

George J. Mitchell Oral History Project

Bowdoin College Library, 3000 College Sta., Brunswick, Maine 04011

© Bowdoin College

Bob Graham

(Interviewer: Brien Williams)

GMOH# 177

December 4, 2009

Brien Williams: This is an oral history interview for the George J. Mitchell Oral History Project at Bowdoin College with former Senator Bob Graham of Florida. For this interview we are in the Madison Hotel in Washington, D.C., today is Friday, December 4, 2009, and I am Brien Williams. I thought, Senator, I'd like you to start by reflecting a little bit on your run for the Senate in 1986, and how you got here.

Bob Graham: I had been elected governor of Florida in 1978 and had served two terms, which under our state constitution is the maximum. Some people suggested that I should run for the Senate in 1986, which was my last year as governor. The then freshman incumbent, a U.S. senator, a Republican, Paula Hawkins, was up for reelection. Ms. Hawkins had had a rather tempestuous political career in Florida, she had some very solid, true believers, but she had a lot of other doubters. But I was not initially persuaded to run, in part because I had spent enough time in Washington, particularly in my eight years as governor, to have some feel for the institution, and I was concerned that maybe the Congress and the Senate were becoming almost dysfunctional institutions and not attractive places to spend a block of your life.

One of the decisive moments in that decision-making was a dinner that I attended of the board of directors of the Gannett newspaper chain, which was held on Miami Beach. One of the participants at that dinner, a member of the board, was former Senator Baker from Tennessee. And we got into this conversation and he said that he couldn't disagree with my assessment, but he thought there were some new people who had come into the Senate, and George Mitchell was one of those, who were going to begin to change the culture of the institution and that it would be an exciting place to serve. When I have told Republican former Senator Baker how influential he was on my decision to run against one of his incumbent senators, he smiles, but I think maybe it's a little bit reticent. But anyway, I decided to run, and fortunately was elected by a fairly comfortable margin, and came to Washington in January of 1987 with great enthusiasm.

BW: George Mitchell was the chairman of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee for that election cycle. Did he participate at all in Florida?

BG: Yes, he was in the state a number of times for various events, fund-raising and otherwise, and was a very important part of our counselor core, people who would give us good advice as to what to do in a particular situation, or relative to an issue that was likely to come up during the campaign. One of the things that I realized was that, while I thought I knew a great deal about Florida state government and about those programs at the federal level which involve

states, such as the Medicaid health program, there were a lot of areas, particularly in national security, that I hadn't been exposed to. So I early on, after having made the decision to run, I spent a considerable amount of time with people who I thought were knowledgeable, to get their architectural assessment of major issues. George was very helpful in identifying who those people might be and encouraging them to come to Tallahassee and spend some time with me and contribute to my political education.

BW: Was there at that time a, how should I put it, cohesive set of positions that you as a new candidate for Senate office were expected to conform to, or not?

BG: No, there was no ideological answer sheet that was given to you as to how you were supposed to respond, and I think that would have been an inappropriate activity. America's a big place and the relative weight of different arguments on behalf or in opposition to an issue vary from place to place, and as somebody who had been around state politics at that point for twenty years, I thought I was well prepared to understand how to talk about it and articulate issues. What I needed was more just basic factual background on those areas with which I had had limited exposure.

BW: And you felt well served by the DSCC.

BG: Very well served. And George, although he's a very intellectual and a very calm person, can also be a cheerleader in an audience that you're trying to inspire and motivate to contribute money or time or support. He's the guy you'd like to have out there with a megaphone and his sweater with the big D on the front of it leading the cheers.

BW: Along that line, are there other Democrats at the time that were co-cheerleaders that come to mind?

BG: Well, there were Democrats such as Lawton Chiles, who would be my colleague in Florida, who were very helpful. I'd been active in a number of organizations which had put me in contact with, for instance, governors who had recently been elected to the Senate, such as Jay Rockefeller, who is one of my closest friends and was very helpful. So George was fortunately not the only cheerleader, but a very good one.

