that you've seen a few times speaking on behalf of Senator [John] McCain's passing, who was his campaign manager. Governor Hughes had such a person. Nothing happens in New Jersey without the bigwigs arranging it. It was clear that the McCarthy-type people were a real force and could not be ignored. But there also was the contention for the chief quarterbacking, if you want to make an analogy.

DS: Right.

DM: There was at least one, if not two, meetings of the entire state delegation before the convention itself. Governor Hughes was there. He was overseeing it. That was laying out how would you think about this as a way of handling certain things? Maybe there was a vote or two or three taken in. But you were introduced to everybody. For example, you met the governor. You met his right-hand person. You also met the chief party people who were involved.

DS: Was Meyner an official delegate? Where did he come down and what was his role?

DM: Governor Meyner was there because he was a former elected high official who was a Democrat. There were a few other such persons there, but otherwise it was the current elected high officials who were there. It was sort of bring in the wisdom. Once again, to make this relevant, it's the same kind of thing that John McCain did, writing down that he wanted President Obama and President Bush to be present. He brought those two together. So different from the

other leader we presently have. Meyner was there as active participant, having a vote. But he was not in the leadership. The leadership was the governor.

DS: Was Hughes, right.

DM: But the other three persons who were there, who were holding pockets there were the leaders of Middlesex County, Essex County, and of course Hudson County. And Essex County, because I ended up moving there later on. I got to know a lot about politics up there, and was active. The person there was the mayor of Newark. This was still in majority-white time but heavily working-class. The name of that guy was Hugh Addonizio, shortish guy. When we went to our first delegate meeting, I remember I was living in Union County, but he was there. So I saw him. He came in with a sort of cluster of persons around him. He was small. No energy, no nothing. He just went to his seat that turned out to be in the corner. He sat there and these four or five other people just sat around. Being slow, I said holy hell, this is the Mafia-type thing. The don comes in, sits in the corner, goes to the restaurant, has a booth in the back (laughter).

DS: In the corner, facing out.

DM: He was later arrested and put in jail, Hugh Addonizio. I felt sorry for he had one very nice black fellow who just adored him. This is a youngish guy. That man had a son born while all this was going on and he named the child Addonizio Hugh. Just a little side there. At the convention, of course, you have the party bosses of Jersey City and Newark. Middlesex did not have a county executive; it had a Board of Chosen Freeholders known affectionately as the Board of Chosen Freeloaders, and that guy was maybe the president of that board. Those three were the party bosses type who ran things.

DM: Back to Governor Meyner, that's what we want to remember, he was there. In the run up of four years before the convention when I was in New Jersey and the Meyner name was right out there and so on, and I had an impression of him, positive. I didn't yet know about the size of the defects of the regular Democrats of New Jersey. I thought that would be a good thing. I would have thought he would be for Eugene McCarthy. But I don't recall. I don't recall any of the major leaders announcing in advance. The delegates that are in the sway are called in, okay boys, here's what we have decided to do. We're going to be for this candidate, that candidate, that candidate. That's the process. Governor Meyner came in and he was present at the earlier meetings, I'm pretty sure, but I never – you can't shake all the hands that you're being introduced to. At least that's my recollection. But as the convention opened, you know all about the tremendous pressure and angst and worries, and we knew about it in advance. We knew there was security. From the minute we got off the airplane, there were police. There were state police. There were National Guards, and there were Chicago city policeman. There was already uproar even as of the day before in the area around the hotel and all that. Of course, we didn't go anywhere except in buses. Then there was the turmoil. I forgot to tell you about the night when we counted the votes and we learned that we had carried Union County with a good chunk of votes for Senator McCarthy. However, as we were there whooping it up and having a beer and three, we were also watching the California results. And that's when we got the word that Bobby Kennedy –

DS: Oh, Bobby Kennedy.

DM: – had won and was going to carry the winner-take-all election. Then we watched as the hullabaloo came and how he was brought into the hotel, and then the cameras were following him and then wump, we saw that right in front of our eyes. That was a mind-blowing experience, honestly. It really was. I can tell you more about my experiences going door-to-door, but let us concentrate on Governor Meyner.

