

George J. Mitchell Oral History Project

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

© Bowdoin College

Tim O'Neil

(Interviewer: Mike Hastings)

GMOH #115

June 26, 2009

Mike Hastings: The following is a recorded interview of the Senator George J. Mitchell Oral History Project, an activity of Bowdoin College. The date is [June] 26, [2009], I'm in Scarborough, Maine, at 4 Runway Drive. This is Mike Hastings, I'm going to be the interviewer, the interviewee is Tim O'Neil. And I begin by, Mr. O'Neil, can you state your full name and spell your surname?

Tim O'Neil: It's actually H. Timothy, it's Hugh Timothy O'Neil, and I've gone by Tim, and O-N-E-I-L, and there's an apostrophe in between capital O and a capital N.

MH: And your date of birth?

TO: Uh-oh. 7/13/35.

MH: And your place of birth?

TO: Geneva, New York.

MH: And your father's full name?

TO: Was Hugh Joseph.

MH: O'Neil.

TO: Gotcha.

MH: And your mother's full name, maiden name?

TO: Perrella, Mary Ann Perrella.

MH: Could you spell Perrella?

TO: P-E-R-R-E-L-L-A.

MH: Thank you. These interviews are, we're interested in the associates of the Senator, friends of the Senator, but we're also, we're interested in them as well as their interaction with

him, so could you start by telling me about your mother and father?

TO: Mom and dad were hard-working people. Dad worked for IBM. Actually I was born in Geneva, New York, and he was with the telephone company, and he came back to Binghamton-Endicott-Johnson City area and went to work for IBM.

MH: He came back from the war?

TO: Back – no, actually.

MH: No?

TO: He didn't get caught in the war, and probably should have but he had a family. And so we grew up in Binghamton and I had a, a guy by the name of George Tate, who was a direct descendant of the Tate House, was my scoutmaster.

MH: Is that right?

TO: Yes, and we were talking about, George has always felt education was the keystone for him, the Bowdoin experience, and then he billed the G.I. Bill to get his law degree and go from there. George Tate was my scoutmaster, and he got me, I'll never forget, we came to, it was in May, senior year, and I was going to go to Harper College, which then was Triple Cities College back in Vestal, and he said, "What are you going to do?" and I told him what was going on. And he said basically, "Have you ever heard of Colgate?" And I probably, knowing me, I made some wise comment about the toothpaste, and, because really, I was the first to go to college in our family.

MH: Now how far is that from where you were living?

TO: Sixty miles.

MH: Sixty miles.

TO: I've got the land speed hitchhiking record. I actually could get home pretty fast, because we were married our senior year there, the young woman that I loved since I was fourteen was in Binghamton, she went to Harper, so that was kind of a driving force.

MH: What were your interests in high school, before you get to college?

TO: Well, I was in politics, I was president of the student body and -

MH: School politics, yeah.

TO: Well, a little bit, but I played football and I swam and played tennis.

MH: Hmm-hmm.

TO: And of course tennis is the way I really got to know George.

MH: I see, so you're a native of New York, and your mother's folks came from the New York area as well?

TO: Mom came from the same town, yes, actually. And my dad's was, they came over around 1850, and there were three brothers, One was a wagonwright, one was really a carpenter, and the other was a painter, and they had a wagon shop on Water Street, and they got caught up in the Civil War.

MH: Hmm-hmm.

TO: And they ended up making Conestoga wagons, and for some reason they migrated back to Binghamton, set up a wagon shop, but just didn't believe that the car was going to make it. And if we live long enough, maybe -

MH: So what did your dad do for IBM?

TO: He actually made more money as a, he was an analyzer, which really was before we had the chips there was Carol Press, the cards.

MH: Right, right.

TO: Now he knew that machine backwards and forwards and he used to expedite. But I remember a couple years he made more money with suggestions than he did -

MH: Is that right?

TO: Yes, because he was able to walk around and see things, and he'd turn in a suggestion or two and go from there.

MH: Inventive.

TO: Evidently.

MH: And so you go to Colby, what did you major in?

TO: Colgate.

MH: Colgate, I'm sorry, Colgate.

