Interview with John Sheridan by Nancy Becker
February 9, 2010

Nancy Becker: Good...afternoon. It is February 9th, 2010. I am Nancy Becker. This is an interview with John Sheridan. It is for the project on the Governor Kean Archive, profiling the career and administration of Thomas H. Kean. I'm interviewing John Sheridan, former Commissioner of Transportation during the Kean administration. John's career has spanned more than 40 years in public service, practice of law and healthcare. He is currently President and CEO of Cooper Health System in Camden, New Jersey. Before joining Cooper he was the Senior Partner and Co-Chair of the law firm of Riker, Danzig, Scherer, Hyland & Perretti, which he joined in May 1985. While at Riker, he served for a number of years as Counsel to the New Jersey Turnpike Authority. Mr. Sheridan served as Commissioner of Transportation and Chairman of the Board of the New Jersey Transit Corporation from 1982 to 1985. Earlier in his career he served as Deputy Attorney General and Assistant Counsel to Governor William Cahill and Counsel to the New Jersey Senate Minority. John is a graduate of St. Peter's College and Rutgers Law School.

Nancy Becker: I am delighted to have this conversation with you this afternoon. And will you talk to me about what your first interest in politics was.

John Sheridan: Well, real early when I was very young, six years old my father was--we lived in Cambridge, Massachusetts and I remember handing out leaflets for Tip O'Neill's first campaign on the streets. So that was my really first exposure to it. My father wasn't big into politics but he was interested, he did little things like that in campaigns. So I guess the next thing I remember is I remember listening to both the democrat and republican conventions almost in total on the radio in 1952.

Nancy Becker: So were you born in Massachusetts?

John Sheridan: Nineteen forty-two, Boston, grew up in Cambridge till I was 12 and then we moved to New Jersey. My father got transferred down to Kearny he was in the meatpacking business. And I grew up in Bloomfield, went to Catholic school and then I went to Seton High School and then I went to St. Peter's College and stayed in New Jersey for law school. I'm the oldest of six and good Irish Catholic family.

Nancy Becker: And so when you came to New Jersey, did you continue your interest in politics?

John Sheridan: Not really, I would say, no. I remember not much interest. I was very interested in sports growing up, a little bit less interested in school growing up, but managed to get to the next level at every turn and just kept going.

Nancy Becker: I'm going to skip forward and ask you, when you graduated from law school, did you immediately join the Attorney General's Office?

John Sheridan: No, I was lucky enough to get a job with Judge Botter in the Superior Court and was a late hire. I wasn't quite sure what I was going to do but I had to get serious because I had just gotten married and took a job for I think for like $5,400 a year. And I clerked for Judge Botter and he was in the Law Division, he did a lot of the heavy duty trials in Bergen County. And the second half of the year he was on the Appellate Division so I had time in both the Law Division and the Appellate Division.
Nancy Becker: So you said you had graduated from law school, you had just gotten married and where did you live?

John Sheridan: West Paterson when we got married. Joyce was from Lincoln Park and I was from Bloomfield and we settled sort of between the two families in West Paterson. That was part of my problem, I wound up registered for the draft in Montclair, lived in West Paterson and was clerking in Bergen County. And I believe this was true, I was the only law clerk that year that got drafted.

Nancy Becker: And you served in the Army?

John Sheridan: Two years infantry, finally-- infantry, advanced infantry, learned to fire shoulder fired missiles in Fort Bliss Texas and then I went to Kansas to Fort Riley and there they plucked me out and put me in the Judge Advocate General's Office as a clerk. So I had applied for a commission when I went in. It eventually came through but by that time I had been in eight months and they wanted a four year commitment and I just decided to take my chances. So I actually didn't go to Vietnam, I served out the rest of my time in Fort Riley.

Nancy Becker: So when you came back from the Army, what did you do then?

John Sheridan: Looked for a job, had a couple of interviews. The judge, my former judge tried to help me a little bit and I had a couple of dry runs that didn't work out. And he had been First Assistant to the Attorney General and he said, "Why don't you think about that and go talk to-- " I think it was Marilyn Shower ? at the time. It was a new administration, George-- Cahill administration had just started. So I interviewed with her and with Attorney General George Kugler and I got hired. And just to give you an idea about a state government because I think this is really interesting, I was the 42nd Deputy Attorney General at the time. The office had just gone full time, before that you could have a part time practice. There are now something-- I'm guessing, like 1,000 Deputy Attorney Generals.