DS: That would be great.

DM: If you wish to learn something later about that door-to-door campaign and what it said about each of the three candidates, and what the public felt about each of the three candidates, and I got a good lesson out of that one, so we can come back to that if you're interested. At the convention itself, there was a hullabaloo. There was all a low roar within the huge hall. It's very hard for any of these conventions to have everybody come to order, everybody shut up. There's too many people moving around. Even the auxiliaries are there and so on. You would hear speakers. There would be breaks called. All the delegates were now caucused by their state and reassembled. Or even while somebody is giving a talk, you would be pulled out again. You may remember the famous, there was a senator from Connecticut, a Jewish guy, he was well known at the time. He was a spokesperson and a major person for Eugene McCarthy. You may remember he went on to the stage and he was talking. He started – I forget his line of thought, but I was sitting there. It's on TV. You've seen it. It's where the mayor of Chicago, Richard Daley, was right up in front. Of course, Richard Daley wanted this to go off. This was Chicago. Nothing was going to go wrong. When the senator from Connecticut [Abraham Ribicoff] who we just mentioned, that senator, he was up there talking and he started saying things that were beginning to roil at least one-third of the delegates and their leaders because it was this and he really irritates the mayor of Chicago who is sitting down in front. He gets first seat, of course. He, the mayor, jumps up and said, "Shut up you fucking yid. Get the hell off the stage. You're a piece of shit."

DS: That was the mayor?

DM: Yes. Until his idiot who is our present president, it's not that he's a Republican, he's the kind of person he is. He is a disgrace, disgusting, etc. I don't like him, in case you hadn't gotten the message.

JK: Can we get back to Governor Meyner?

DM: Yes. As my wife says, I can wander. It's in this context, the other things that were going on at that convention, besides the three candidates, we had all the black delegates from the southern states who were being blocked out, and that had to be addressed. There was plenty of back-and-forth. We were pulled out – we, the Jersey delegation – pulled in to caucus. The leadership was there. I cannot remember why we were pulled out. A relatively important type of person was coming on and was speaking, and we were pulled out from the activity that was going on. It wasn't a vote, but what the hell, we were supposed to be seated there and hear this.

But we were yanked out. Can I turn this off or pull this close? I'm thinking it's going to get on your phone here. Thank you.

DM: There was the black movement taking hold elsewhere except in the Dixie states, and even there, they were having delegates trying to be elected, duly voted for and everything. But there was a youngish black guy, I believe from Georgia, and I tried to do some research on this but I couldn't find it, but he was an up-and-coming young person. He made it in *Time* magazine and so on. While we were in the caucus, he was brought on, and it was a historic speech. It got a lot of coverage. As best I recall, it was at that time, in that room, that Governor Meyner came forward to be part of, let's call it the leadership. Whether that was a caucus that I just told you about with the man speaking, at the end of which in that caucus, one of our delegates got up and said, "This is crazy. We have one of the forthcoming American people speaking out there, and in here we are diddling with chicken-shit activities and things. I'm walking out." All of us picked up and walked out. It was either there or the other. But this thing I'm telling you about Governor Meyner did take place in one of those kind of caucuses. What happened was, I believe, the purpose of the caucus, and I can't remember the exact purpose, but it was clearly to bring people into line so the leadership could line up and make sure their tally was accurate for the forthcoming vote to happen maybe on the next day or so. But Governor Meyner was in there, in the delegation, and he stood up. I thought for sure he was going to make a plea for Adlai Stevenson – ah, Eugene McCarthy. We were looking forward to that, given my view of things. Also, as I said, I had a positive image of Governor Meyner. In my mind, he was going to get up and talk. Well, he got up and he chewed out all the McCarthy people. "Why can't you people get off your asses and do something? We are party. We are the Democrats. We have been around since the glacial period." He just tore us apart. I was very upset at the time. But I was not stupid at the time. At least on that. I said, "Why is he doing this? Why is he stiffing us?" And by the way, he was an announced candidate, going to run for another term. Remember, in New Jersey.