TO: Actually I was, I took a lot of philosophy, a lot of English, and I majored in sociology. There were two guys I worked under, Ray Reese and Arnold Sio.

MH: What was the first one?

TO: Ray Reese.

MH: Reese.

TO: And Arnold Sio, and they were very, I was not the greatest student, but they were very rigorous.

MH: How do you spell Sio's name? Reese I know, I can figure out, but -

TO: Arnold Sio.

MH: Yeah.

TO: S-I-O.

MH: Oh, Sio, S-I-O, Sio, Okay.

TO: Very, S-I-O.

MH: Right, okay. Occasionally I'll ask you for spellings if I think it would be difficult for the transcriber.

TO: Believe me. He was a tough guy, he was a good one.

MH: And you say you married while you were a student there?

TO: Actually yes, and when George got me the, actually I paid fourteen hundred bucks to go to Colgate, and they got me a job in the kitchen, and that was all I ever paid was the first year.

MH: Did you continue with athletics in college?

TO: No, actually I was president of the student body.

MH: I see.

TO: And president of the senate.

MH: I see.

TO: And so we did that kind of stuff, but I majored in bridge my sophomore year, so I mean you can tell – and the only other claim to fame in going to Colgate is Mom talked, because of my Irish ancestry, she talked me into taking the pledge not to drink until I was twenty-one. And I kept it. And so Colgate, the fraternity house I was in had, the claim to fame was really the longest bar in the county, and so I put a lot of guys to bed.

MH: Fraternities are a big thing at Colgate.

TO: Well they used to be.

MH: Right, they've phased out in most places.

TO: Things are really bounced around now, so. But, you know, it was an isolated community, tremendous -

MH: What town is it in?

TO: It's in Hamilton.

MH: Hamilton, New York, right.

TO: And Hamilton [College] is in Clinton.

MH: Clinton, it's confusing, yes.

TO: Yes, but a man named Everett Case was president, and he was married to one of the owners of, a very accomplished woman who did a lot for St. Lawrence, and he really brought it out of the dark ages, intellectually. And we just lost Harvey Picker.

MH: Right, right.

TO: Harvey -

MH: Wonderful man, yeah. So there's a Colgate connection with Harvey Picker?

TO: Right, he gave us a building, and he was into the computers and he set up the library, Case Library.

MH: This is Harvey Picker of, well he died recently in his nineties and he was, or late nineties, I think, and he lived in Camden, owned Wayfarer Marine.

TO: Ninety, ninety-two, ninety-three. I was on the MEMIC Board, and he formed MEMIC and then came on the MEMIC board, and it was always interesting whenever he spoke, we all listened. He was an exceptional guy. Case did a tremendous job on bringing the school around,

and Harvey Picker was a part of it.

MH: I see. So what happens after Colgate?

TO: Well, Ray Reese, I'll never forget moaning and groaning about being in love, up in his study, in his house, and he said, "Marry the girl." And so I went home, first I went, got Angie a job, went home and proposed to her, made sure I had my scholarship for next year, and proposed to her, and dad really thought that she was in trouble. He was very, he was a great guy. His classic – when I first went to pick her up, he worked in a shoe shop and he was very muscular and he'd read the paper, standing there in short sleeves, and I'd come in, and drop the paper down, see it was me, put the paper back up. He was Sicilian and put the fear of God in me, and it was, and I think that was kind of what – but anyway. We married, and actually Timmy was conceived at Colgate, and went with Goodyear, and spent nine years with Goodyear.

MH: Doing what?

TO: In their stores, and in their wholesale. Ended up running a store in Nashua, went up to Watertown, where you just can't believe the amount of snow, I mean it just is -

MH: Watertown, New York, yeah.

TO: Oh my gosh.

MH: And Nashua, New Hampshire?

TO: Nashua, New Hampshire, was our first venture into New England. And I'm thinking, I was really interested in, I never realized the French population, and I thought, so we got in an old mill town like Nashua, and I'm running a store, and most of the people still are speaking French, I'm trying to sell appliances and stuff, it was a real, I met myself coming and going pretty good. So we ended up coming up to Maine, and we ended up outside of, in Manchester, outside of Augusta and -

MH: When would that have been, roughly?