BW: 'Eighty-six was sort of a bit of a sea change because the curtains were closing a little bit on the Reagan era and so forth, and it was a big shift to the Democrats in the Senate, and quite a class of senators that came in with you. Were there any commonalities among you, did you feel like that was a brotherhood at all, or were you all just unique senators?

BG: Yes, I think we were all very happy, and in some cases relieved to be there. It was an unexpected result. People thought Democrats were going to pick up some seats in '86, but didn't think they were going to pick up enough to assume the majority. They were mainly people in the late thirties to early fifties age, I was actually fifty on Election Day so I was probably at the upper end of the age spectrum. I'm trying to think, there were I think a couple of other

governors and so I had an affinity with them because we had known each other through the National Governors Association, et cetera. We had what you would expect from a person who had just spent a major block of time and effort to get elected, a great deal of enthusiasm to quickly get engaged in our responsibilities.

I remember, my first committee hearing was as a member of a committee that George was on for many years, the Environment and Public Works Committee, and I ended up offering one of the first amendments to a bill that was being marked up, and John Chafee commented that, you newcomers here don't wait around very long.

BW: Did you look – and this is sort of a looking back question, although I guess all of these are – but did you see in your class of '86 the seeds of the new Democratic Coalition?

BG: Yes, because most of us were centrist or slightly left of center, there weren't very many ideologues among the class of '86, and I think that did begin to frame what was going to be a characteristic of the New Democrats. I had been one of the charter members of the Democratic Leadership Council when it was formed after 1984, so I was very interested in that more centrist approach, and I thought that certainly in my state, and suspected in most states, that that was going to be the form of Democratic politics that would be most successful with the voters.

BW: Prior to George Mitchell's becoming the majority leader, you had I guess two years with him when he was, quote/unquote, just a senator. What recollections do you have of him as a colleague during that period '87 to '89?

BG: I guess most of my recollections were on the Environment and Public Works Committee. George had been very active in legislation such as the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act, and some of those were coming up for major overhauls and I was impressed with the level of detail that he had, his command of the issue, and then his ability to use that to find common ground on some quite contentious issues.

BW: Did he take you under his wing at all, in terms of your being a freshman, and guide you?

BG: Well, I sought out his advice on a number of occasions, but I don't think he treated me any differently than he did the other senators that he helped elect.

BW: Were you on his subcommittee, he was chair of the Environmental Protection Subcommittee, as I understand.

BG: No, I was not on that subcommittee.

BW: In late '88 then, there was the election for the new majority leader, and where did you stand on that?

BG: I supported George. I can't even remember who his opponent was, who was his

opponent?

BW: Well, Senator Inouye and Senator Johnston, from Louisiana. So tell me a little bit about some of the battles in the Environment and Public Works Committee during your time there, and let me ask you this first, were you a sort of environment guy, or were you a public works, transportation, did you fall in one category or the other?

BG: If you had to put me in one category, you would have put me in the environment side, environmental protection had been one of my three priorities during my eight years as governor. But I was also interested in the public works side, frankly. The growth states felt, and with justification, that they had been discriminated against in the formulas that allocated the highway funds. I can't give you exactly the proportion, but Florida, which was at that time the first or second fastest growing state in the country, on a per capita basis, was getting something like eighty percent of what other states were getting.

And so I became a public works person in part: one, to achieve more equity in the allocation; two, I was very interested in rail transportation. While I was governor I visited Japan and France and rode on their high speed rail systems and thought they were going to be an important part of the future of the United States, and that Florida was a particularly attractive area because of its flat terrain and the ease with which such a system could be installed. So that was another public works side of the committee that I was heavily involved in.

BW: Did you and George Mitchell ever part company on these environmental and public works issues?