DS: Yes, and he did the following year.

DM: So you know all about that. Their constitution is two terms, but you can do three in a row. So, I said, "This is horrible. He's sucking up to these party people, the leaders of Hudson County, Essex County, Middlesex County. He's just showing he's a good ole boy kind of person."

DS: Was he promoting Hubert Humphrey? Was this his agenda?

DM: I cannot recall who he came out for. I believe, as best I recall, the party leadership was for Hubert Humphrey.

DS: I would guess.

DM: You can go back and check that out. You can look at the votes. Some of you folks may have done the particular yourself. You can see that. But it was that he, Governor Meyner, was trying to show he was going to curry favor. You can do it by feigning with damn praise, or damning with feigned praise, all that sort of stuff. He didn't have to come out in public and say

or do anything. That was the impression. I was there. I heard that stuff, as I'm saying here, for the record if you will, that he did that thing. Therefore, I wasn't happy with him. Maybe we picked up and walked out that day, or maybe it was another caucus. But I was there when he said and did that.

DM: I was teaching at Upsala College in East Orange at the time and was going to continue on for another 10 or 12 years. We had moved from, when I lived in Union County I commuted, but we bought a house up in Montclair, so we moved up there. But Upsala College was very close then. Come the end of '68, the governor announces in, I guess, early '69, Governor Meyner, announces he's running again. Surprise! Well, I said, "Oh, boy." As always, my motto is I am a Democrat. You have to give me a good reason not to vote for a Democrat, and they frequently do. Yes, I swear I voted for a Republican maybe four or five times in my life. As far as that went, on the one hand I said well, I wonder who the Republicans will come up with. They come up with another jerk, by my standards. I'm certainly going to vote; I will be voting for Governor Meyner unless because I expected the party hacks to come up with one of their controlled candidates for governor. Well, lo and behold, things start to play out for Governor Meyner's campaign.

DM: Lo and behold, he's going to have an appearance at Upsala College. I said, "That'll be interesting. It'll be good." Hear him speak in a different vein. All of the students came. There were about 900 to 1,000 students at the time. They packed them in. But what was different was there were TV cameras. There were a lot of reporters. It was a big deal and there was literature handed out. There was a movie, The Life of Governor Meyner. That played out. Then the Governor spoke, and then he opened it up to questions. Back up to that movie. Governor Meyner was out there, his great achievements. He did good things. I had a positive impression of him. But to show that he was, in his old age, his dotage, still had energy and everything, he could have been 65, 63, I don't know what he was. But he chose to show how vigorous and healthy he was by showing him playing a vigorous game of tennis. I thought oh, my God, you don't get the blue-collar vote by showing tennis and stuff (laughter). Football or basketball. I said there's a little wrong thing here. But then he opened it to questions. There was a question here, there was a question there. I put up my hand and he said, "You, over there." I said, "Hello, Governor. I'm David McGuire, a teacher here at the college for chemistry. I happened to be an elected delegate to the convention. You were part of our delegation and I'm aware of your fine record for your two terms of governor. However, I would like to bring to your attention and to the attention of the audience that in your presentation you talked about how left-wingy you were." He was showing his liberal colors, if you will. I think that's a good quality. "But Governor, I was at the convention. I was in the caucuses and I was in the caucus when you tore Eugene McCarthy to pieces," at which point the crowd was there, all of a sudden, all the lights went on me. And all the cameras came running up, things like that. Within three minutes they had shut down the whole thing and the Governor was out of reach of the crowd. That's how that worked out. It wasn't quite a gotcha. I didn't do it for that purpose, but I wanted to keep him left of center, which is where I tend to be. Not far left, but certainly left of center.