TO: The late '60s.

MH: Okay.

TO: And actually in Garden Crest, the same place Ken Curtis was for a while when he was working up that way, and got into – Noyes Tire was a factor in the market, they had fourteen stores, and I went to work, I put them in the under car business – the brakes, front end and that kind of stuff and was a retail sales manager.

MH: I see.

TO: And my next-door neighbor was a guy named Gene Cohen, who was building Portland Glass.

MH: Okay.

TO: And he used to wait for me at night, he'd have, and amazingly the two businesses, Mike, are very, very similar -

MH: Really?

TO: Yes, in the sense that at least the big, the major portion of what we pursued was tied to the car.

MH: Hmm-hmm. Windshields, auto parts.

TO: Exactly, they break every eleven years and that kind of, so he kept on trying to hire me and I said no. And after nineteen years in the tire business I shifted over and I spent sixteen years, I was president of Portland Glass, and Gene and Madeleine, we were abutting. Madeleine died at forty-five, and he died at forty-seven. And so that was a ringer-dinger, that experience, Mike.

MH: Is that when you became president, is when -?

TO: Yeah, because I was executive vice president, and he made me president while he, he had cancer and knew it was, it really gave him the two years to take care of his wife.

MH: Tell me about that company, Portland Glass, it's a fairly prominent company today.

TO: Well we built it, you know. At the time I was running it, it was forty-three million dollars and we had forty-three stores, we had 680 -

MH: Forty-three stores?

TM: We had 683 employees.

MH: Were they just in Maine? They couldn't have been just in Maine.

TO: No, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and we were starting into Massachusetts.

MH: I see.

TO: So Cohen had, gave to me, Mike, he saw in me what I only hoped was in me, and I'm sure that probably George did the same for you. And so at that point I think I was pretty much a

resident critic.

MH: Yeah.

TO: And then all of a sudden I said, “Do you want to be right or do you want to get something done?” And so it was a tremendous experience for me.

MH: How big was the company when you began with it?

TO: Well when we started it had, it was probably four million at the most. I mean, and the real estate, the whole nine yards, and that’s how he made his money was in the real estate, because he’d be going out and buying McDonald’s locations and buy two of them, and I would pay the rent in Portland Glass. In a business that’s like two percent rent factor, and I’d have eleven or twelve percent. And I finally one day said to him, “Hey look,” I said, “you’ve got to pay me like the house of Cohen.” I said, “You’re paying me off of Portland Glass and I’m making you a bloody fortune.” So I finally got Lewiston. I should have gotten a couple more and that would have been a, because that’s been a boom.

MH: Did Portland Glass, I assume it does -

TO: Sold out.

MH: It does have a great deal more than, even when you were president, I assume they were doing a lot more than automobile glass.

TO: Oh yeah, we were in -

MH: Store windows, a whole range of glass work?

TO: Yes, we’re in construction. And if you take a look at downtown, the Payson Museum, we literally built those windows. I.M. Pei drew them, and we built them.

MH: How much of the market do you think that you have in this -?

TO: Well we had sixty percent of the auto replacement market in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. And they’re still, they are owned presently, they are owned – and this leads into a story of how I really got to know George – they’re owned by Roto-Rooter.

MH: Right.

TO: And the core of those stores are still the most profitable, The Glass Doctor is what they call themselves, in our Portland Glass division, and they are still the most profitable glass company.

MH: Were you present when the sale was made to Roto-Rooter?

TO: No, I owned Haskell & Hall, a construction company and another, D&N Distributing at the time, and I bought this, Kaplan Vending, for my son-in-law and then I kind of got tangled up in it, because there was a divorce.

MH: Okay. Long association with businesses in the Portland area then. Mostly in the Portland area?

TO: Pretty much, I mean outside of New York for a while, I've been in New England.

MH: And I met Tim, or I talked to Tim, your son.

TO: Yes.

MH: Are there other siblings?

TO: Yes, there are, we have two men and two women.

MH: Oh okay, four.

TO: And they're all actually in the greater Portland area.

MH: Oh that's wonderful, yeah.