BG: I can't remember any major departure. In fact, the only big departure that I can recall was the Persian Gulf War vote in 1990, December. Senator Mitchell, who was then the majority leader, invited four or five senators, mainly from the class of '86, to accompany him on a trip to the Middle East. I remember we went to Jeddah, talked to some of the people in the royal family there about the invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein and what they thought the United States should do. And then we went up to where the troops were preparing for battle and spent a day or two there.

I think George's feeling was, as one who thought it would be precipitous for the United States to go to war at that point, that there was still room for negotiation, that seeing the issue on the ground would convince us to his position. The irony was, it had almost the opposite effect. I think just about every member on that delegation actually ended up supporting the resolution to go to war in the Persian Gulf, and I was one of those who did so.

BW: I apologize for not knowing the answer to this myself, did George Mitchell change his mind, or did he -?

BG: No, he voted against the resolution.

BW: Were there any other issues?

BG: I can't think of any other issues of approximating that significance where we differed.

BW: Were there common issues between Florida and Maine that the two of you brought together, maybe railroads? Because I know George Mitchell was supporting the railroad system in Maine too, is that correct or not?

BG: Yes. We both, I think, would call ourselves environmentalists, and while the different in Maine and Florida in terms of the context in which an issue like the Clean Water Act was played out, but we were strong supporters of an effective national role in both standards setting and funding for the infrastructure of a cleaner America.

BW: It was quite clear that in Maine, acid rain was a real issue for the northeast. Was it also for Florida?

BG: Ironically, yes. Ours was mainly a mercury issue, we have a number, well Florida's not a very industrial state, but we are surprisingly a big mining state, a large percentage of the phosphate, for instance, which is dug in the world, comes out of Florida. And that and some other activities had contributed to mercury, which would then, by rainfall, would drop particularly in the lakes of the northern part of the state. So while the chemical circumstances were somewhat different, the ultimate problem was the same and we both favored policies to try to contain those sources of pollution.

BW: And did you have to do a lot of educating of the public in Florida about that, particularly with industrialists?

BG: Yes, that had been something I'd been doing for many years, because as I say, environmental protection was one of my priorities as governor and we worked on a lot of analogous projects from the state perspective. And I think by the middle of the 1970s, Florida had gained a very strong environmental consciousness, and so there was broad support for initiatives that would protect the environment. Probably the more difficult one was, there also is a culture of state responsibility, and so it wasn't so much convincing them of the environmental appropriateness of the action, you had to convince them that this should be done at the federal level rather than at the state or local level.

BW: Exxon Valdez, in 1989, what effect did that have on the Senate? And what was the outcome?

BG: I think it probably, well it did spur legislation both of a maritime nature, to try to increase the safety of cargo vessels and their crews, and also heighten the commitment to federal effort at recovery after a major issue. We never had, during my period as governor, or senator, an incident in Florida that was of the scale of the Valdez.

BW: Any vivid memories of the battle over the Clean Air Act, and maybe George's leadership on that?

BG: My main memory is, there's a conference room just off the Senate chamber where George set up his office for the duration of the Clean Water [*sic*: Air] Act, and I would walk by there early in the morning and then again late at night, and George would be sitting there patiently, trying to educate and persuade people. And I was impressed with his tenacity.

BW: You said Clean Water, but I think you meant Clean Air, is that correct?

BG: Yes, I'm sorry, yes, Clean Air.

BW: So that was really his, he took ownership of that issue, you would have to say, right?

BG: Yes.

BW: Even though at the time he was a majority leader, so he was sort of wearing two hats, wasn't he, in a sense.

BG: Yes, and since I hadn't been around too long, I didn't realize how unusual that was, for the majority leader to essentially take possession of a specific issue. Because just the normal functioning of the majority leader is an extremely demanding job where you have to act as somewhat of a combination of a psychiatrist, a political advisor, a priest, rabbi, lots of skills required to deal with the egos that, while it says you're the majority leader, it's not in the context of the English parliamentary system, where there's such a strong tradition of party loyalty. And so it's almost the majority 'herder,' h-e-r-d-e-r, that you end up being.