Nancy Becker: When you talked about your early years in Cambridge, Massachusetts and you were giving out literature for Tip O'Neill, so when did you become a Republican?

John Sheridan: I actually went into the Cahill administration, but I don't even remember how I was registered at the time. I know how I voted and I had sort of a checkered history of voting up to the time. I voted for Goldwater in '64. I voted for Humphrey in '68 and figure that one out, that doesn't even make any sense. But I guess I was changing my attitudes at the time quite frequently. When I was in the AG's office, I was working there, I'm trying to think, probably two years, but we had moved to Newark when I took the job in the AG's Office. We lived in the North Ward and I used to take the train to Trenton. So I got to meet some people, one in particular, Judge-- former judge now, Jim Petrella, was in the Cahill administration. And when there was an opening, and this is kind of interesting, when Richie Weinroth left Governor Cahill's Office, they asked me to take his place. And so that's how I got over to the Governor's Office. And the AG consented to that because he had to because I had a three year commitment to him when I joined the AG's office.

Nancy Becker: So you joined the Cahill administration three years after being in the AG's…

John Sheridan: A couple of years after.

Nancy Becker: And then what was your job in the Cahill administration?
John Sheridan: It was basically to deal with legislation that was there and any problems that came up in certain areas. And my assignments were transportation, health and BPU, I'm trying to remember, and insurance, insurance. So the legislation in those areas was in sort of my bailiwick. The Counsel's Office in the Governor's Office was very small. We had a Chief Counsel, which was Pete Garvin who later became Chief Justice, Jim Petrella and then three essentially assistant counsel and that was the entire office. Dave Norcross was Special Counsel to the Governor, he was in the office too.

Nancy Becker: So it was very small. So when did you first meet Tom Kean?

John Sheridan: Right as soon as I went to the Governor's Office. I met Tom Kean before I met Governor Cahill when I went to the-- it was interesting, I would say I was in the office six or eight months before I met the Governor, you know, just doing my thing. I met Tom Kean because he was the Speaker of the Assembly and so I had some dealings on certain-- not a lot of meetings, I don't mean to imply that, but I got to see him in action at that time and he was a young speaker, a young legislator and had a rapid ascendancy in the Assembly from just one of the regulars to become Speaker. And at a time when-- in order to make that happen and I believe this is true, it was before I was there, but he basically became Speaker when there was an arrangement cut with-- Hudson County Democrats that made him the Speaker. I didn't realize it at the time but I obviously realized it later that that must have taken a lot of political skill to pull that one off.

Nancy Becker: When Tom Kean first ran for Governor in 1977 were you involved in that campaign at all?

John Sheridan: I was, but not with Tom Kean.

Nancy Becker: Who did you work for?

John Sheridan: In the primary I was with Ray Bateman and supported Ray. And I was living-- part of it was where I was living a Somerset County resident by that time, I worked in Bound Brook, I was working in Princeton. And I knew Ray better because I worked as Counsel to the Senate Republicans after I left the Governor's Office and so I knew Ray better than I knew Tom.

Nancy Becker: And in the 1977 campaign where Governor Byrne unexpectedly won a second term, Ray Bateman lost the election, what were you doing or what did you do during that period of time?

John Sheridan: I was still counsel to the Senate Republicans part time, but I was-- I had gone up to Princeton when Governor Cahill lost as an attorney in the same firm as he did. So it was Cahill, McCarthy and Hicks and I was a-- for want of a better term, I carried his bag for-- you know, whatever files I was asked to work on I worked on. And after about four years he left and his son had been in the Prosecutor's Office and was going into private practice and the Governor went back to his old firm and I think they were in Haddonfield at the time but they were originally in Camden and was Cahill, Wilensky and Cahill. And around that time I became a partner in McCarthy and Hicks in Princeton and I was a general practitioner is what I did. But I stayed-- I had this part time job as counsel to the Senate Republicans so I had a good feel of what was going on. I lived through the income tax issue and the first series of school cases. So I kind of had a good feel for what was going on and not going in government.

Nancy Becker: So let's skip to 1981 and the gubernatorial primary campaign. Were you involved in the gubernatorial primary campaign in 1981?

John Sheridan: Yes, but not in a big way and not with Tom Kean.
Nancy Becker: And who did you work for?