TO: It's kind of interesting because you go on over for trips back home to – I say home – to New York state, and they say, "Boy, are we glad you picked Maine."

MH: Tell me about how you met George Mitchell.

TO: Well, Joe Angelone lived two doors down.

MH: Right.

TO: Okay, Joe and Pat, and so I kind of had an understanding of him, and then played with him a couple times. And lo and behold, Portland Glass was sued by Shatterproof, and who was representing Shatterproof but George Mitchell.

MH: Oh. Tell me, Shatterproof is outside the state -?

TO: It was an independently family-owned business out of Detroit that made windshields. And what had happened is that there were some windshields in question, they were looking for a settlement, Gene was looking for settlement, told this guy to throw them in the dumpster, and Shatterproof said, "Hey look, no windshields, no money," and so George was, you know, five to

seven thousand dollars I think. But anyway, so Cohen says to me, "You know Mitchell," and I knew Mitchell like I didn't know Mitchell, okay? Once you really know Mitchell you won't be on the other side of any litigation he's ... So he said, "Make sure when you settle up with him that you get George's, whatever George is going to charge us, you get it all in one lump sum." So that was what we did. And so that's when I got to know perhaps the sharp edge of George. But, then we played a lot of tennis, we must have played -

MH: Now, characterize for me what he's like as a tennis player. I know there's a lot of psychology in tennis, so what is he like as a tennis opponent?

TO: Well, he is, intellectually, I've never, there's about maybe five people that I've met in my life that have the kind of wheels that George has, and he uses the wheels, I mean he's very aggressive, and I'm sure if you've talked to Harold or any of those guys, he's two steps, on his serve he's at least two steps into the court, because he's foot-faulting. If we could call foot faults we'd probably all have won. But he's very cool, and he doesn't give up, he doesn't give up. A couple times, on drop shots, I've seen him run for them and pull his groin or something like that and put him out of commission, because he just is, he's really genteel, you can get him, but he's not sticking the barbs in you. I mean, well if you made a foolish shot he'd maybe, you know, how he'd, I'm sure he did, if you worked for him you know exactly what the hell he did, you know. But he just, he's a winner.

MH: People have said to me that there was not a lot of flourish, but he always seemed to get the ball over the net, it always seemed to come back at you.

TO: Oh it, yes, and you know, you get a shot and then all of a sudden you see it coming back, and then you get a chance to mess it up somehow. So he very rarely lost, *very rarely lost*, and I hated to have him as a partner in doubles and we lost, because he'd never say anything but you could feel the body language, and you knew damn well that when you screwed up it mattered. But he was always good.

One thing that George did - You know my oldest daughter Kathy, her first marriage broke up, and they were in the middle of the divorce and she'd found her present husband and was going to marry him. And it was the week before the wedding, and the wedding was going to, we had a tent out back and the whole nine yards kind of stuff, and that Monday morning I woke up and I could sense my wife was awake. I rolled over and I saw her looking at the ceiling, and I said, "What's wrong?" And she said, "The divorce hasn't gone through and the wedding is Saturday." I called George at nine o'clock that morning, and the kids had no money or nothing was really, just two lawyers that were just yanking each other around. And by that Thursday, they had the papers and he just cleaned house.

His intellect was, what I always, Mike, I couldn't wait to get to him to say, "What happened here?" It's kind of like, and if you were working for him at the time, I think a lot of the rancor between the Democrats and Republicans started back with the older Sununu.

MH: Hmm-hmm, hmm-hmm.

TO: I have never -

MH: He was chief of staff at the White House.

TO: I have never seen George as upset as I saw him after some sort of get together with Sununu, and somebody ought to really dig into that, because George was beyond himself. But Sununu, to put it mildly, it bothered George that somebody that smart could be that narrow, and that that was kind of the -

MH: Well maybe. There are interviews going on in Washington -

TO: Oh I'm sure there's -

MH: - on a lot of things, and some of them with senators that Senator Mitchell served with, so I'm sure they'll be getting to that. So did you see him much when he came up here from Washington, when he was up -?