DM: The Republicans, the primary as I recall, the Governor did, indeed, win the Democratic primary for his third term. The Republicans instead of nominating one of their cruddy type of candidates as opposed to our type of cruddy candidates, they elected, or nominated a former FBI

guy, Cahill. [William T.] Cahill was his name. He was an FBI agent for a couple years and then had, I think, become a federal attorney. He was an attorney. Now there was a Mr. Clean kind of guy. He had none of the entangling alliances of party. I was definitely attracted to and thinking of voting for him. But once again, some of the – I liked him. I thought he was a good candidate. If it weren't for Governor Meyner, actually, I would have voted for him. In other words, hack-of-the-year Democrat I wouldn't have voted for. Because this was a chance to have a little bit of a Republican turnover. Remember, it had gone eight, 16 straight years of two Democratic governors, Meyner and then Hughes, two terms each, 4 plus 4 plus 4 plus 4, 16. So I said maybe it was time for a change, so to speak. Unfortunately, and I did vote for Governor Meyner with a clear conscience if you will. I just felt regardless of what I've told you and is the record that he was a very good guy. It's like a pitcher who wins 12 games and loses his 14th game or something. Mr. Cahill was a really good – he won, Cahill did, not Meyner. He was a really good governor but he totally drove the Republican core and the right wing of the Republican Party crazy. They defeated him in the primary and put a guy so far to the right that after that man had his one term, he was overthrown in a landslide the next time. He wasn't even nominated. They elected a guy with three right arms. That's the end and summary of my experience with all these things.

DS: That's fascinating.

DM: Along the way, I would say that I did equally keep track of Mrs. Meyner, who went on and I believe she won a Congressional election or two.

DS: She did, two.

DM: She herself had a very fine record.

JK: She served two terms in the House during the Carter years.

DM: What district did she represent?

JK: I forget the number.

DM: From Phillipsburg?

DS: It was the Phillipsburg district, yeah, that district.

DM: All the numbers change.

JK: Now at the convention, as a former governor, Meyner was there. Was there any celebration of his career or special attention given to him, or any honors by the delegation?

DM: Insofar as the convention as a whole, almost certainly he was introduced. But the things that happened at the beginning, the first day, all kinds of people are trotted up, get five minutes in front of the camera and so on. I can't say that he spoke while I was there, or was honored while I was there in the whole, that whole convention. I believe the governor spoke at the first,

and if not the first, the second, of the pre-convention meetings we had of the whole delegation. He was given due honors and not patronized. The three or four persons who were going to control the party in the primaries and so on, they had a known quantity here and they are not going to beat up on him. He'd already announced he was definitely – everybody except the official announcement knew that he was going to be running again. That's my recollection.

DS: This has been great. It's a really interesting story about the convention. Can I ask you, having been in Georgia for so long, I'm trying to think of who the person, the speaker was at the convention? Was it Julian Bond?

DM: It was Julian Bond.

DS: It was Julian Bond, all right.

DM: How could I forget?

DS: I was going to ask you that.

JK: He's passed away since then.

DS: He has passed away.

DM: Yes, he was on. He was content, I think, for about 20 or maybe even 30 years, to act as a state senator of Georgia, I believe and of course, that was swinging more and more to the – well, more and more blacks were being brought forward. The polls were relatively opened up. But I don't think, and maybe you could check this out now that I know the name and I'm going to write this down, because otherwise I'll say what's his name? Julian.

DS: Julian Bond. I just had a photo of him.

DM: He reminded me of the young, in retrospect, when Obama began to appear, he reminded me of Julian Bond.

DS: I had a photo of Julian Bond speaking at Lafayette College out yesterday for a class. I guess it was Monday. He was here as part of the Black Arts Movement in 1971. He was so young, oh, my gosh.

DM: It's so interesting that the term Black Arts used to be voodoo and so on, but now we have this whole different thing. The nice thing about being 83, and remembering some of things, is to see this incredible change, incredible change. Still room for lots of change.

DS: Yes, there still is.

DM: But compared to where you started from, okay, at the ballgame and you receive the ball on the 10-yard line and you're now on the 8 yard line or 10 yard line of the far end. Never could have imagined these things.

DS: Are we there? Are we on that yard line?

DM: Yeah.

DS: We certainly are farther.