John Sheridan: Pat Kramer.

Nancy Becker: And Pat Kramer clearly was the candidate who was favored to win in that primary.

John Sheridan: He was and I had known Pat from the Cahill administration. Pat was Commissioner of DCA in the Cahill administration so I knew him quite well and I liked him a lot. I thought he was going to win. Little did I know.

Nancy Becker: Do you want to talk about Kean's victory a little bit in the primary, how did he manage to pull that off?

John Sheridan: You know, I don't remember it all that well, but I do remember this part, I think is right. Pat Kramer's strategy was to line up all the county chairs and he had done a good job of it. And Tom, showing his political skill again managed to get a bill through basically making an open primary in a lot of counties. And some of the counties that were pledged to Pat, once that happened couldn't deliver. So his strategy in the end didn't work out very well.

Nancy Becker: So once Tom Kean won the primary what was your role then in the campaign?

John Sheridan: I had a minor role in the campaign. Larry Weitzner and I worked on transportation policy. They knew I had one year at-- one of the years when I was-- well, when I went to the Governor's Office, I was there about a year and Governor Cahill and the Attorney General asked me to go out to transportation. They were having a lot of issues in public transportation. At that time there was no New Jersey Transit, the railroads were all in bankruptcy. They asked me to go out there and deal with the Commissioner and work right in the Commissioner's wing and focus on public transit and see if I could help. And I did. And I had a very intense year in public transit in 1973, last year of the Cahill administration.

Nancy Becker: So the election of 1981 was one of the closest in New Jersey history. What was your role during this period of uncertainty when it was not clear who the victor would be?

John Sheridan: I would say I had no role. I was available to work on the recount but I don't recall spending any time on it. I was obviously still counsel to the Senate Republicans during that time so I was in Trenton a lot, but I don't recall having a role during that period. During the transition period, my name got floated for a couple of different positions. I know some people had suggested to the Governor that I would be a good Insurance Commissioner. I had a little bit of experience in the sense that I had worked through the no-fault bill issues when I was in the Governor's Office. And particular on the second round of changes, I probably was the draftsman of most of those changes, myself and a-- you know, Pete Guzzo? Pete Guzzo was on the Assembly Staff at the time and so we worked on those issues and got some legislation that ultimately and kind of fixed a lot of the problems that people were having with the no-fault law. Phil Kaltenbacher was the assemblyman at the time and later-- might have been Republican Chairman under Tom Kean. I'm trying to figure the times here, I think so.

Nancy Becker: I think he was too.
John Sheridan: He was very close to Tom because they were both from Essex County and Phil was very big on insurance so I had worked with him on that. So people knew that I knew something about this, but I think the name was put in by the president of New Jersey Manufacturers, a fellow named Vince Hoyer if I recall correctly. And so I got interviewed in that process along with a bunch of other people. And I had-- you know, Larry Weitzner, I think Lew Thurston, some other people thought I would be a good Commissioner of Transportation and so they had put my name in for that.

Nancy Becker: I may want to come back and talk about no-fault because we haven't talked to anyone about no-fault insurance. It was a big issue.

John Sheridan: But it was mostly an issue long before Tom was Governor.

Nancy Becker: Yes it was and it continued long after he was governor.

John Sheridan: Right. Right.

Nancy Becker: When you were asked to be Commissioner of Transportation, were you surprised and who asked you?

John Sheridan: No, no. Well first of all I was the last cabinet officer appointed. And they had talked-- I knew that they had talked to a lot of people. I didn't know who, but they had done some kind of a national search and had come up with names and they had done interviews. Ultimately I recall being interviewed by Tony Cicatiello, Cary Edwards, Gary Stein and-- maybe the three of them, maybe somebody else. I'm not sure. But we had a long interview, I thought-- I really thought I had some ideas about what needed to be done and what we should do. And matter of fact the papers that Larry Weitzner and I had produced during the campaign, the Governor actually used them when he went to editorial boards. And he had done-- maybe they had done 7 to 10 of these, but I think 3 or 4 of them were good and he took them with him. And he got-- I'm not saying it was because of that but he did work the editorial boards and I think some of those papers that showed up were helpful in showing that, here's a person of substance, you know, here's a person who's thinking about what he's going to do when he's Governor and he's got some ideas about what to do. And so to that extent I think what Larry and I did made some contribution.