TO: Well actually, the bulk of the time was between the loss with the governorship and his being a federal judge. I'll never forget, we were playing tennis and I'd give him a ride back to South Portland, and it was a lousy day, much like we've just gone through, raining and dark and the whole nine yards. And we're headed back across, and he's behind in the polls, way the heck behind, he's thirty points behind, something like this, and I look over at him and I say, "George, why did you give up a job for life for?" He says, "I'd rather appoint them than be it." And I'll never forget [that], and he was dead [serious], you know how dead serious he could get. And that just, and Joe talked, Joe and Pat, when he was running, some of his first TV ads. We see him now and he's so natural on TV. His first TV ads were awful. I'll never forget the one where he was standing in some mill up in Waterville, and you know, 'John of Gaunt', that's all I could [think]. And so Angie and I and Pat and Joe were, they were cutting ads for him, and he was talking to us to try and get relaxed a little bit. Now you see him and it just, I'm amazed.

And the other thing is, a lot of us have understanding and we have depth. I'd say five people, seen the breadth of understanding. And we used to go out after tennis and eat, and the games that were played, you know, "Name twelve countries that border Russia," you know what I'm saying.

MH: I've heard these, yeah.

TO: Yeah, yeah, you know, "Oh man, I'm lucky to know where I am." So it was fun.

MH: Who would you play tennis with, I mean were there kind of a set set of people that -?

TO: Well Juris, of course, and you've talked to Juris.

MH: That's Juris Ubans, right?

TO: Yes, Professor -

MH: Right, the art professor.

TO: I call him Professor Goodlife. He, we play, we still play. Originally there were about seventeen of us, and we'd play during the week and we'd play on the weekends. You know, Harold was in it. When Walter Corey was hanging together and didn't have the hip, he was playing. Tom Allen was in it.

MH: Was he part of the group?

TO: And Kermit Lipez was part of the group. Kermie and, he's a tremendous judge but he's fiery as heck, and on the tennis court he was fiery, and I'm saying, "Where's the judicial temperament that I see in George, in Kermit?" But he had a great love, Kermit has a great love of law and a history of it.

MH: I'm hoping to interview him.

TO: Oh, you should, because he's got some real stories. There was a unique relationship between the Angelones, and it's too bad you can't get the Angelones, and George. Joe was kind of, Joe was Mr. Insider, and he was the chauffeur, and he loved to take George places and George loved to be with him. It was a -

MH: The Senator used to mention going to hockey games particularly.

TO: Oh yes.

MH: Even before the first Senate election when we were in such bad shape with the polls.

TO: Yes.

MH: His way he'd let his hair down would be go to Portland and go to a hockey game.

TO: Yes. You know, just before he took over the Senate leadership, Juris and I went down to play tennis down there with him, and that was kind of the swan song of the tennis, because he knew where he was going and how busy he was going to get. And he hosted us down there -

MH: Where did he take you to play tennis, there's only, yeah, probably over at the Hilton.

TO: Yes, and we got in some tennis and we had some fun. And I've caught up with him in Naples; he came down and spoke in Naples.

MH: Naples, Florida?

TO: Yes, and actually he invited us to dinner and we heard the speech, so it was fun.

MH: How long ago was that?

TO: Oh, that had to be, that was the year his second child was born. So that was, what's that, five years now?

MH: Yeah, about that.

TO: So it's, yes, I often wonder, he's a couple years older than I am, and I'm saying, "Boy, he's got those young kids, and knowing him -"

MH: A man with great energy, though. I'm amazed at how much he can get into a day and -

TO: Well he is, Mike, he's really unique, as you know. If you'd kind of see where he came from, and of course by the Joe connection we had the Robbie connection. And so you get to see some of the family and some of the interplay of, between -

MH: Now why because of the Joe connection, the Robbie? I mean I know -

TO: Joe and Robbie were, when, after he stepped out of the banking setup, he took over Biddeford -

MH: Right, the bank in Biddeford.

TO: Okay, Robbie played tennis with us.

MH: Ah, okay.

TO: Okay? And Joe and he would go out and have dinner and some drinks. And so you got the by-play of what was going on there, but it was good stuff. It was good stuff.

MH: Do you still have any family in Ireland that you know about or keep in contact with?

TO: No.