JK: Since you were active with Eugene McCarthy and '68 was such a watershed year, what made McCarthy attractive to so many voters in Union County?

DM: Well, remember what was going on as we had the – we didn't call them hippies then. What did we call them? Long hairs.

JK: They were hippies then.

DS: We called them hippies.

DM: Hippies was an okay word then. That was that. There was more and more movement towards the left, generically speaking. We had the war in Viet Nam and all things leading up to that. And the racial issue was getting foremost. There were parts of Union County that had, in the Town of Elizabeth, in the City of Elizabeth in particular. He was well-spoken, well-educated, had no typical political ties. You couldn't really – and he had spoken out against the war. He resonated with the voters in New Hampshire, I think, was the state that he ran a close second to Lyndon Johnson. In the eastern part of that district, which runs east-west pretty much, in the more hardcore Democratic districts, he was – it just wasn't something that caught onto people. The union vote was there and so on. But as soon as you moved on to the better educated, more thoughtful people and later on the independent vote, he simply appealed to them, that he made a reasonable presentation argument in the best sense of the word to them.

DS: Did it break along youth and age? I always think of him as a candidate for the young. But I'm sure that he had plenty of support in the older crowd, too. But generally, I think –

DM: The younger people were, of course, similar to what's going on now. You're seeing a lot of people being part of the Blue Wave that's coming on, bringing back memories, if you will, of that same sort of thing. But the vote was, as always, and I may be wrong on this, but you had to be 21 to vote at that time, 1968. I could be wrong on that. But many of them were out there. The youth vote provided the manpower and woman power to go door to door and that sort of thing, appeal, show up at the rallies. They had their own things that they were interested in. I think technically speaking, the more educated you were as a Democrat in the more economically better off you were as a Democrat, you tended to be more in favor, you tended to get a bigger vote for Senator McCarthy. And of course, Hubert Humphrey had a terrific background and a lot of people in that Democratic make-up that I just described also were voting for Hubert Humphrey. His problem, Hubert's, was he was in the shadow of JFK.

JK: You mean LBJ?

DM: LBJ, I'm sorry. He came across publicly is kissing ass or being pissed on, excuse the language, by LBJ. And it's true. History shows that LBJ maltreated lots of people. He would be sitting on the toilet next to the Oval Office and he'd call in Hubert and other people. "Come in, we gotta have a talk here, Hubert." It just rubbed things the wrong way. Of course, he, Hubert Humphrey, being the loyalist, could not come out publicly against the Vietnam War, which was the downfall of LBJ probably. That's how I saw it coming out.

DS: Thank you.

DM: I could tell you one other thing and then I have a luncheon appointment with your elected official, Bob Freeman. Can't come here without making sure Bob is behaving himself. I'm sure you folks have a lot of contact with him. The enigma of those three 1968 candidates was Robert Kennedy. People were very conflicted about him. They loved him or they hated him. I went door-to-door time after time in different neighborhoods. Hubert people and McCarthy people tended to more or less fit into a kind of pattern. If you've done a lot of door-to-dooring as I've done, you can almost look at a house and come to certain conclusions. But Robert Kennedy had to go through his own metamorphosis to become who he was intending to be. Unlike his brother, who had to keep low to the ground because he had to look at the reelection ahead, Robert Kennedy came out and was trying to make his own statements. I went door-to-door. I had my little scorecards and said okay, here's the Smith house. How many voters are here? You're registered, anybody else registered? You have somebody else, anybody over 21 who's not? All the usual stuff. And said, "Well, I'm here and I'm here representing Senator McCarthy and here's a piece of literature about him. Do you know anything about him or very much? No. Well, here's something. Please read it. I hope you read it. Think about it. Are you favoring any candidate at this time?" "Yes, I'm favoring Robert Kennedy." I replied, "Thank you. Any particular reason why you're voting for him? What do you like about him?" Not the majority of people said what I'm going to tell you, but 35 to 40 percent of the people, people on the same block, so it was consistent for ethnics and so on. But these were white people, not black people, what I'm going to tell you. I went door-to-door. One person said, "I'm for Robert Kennedy." "Why are you for Robert Kennedy?" "Cause he's gonna keep the niggers in line." "Thank you." Next door, "I'm for Robert Kennedy." "Why are you for Robert Kennedy?" "He's gonna give the black people a break." That came out in about 40 percent of my Robert Kennedy contacts. Later on, other things started playing in, but that was –