BW: After the Clean Air Act in '90, and until George Mitchell retired from the Senate in '95, were there any other burning Environment and Public Works issues that you recall? It seemed to me it sort of got quiet for a period.

BG: Well, I don't know if this was a burning issue, the one that I became involved with as chairman of a subcommittee and where George was very helpful, was the National Wildlife Refuge system was hardly a system, it was really the amalgamation of three or four hundred decisions to designate a particular piece of real estate as a refuge, and then a rather loose and frequently incoherent set of standards of how those should be managed. There'd been a longtime effort to establish a common core of values and standards for management for our wildlife refuges, and I was proud to be involved in that. We did most of the work in the early '90s. Then in '94, when the Republicans' election, they took over the Senate, I worked with a man named Dirk Kempthorne, who was a senator from Idaho, and the two of us finally were able to get the bill in the shape that it became law. And George was helpful throughout that process.

BW: Now, you also shared assignments with the Veterans' Affairs Committee, and then he was ex-officio I suppose a member of the Intelligence Committee.

BG: Yes, as the majority leader he was. I went on the Intelligence Committee in 1993, and I served for ten years.

BW: Any recollections of his participation in either of those committees, Veterans' or Intelligence?

BG: The answer is no, I don't think, he probably was more active on the Veterans' Committee than he was in the Intelligence Committee but I don't have a sense of either of those being a particular priority.

BW: What about base closings, were you involved in base closings?

BG: Well I was, because Florida's a big military state, and while I was governor we tried to be very aware of what was going on in those bases, and if there was something that the state could do that would cause that base to be looked upon more favorably in the next base closing process, to do that. So I followed that and worked with that closely. I know George did the same. We had one area where we were in competition. The Navy has a relatively small number of aircraft whose purpose is to locate submarines, and they had one base in Maine and they had another base in Jacksonville, and the decision was made to consolidate, it wasn't sure which of the two were going to be the ultimate survivor.

BW: I know for Senator Mitchell it was the Loring Air Force Base right up at the top of the state. Did senators negotiate with each other on that issue? I guess it was a commission that was really making the decisions, wasn't it?

BG: Yes, it was more a matter of trying to persuade the commission to look favorably upon your bases.

BW: Let's shift a little bit to your talking about George Mitchell's leadership, and I think a few minutes ago you probably described some of the qualities there when you talked about the chief herder. But what words would you use to describe his leadership?

BG: He started out and continued with the asset that people generally admired and personally liked George Mitchell. It's always easier to follow the lead of somebody with whom you have that relationship. He was very smart in his understanding of, and analysis of, issues, but also had an uncommon ability to articulate his position in ways that drew people to his side. He had a very good relationship with the Republicans; I think that he worked well with the minority leadership. Of course he came from a state which was a very closely divided state, and I think that with people like Bill Cohen, he had a close working relationship.

The Senate at that time was a much less partisan place than it has become. I have said that when I went into the Senate in '87, I would suggest that a third of the Senate were basically centrist, and I would put George in that category. And since that time, that number has probably

dwindled to maybe a dozen, and he was able to very effectively find areas for bipartisanship. The Environment and Public Works Committee was a particularly good place, because we had some wonderful Republican senators, John Chafee and I became very close friends, worked together on a lot of issues.

BW: Was that a committee that you advocated joining when you came in?

BG: Yes, I wanted to be on a committee that had environmental responsibility, which meant basically either the Environment and Public Works Committee or the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. I also wanted to be on a finance related committee, and I was on the Banking Committee, and subsequently on the Finance Committee. And I wanted to be on one national security committee, the Intelligence Committee was my goal. I spent six years on the Armed Services Committee before I got on the Intelligence Committee.

BW: Getting back to George Mitchell, were there any negatives to his leadership?