MH: I wondered what they thought of his performance over there.

TO: Well I've got a real good friend, who became a much better friend because of what George did. Actually the kids took us over on our fiftieth wedding anniversary; eleven of us went over to the (*unintelligible*). And I'd never been, Angie and one of our daughters had been,

but when George was doing the work, and after the work in Ireland, this guy is an entrepreneur, a doctor who, radiologist, who was the prime stockholder of a health care that sold out to Blue Cross-Blue Shield in Maryland. And he's a businessman but a great doctor. But, you know, he was always asking me about George. And I can't believe when the premier stood George up yesterday, because I was at my grandson's basketball last night, and Donny Peters and I were sitting together kibitzing.

MH: I didn't catch that on the news, what happened?

TO: Well he was supposed to meet in Paris, and he said, "No, you got to meet with the defense guy and you can talk to me later." So Donny and I are talking last night and saying, "Holy cow. That must have set George off pretty good." Because I mean he's given up everything just to follow through on this.

MH: And he's spending a great deal of time over there, it's not, he's almost over there full time at this point.

TO: Heather's up in northern Maine at this point, I guess.

MH: I assume she's at Mt. Desert Island.

TO: Yes, Donny said she's up there, and that George is going to slide in and slide out, because normally August is when he comes up, and so that's kind of the deal. Yes, we're lucky. He, it's kind of, when an average guy gets a chance to meet an above average guy, it's an eye-opener. And one of my classmates ran TimeLife, but not in the same league as this cat, you know.

MH: And it's been a very interesting, I very much enjoyed meeting the people who supported him at various points in his career, and we have a few people who were his opponents at various points in his career and they're interesting as well, and they all seem to have a great deal of respect for him.

TO: It is respect, and I've always tried to support him financially because when he didn't have anything he was, he'd always check on, "Is this a company car? Is this, and how does this work? Do you get the full benefits to get this kind of stuff?" And I know he was concerned with (*unintelligible*). And so it was great to see him branch out, get a chance to make a buck.

MH: And he turned out to be a very good businessman as well.

TO: Well he always was a good businessman; he really understood business. I mean he understood the deal, and his word was his bond. The currency of life is trust, and if I were ever going to trust somebody, I'd trust George.

MH: It would be, I don't know the degree to which we'll be able to interview people who are

on, who are affiliated with some of the companies on which he sat on boards, but that would be interesting.

TO: I'd love to hear that story.

MH: You know, because we have a lot of stories about his negotiating skills in the Senate, and as U.S. attorney, and, as presidential emissary, but I don't know how many we've gotten yet from the board period.

TO: Yes.

MH: And actually that's now, you know, he's been on boards since '95.

TO: Walt Disney, I mean that, what he went through at Disney ought to be something that really, I mean he's been tested, he's been tested.

MH: All right, in these interviews I always, you know, I always, we try to, I try to prepare and learn as much about the interviewee as I can. I didn't have a lot on you, I wasn't aware of the Portland Glass connection, but are there any stories that you think that would be good for the archives to have, that you can particularly remember? You went to Washington, you said, to play tennis before he left, before he took on the majority leader position, was that before or was it after?

TO: That was just before he officially took over, because -

MH: Did you have any other trips down to see him?

TO: No. Well we went down, this was kind of interesting, with Timmy, you've got the contact with Timmy. Joe Wishcamper and I sat next to each other on a plane going down to - and at that time Timmy was working for Joe. He'd worked twelve years for Joe before -

MH: Joe Brennan?

TO: No, no.

MH: Oh, for Joe Wishcamper, right, okay.

TO: Joe Wishcamper, okay, before he, it's Monks and O'Neil now, and they're a lot of Section 8 stuff, and of course Timmy cut his, was in the middle of the Section 8 stuff with Joe; he ran his management company and he also was an investor with him, towards the tail end. And it was really, I'd never seen a swearing-in and I'm going on down, but I had a chance to sit with Joe going down, and Timmy had just signed on with Joe. And Walter Corey, well this brings up a story about, George thought because I owned a construction company and because I had Portland Glass, I had some skills with my hands, okay. The classic story is that he would,

he'd have something done at the house, and he had that old colonial and -

MH: In South Portland.