DS: You mean about half the people said he would be pro black and the other –

DM: Of those who said they were for him and didn't have other reasons, to the extent that race came out, and I didn't bring it out in front, I didn't bring anything out in front except what people said, the black, are you for blacks or are you against – nobody said they were against blacks. It's they're too uppity and all that stuff. But the word "nigger" was on the face and tongues of these people.

DS: What I'm not following is you gave one example and it sounded like they wanted Robert Kennedy because he would keep black people in line.

DM: Yes.

DS: And another person said that he would give them a break.

DM: Yes.

DS: So you had opposite responses.

DM: Yes. That showed up in –

DS: The percentages were about equal?

DM: Of those who brought those two points up, I'd say it was about 40 percent.

DS: Forty percent each?

DM: Each. I'm sorry, they made up about 40 percent of people who said they were for Robert Kennedy. But of those who gave as a reason the race issue, out front, would you mind telling me what you like about Mr. Kennedy or why you're supporting him, that's what came up. Same person. How could this happen? This is the miasma of politics.

JK: People have a lot of misperceptions of politicians. They don't know really what they stand for, and they project onto them their own desires.

DM: Yes, or needs, or stabilities and so on. I'm for Hubert Humphrey because he's been for union guys and that sort of thing. Maybe either of you know. I tried, I didn't have enough time to do all my research for this, but most of it's from memory anyhow, which is impeccable, except when it's not. The – I lost my train of thought. I lost it. Sorry.

JK: Thank you very much, David. We appreciate your coming in.

DS: We appreciate it. We do, indeed.

DM: I appreciate the record for Governor Meyner and the specific history of this, including Mrs. Meyner. Along the way, I'll finish this with regard to Mrs. Meyner, one of the things I did when I lived in Pittsburgh was end up supporting a Democratic woman running against a Jewish person in the neighborhood represented by this three or four or five time winner of state legislative positions who was a Jewish Republican, whose real desire was to be appointed a judge. But he kept winning for the state legislature. This lady decided to run, Molly Yard. Does that ring a bell?

DS: Absolutely.

DM: Well, I helped her twice when she ran twice. Very close to her. When she lost even the second time, she was the Democratic candidate. No Democrat wanted to run against her, so she did. She was the kind of person who would support McCarthy. I always want to block, because I don't want to say Joe McCarthy. She took, at the end of the campaign, the second campaign,

her husband was slightly affluent I would say. She was wonderful. I only met her husband a couple of times. But at the end of that, she and two other persons – I can't even remember them – but me, and I was maybe 28 years old. I was in grad school. We had done, again, a perfect type of campaign. It was my precursor to the one I've just discussed, with a group of us years later in a different state did. She said to me, "You know Dave, I came close again. Do you think if I would've mortgaged the house I would've had enough money to win it?" And I said, "No. There are just times when you can't win campaigns and I don't think anybody should be in a position to ever mortgage their house for an iffy thing. Would you mortgage your house to put a big bet on the winner of the Kentucky Derby? No." So that was it. She later on became head of –

DS: Was she head of the National Organization for Women?

DM: – NOW, correct. And do you know what? By then she was older. She was over 65 at least and she had gray hair. She was brought in by a form of popular demand when the youngie, hippie, swinging NOW type of people, uppity women, were – somebody pointed out to them, 90 percent of women don't fit into your demographic. Why don't you get a woman who is not a popular figure or not this, or appeared in movies or do other things, or stood naked on front of some state hall or something like that? They put her in, and she did a good job. Who would've believed it.

JK: That's right, yeah.

DS: Dave, thank you so much. I'm going to turn off the recorders. I think we are complete.