BG: Well, nobody's perfect, but you have to think to try to find George's imperfections. He had a reputation of being stubborn, and some people thought he was a little inflexible. You can assess for yourself whether that's an asset or a liability. No major defect that adversely affected his ability to carry out his leadership responsibility jumps to mind.

BW: How important was Democratic cohesion for him?

BG: I mean no question that he was a strong value-based committed Democrat, but he was not an ideologue, he approached issues on their individual set of facts, and he was always looking for what he thought was the common sense, the pragmatic resolution. One of my concerns with the partisanship that you see now is that it appears as if, if Barack Obama were to wake up this morning and said the sun is rising in the east, that you could get a majority of Republicans to vote that it actually rose in the west. It's just a major opposition to whatever the other side has pronounced.

BW: And just tangentially on that thought, were the Republicans doing about the same thing with Bill Clinton?

BG: Yes, I think when the tables were turned, when there was a Democratic president and a Republican Congress, and I don't know whether this was the fact that it was Republicans or there were some changes in the composition of the Senate. One of those was that many more former House members were becoming senators than had been the historical norm. The House had had a long reputation of being very partisan. Part of that was the Democrat's fault, I think, when they were in control for such a long period they began to treat Republicans as almost the necessary furniture in the room but not to be given any real importance. And that caused a festering almost hatred by a lot of the Republicans who served during that period, and those who moved over to the Senate carried that with them. And I think that contributed to the intensity of partisanship that began in the 1990s and has accelerated.

And also on the House side, the extreme gerrymandering of districts, where only a small percentage, probably less than ten percent of the House, is truly competitive, and the only way a Republican is likely to ever get defeated as an incumbent is if they allow another Republican to get to their right, or a Democrat, if they let another Democrat get to their left. So that doesn't encourage people to want to try to compromise.

BW: As a former governor, did you – George Mitchell was never a governor, he wanted to be but he wasn't elected.

BG: What year did he run for governor?

BW: Nineteen seventy-four. And did you see any issue there in his leadership, not having had the experience of being a governor?

BG: No, I didn't. He was of course a federal judge and he clearly brought sort of the temperament and the intellectual attributes that you would associate with a federal judge to the Senate. But in terms of the fact that he wasn't a governor, I couldn't describe any trait of his leadership style or position on individual issues that I could say clearly indicated that he had lacked executive experience.

BW: Another thing that distinguished him from most of his colleagues was, he really didn't have much of a private life or family life during the period of time he was leader.

BG: Yes, he'd been divorced I guess just about the time that he was appointed to the Senate, is that correct? And while at social events you would occasionally see him with a lady, you got the impression that he didn't have much of a social life, and those late night meetings that I referred to as he was working through the Clean Air Act were illustrative that there wasn't some other alternative competing for his time. I slightly got to know his current wife, a very lovely lady, and I think this is a happy period in George's life.

BW: I've picked up on some resentment among some members that there were too many late night sessions because George didn't have a family to go home to and the rest of you did.

BG: Well, I didn't sense that. And the Senate had gotten used to that, we'd had Bob Byrd, he was the leader before I got there, but he had the reputation of also not having a wristwatch and time was not of consideration. So I think people were pretty acculturated by the time George got there, to working at night.

BW: During the course of this oral history project, the Senate has lost Ted Kennedy, and I was wondering, do you have any recollections of Kennedy and Mitchell events or exchanges, or how they worked together?

BG: I had the sense that they worked well together. Of course Kennedy even then, in the late

'80s, was one of the more senior members of the Senate, and the Senate has a high regard for seniority and I think George was aware of that, and he was a relatively junior member when he became the leader. I think George treated Kennedy with great respect and maybe a deference because of his reputation and his length of service.

BW: In your own experience, was Kennedy very collegial?

BG: Yes, I enjoyed very much working with Kennedy. We had some disagreements early on, and they largely went to the kind of issue that I mentioned earlier on the transportation funding bill, because there were a lot of other areas that were affected by the committee that Ted was chairing, the Education and Health Committee had a different name at that point, but that was just the normal sort of protecting your own state interest matter. But I very much enjoyed my personal relationship with Ted, and he was a phenomenal legislator, and a very fine human being.