TO: In South Portland, and something would go wrong, and they'd finally get somebody there to fix it, and his comment always was, "I go directly to the office, because I know I can build faster and better than the tradesmen, as a lawyer." I mean, here's this great genius with no practical, how a window goes together or where a leak, [he] had a leak on the back of the house that was always a problem. But, "I go directly to the office and I know I can build at least as much as the tradesmen can." And he was just a good guy.

MH: So you got to the swearing-in, one of his Senate swearing-ins?

TO: The first.

MH: The first, okay, so that would have been the '82, or January of '83.

TO: Yes, so that, Mike, but I was talking with Joe on the plane and he said, "Well what can I do for Tim?" And he said, I had a chance to say, "Look, just demand excellence." And Timmy was kind of a late bloomer, but he was a millionaire a heck of a lot sooner than I was, I'll tell you that. And, you know Joe; it was just a great experience. And he used to, how the connection came is, Walt Corey used to live two doors up from us, and when he was federal state coordinator for Curtis, Ken Curtis, he'd call down to say, "The pig is plugged, send Timmy up," and so up Timmy would go and get it working, and so out of that came a job with Joe, out of that came a lot of experiences. Timmy and Donny Peters are real close.

MH: Are they?

TO: Very, very close. And if you really can't get through -

MH: Okay, well I'll call Tim and -

TO: They both have the same deal that, the boy that dies with the most toys wins.

MH: Well very good. This has been great. You'll get a thank you letter from the office at Bowdoin, and then eventually you'll get a transcript of what's been said, and they'll ask you to sign a consent form. And if you think of some more stories, I'll give you my card and we can certainly continue this discussion. Sometimes when we do these, people, you get talking and then -

TO: Get derailed.

MH: Tomorrow you'll think, "Gee, I wish I'd brought up that particular incident, or that particular story."

TO: Well there's one I, you were talking about how intense a competitor he is, I was very frustrated, I couldn't beat him. So I took a week off and I played tennis every day, and I set up a match with George on Thursday, and I blew through him – on the first set, but I didn't on the second or the third. But you're talking about, you know, he inspired me to take a week off and practice, I'll tell you that.

MH: Now tell, before I go, tell me about this company. This is a -

TO: Kaplan Vending.

MH: It's a vending, for vending machines.

TO: Vending machines, right.

MH: How wide a geographic area does it cover?

TO: We go down to the Berwicks, and we're into Sanford, we do Hannaford over here, we do, I call it Saco Defense, but it's General Dynamics.

MH: Used to be Marymount a long time ago.

TO: Right, exactly. And we go up into the lakes region, and we go on up to Lewiston.

MH: I see.

TO: And Don, the business started in '58.

MH: Right.

TO: And we bought it twelve years ago, I bought it for a son-in-law, and then as I said, four years ago I got the phone call in Naples saying, "Dad, you better get up here, there's going to be a divorce."

MH: How many people do you employ?

TO: There's just thirteen of us.

MH: I see. Do the, I mean when I think of a vending machine, I think of, you know, candy or something like that, but I know that the grocery stores now have these machines where you can actually put bottles in and it crushes them, do you do that kind of thing as well?

TO: No, no we don't.

MH: No, you don't, okay.

TO: But actually, CLYNK does it, that's a very separate business that -

MH: Oh okay. I wondered if vending companies were into that, but -

TO: Well, if somebody had some brains, they would be. Kind of like the O'Neil that didn't believe the car was going to make it. But this is a direct derivative of how we get our money out of machines now, I mean that's, there's all kinds, it's the same technology.

MH: Yes. I know that we have a Athern or Ahern up in Unity.

TO: They just sold out to -

MH: Did they?

TO: Yes, to the big guy up in Pine State.

MH: Okay, because I can't remember, I think Ahern had the university contract for a while.

TO: He's a well-run, well respected group, and the son is going to be very active at Pine State now, he's going to have a bigger broom to push, so it'll be interesting.

MH: Thank you very much for this.

TO: Thank you, it was enjoyable meeting you.

MH: Appreciate it.

End of Interview