BW: Any recollections of interactions between George Mitchell and Bill Clinton?

BG: Nothing stands out particularly. I had the sense that they worked well together, and that George was very committed to trying to make Clinton a successful president. The big issue while George was majority leader and Clinton was the president was health care in the 1993-94 period, and I know George worked very hard for that to be a success, which was not ultimately achieved.

BW: That was a big disappointment for George Mitchell. Were there other issues that you got the impression he was anguishing over?

BG: Well, I think George had a rugged childhood. He ended up being adopted by family [*sic*; George Mitchell's father was adopted, not George]. One of the things I should say that initially attracted me to George was his Lebanese ancestry. My wife is Lebanese, and so she had an immediate fondness for George, which I carried over. But I think because he had grown up in different circumstances, he had a genuine empathy for other people who had gone through that, particularly children. And health care often is the center issue [that] encapsulates the difficulties of people who grow up in the kind of circumstances that George did. So I think he had an emotional investment in that issue, as well as a political investment, and was very personally disappointed by the inability to get that passed.

BW: Where were you on that issue?

BG: I supported the president.

BW: Let's talk a little bit about your own relations with other senators, and your role in the leadership. Who were you close to in the Senate, who were your buddies?

BG: Well, as a group, I was close to those who had been governors, who I had known before

I came to the Senate. I mentioned Jay Rockefeller was a particularly close friend. I became close with people that I worked with on the various committees on which I served, John Chafee being a particular example of that. I had good relationships with a number of the southern senators, such as Sam Nunn and Fritz Hollings, and then my own colleague, Lawton Chiles. And then when Lawton retired in 1988, Connie Mack was elected, and Connie and I had a very good twelve-year relationship.

BW: I guess it was in '89 you were appointed to the Democratic Steering Committee?

BG: Hmm-hmm.

BW: And in a word, what does that committee do?

BG: What the majority leader wants you to do, it's like other things, there is an appearance of a collegial process of decision making, but in most instances it comes down to ratifying what the leader wants to do.

BW: What distinguishes that committee from the Democratic Policy Committee?

BG: More political.

BW: Explain what you mean by that.

BG: Well, the Policy Committee is supposed to, and I think generally does, focus on developing what will be the Democratic position on a particular matter, and with that tries to influence the legislation at its initial phases within the committee drafting the outlines of the initial bill and then sort of monitoring its progress as it goes through the Senate, and then when you get into conference with the House.

BW: So then, by contrast, the focus of the Steering Committee is -?

BG: How will the actions of the Senate affect the future election prospect of incumbent members primarily, but also the ability to attract candidates that can be successful as challengers.

BW: In '93, you were asked to be the chair of the Democratic Senate Campaign Committee, is that correct?

BG: Yes, I felt, I was like the captain of the Titanic who was recruited to bring it across the North Atlantic.

BW: So you knew rough waters lay ahead.

BG: I suspected that particularly after the rough treatment that Clinton had gotten in the first two years, the stridency of people like Newt Gingrich and a cabal of people that he had drawn in

the House, that '94 was going to be a tough election year for Democrats.

BW: And somewhere I picked up, I guess I read this, that you said 'yes, I'll take on that chairmanship if you give me either membership on the Intelligence Committee' or chair at that point?

BG: Well, I wouldn't have been chair, because that's still a seniority process, but I was very interested in being on the Intelligence Committee. I hope I wasn't as brazen as to make it a quid pro quo, but I was very happy that George appointed me.

BW: So your appointment to the DSCC, and then to Intelligence, was that all on both stages negotiated between you and George Mitchell, was that how that was come about?

BG: Well he was the person who, as the Intelligence Committee is the exception to the rule that people get appointed to committees by some collective process with seniority a major factor, statutorily the members of the Intelligence Committee are appointed by the majority and minority leaders without any tenure in office consideration. So if you were interested in Intelligence Committee, that's the person you needed to talk to.

BW: Did George Mitchell come to you and ask you to be the chairman of the DSCC?

BG: My recollection is yes.

BW: Did you as chairman model your activities on your recollections of George Mitchell's DSCC chairmanship?

BG: Yes, particularly in the stage of recruiting candidates to run. George was, the fact that the class of '86 was as strong as it turned out to be was in significant part because George had gone out to recruit the strongest candidates to run.

BW: It sounds a little bit like baseball.

BG: Yes, right, except the salary isn't as good.

BW: Are we okay with time, or -?

BG: Let me just see.

BW: Think back to 1992, in your mind would George Mitchell have made a credible presidential candidate in '92?

BG: If the question is credibility, absolutely yes, he had presidential attributes. Maine is of course a small state, but of course that was the year that Bill Clinton was elected from another small state, so that wouldn't particularly have been a detriment to his prospects. So I guess, I

hadn't – did George think about running for president in '92?

BW: I don't think so, but I think a lot of Democrats felt that there was no point in running in '92 because George Bush the First was so popular after the Gulf War, and then of course things all devolved sort of late in the game, so I guess I've gotten the impression that in a way, Bill Clinton stepped into a bit of a vacuum.

BG: Well there were, I guess Senator Tsongas of Massachusetts was running, and Bob Kerrey was running, so -

BW: It wasn't a total vacuum, no.

BG: Yes, and then did Gary Hart run in '92? That was the year he got into his troubles. So it was not a, it was by no means an empty field.

BW: At that point, you weren't toying with the idea?

BG: No.

BW: That came later.

BG: Yes.

BW: As history looks back on George Mitchell, how do you think he ought to be remembered, he should be remembered?

BG: I think he should be remembered as one of the great Senate majority leaders. And had he decided to continue in the Senate, I think chances are that he would be the majority leader today. I was never quite clear as to why George retired as early as he did, because he only served roughly, what, twelve years, two terms?

BW: Two terms.

BG: And I was disappointed that he did retire, I think he had a lot to contribute.

BW: How do you think he would have functioned as a minority leader, because he probably would have become the minority leader after '94?

BG: I think he would have, I mean the attributes that I ascribed to him earlier, particularly his ability to work across the aisle, while that was going to become more difficult because the culture of the institution was becoming more strident, I think his essential leadership style and qualities would have served him well in the minority role.

BW: Do you think his foreseeing that possibility, of becoming the minority leader, had any

bearing on his decision to leave?

BG: The answer is I don't know, and I didn't have any sense that he was prophesying that the Democrats were going to lose the majority and that may have affected his personal decision.

BW: Did you take any hits as a result, because of the results of the '94 elections?

BG: Just to the degree all the other Democrats did, and that is that we shifted from being the party in control to the opposition.

BW: Anything else you'd like to say on this occasion?

BG: Well, I am not the best commentator on George Mitchell because I am so unabashedly a George Mitchell fan, I think he is in many ways the embodiment of the citizen public servant, and that we need more of.

BW: Do you refer to him when you make presentations about your new book, *America*?

BG: The answer is no, because it's not in the nature of this book. The purpose of the book is twofold: one is to motivate Americans who may have fallen into the trap that 'you can't fight City Hall' and therefore have given up their efforts at being civically active. The principal means of accomplishing that is a series of case studies of where people have seen a problem and then used their democratic rights to accomplish an important result. The second is that being a good citizen is not just a matter of knowing your rights and responsibilities; you have to also develop some competencies of how to apply those rights in an effective manner. I've identified what I think are the ten essential skills of effective participatory citizenship, and each chapter is devoted to elaboration of what those skills are and how to acquire them.

BW: It's a good, very good, admirable effort. Well thank you very much for this interview, I enjoyed it very much.

BG: Good, well thank you, great.

End of Interview