Nancy Becker: How old were you at the time?

John Sheridan: Thirty-nine.

Nancy Becker: And your experience basically in transportation was not vast?

John Sheridan: Was?

Nancy Becker: Not vast.

John Sheridan: Oh, not vast for sure. No, I dealt with the issues when I was in the Governor's Office for about a year, but a part of a much larger portfolio. And then I went out to DOT and I was out there for one year. Now, I would say to you this, I had pretty enormous amount of experience squeezed into a short period of time out there because I had-- I was counsel to the five railroad bankruptcies, so I represented the state on the five bankruptcies, you know, Penn Central, Erie–Lackawanna, Reading, Lehigh Valley and Jersey Central. And there were enormous problems because a couple of those railroads were running the passenger service in New Jersey and they were all clamoring to get out of passenger service, shut down passenger service, so there was all of that. In the meantime, I don't know if meantime I don't know if many people remember this but public service used to run the bus service in North Jersey. And they were basically
losing their shirt on bus service and wanted to find an exit strategy, but my job became
over the course of that year to keep them afloat, keep them going for that year. And I
would just say this also, it was the Department of Transportation and that had been
created by Dave Goldberg, but it was transportation largely in name only because it was
still 95 percent a highway department and about this much mass transit.

Nancy Becker: So describe your job as Commissioner.

John Sheridan: Can I just tell you about how-- you know, you asked me before about how I got there.

Nancy Becker: Yes. Right.

John Sheridan: So people kept telling to me, "Hang in there. This isn't over yet. You may get it." And that came from Lew Thurston and it came from some other people too. "No decisions' been made." So I was like hanging on a string and I had talked to Joyce endlessly about whether this was a smart thing. I was now a partner, I was making more money than Commissioner of Transportation. I was doing pretty well in the law business. And I said, "No, I want to do this if it's available because I really think I could do a good job and I think it's a right career move for me." And she-- you know Joyce, she's her own person but we had a lot of talk about it and we decided we would do it if it came. So what I decided I wouldn't do is lobby for it, I just wouldn't. I was sure that if I did that it would not come my way, you know, Tom would not be able to deal with that and I knew I had some history with Tom, obviously I had not been with him in the primary, I was not this huge player in the campaign. Even Tom's relationship with Governor Cahill, while I think it worked well, I was perceived as a Cahill guy I think. I don't know whether he thought of me that way but that's what I was. So I was kind of hanging on string waiting for something to happen. The insurance post had gotten filled, I obviously didn't get that, thank God. Thank God now. And so along comes Vince Zarate one day and this is about March 1st.

Nancy Becker: Tell who Vince Zarate is.

John Sheridan: Vince Zarate was a legend from the Star-Ledger, a State House reporter forever and a great reporter and a very interesting character and a man with a tremendous voice who used to do performances at the annual press dinner where they lambaste all the politicians in Trenton. So Vince calls me up one day and he says, "John," he says, "I have it on unimpeachable authority that you are the next Commissioner of Transportation." And I took a deep breath and I said, "Vince, I don't know where you're getting this from. Nobody has said a word to me from the front office about the position. Please don't run this story." He said, "John, I have to run this story." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "I'm telling you, the person who gave me the story has never been wrong, calls it right every time, always has good information. I believe him. I don't know why you don't know yet but you're going to be the next Commissioner of Transportation." I said, "Vince, if I have any chance at all this'll be the end of it when you run this story." So I got off the phone and I called Lew Thurston and I said, "Lew, help me will you. If there's something I should know, tell me, if it's-- " he said, "No, there's no decision." I said, "Then you better get Vince and kill his story, you better kill his story." And Lew did get Vince and Lew did kill the story. And another couple of weeks went by and then I had my interview and then shortly after that I got a call from the Governor's Office to come and meet with him. We had a short meeting. I think the story went as to how they finally got to me is I think the Governor finally threw up his hands and said, "Ah, what the hell, give it to him, give him a shot."

Nancy Becker: Did you ever find out who Vince Zarate's source was?

John Sheridan: I did.
Nancy Becker: Would you care to tell?

John Sheridan: I don't recall the name exactly but it was some-- believe me this was really bizarre, farfetched impossible unimpeachable source in the sense that the guy was somebody who sold equipment of some kind, I think snowplows I think to the DOT. But he had some connect to Luke Gray who was the Chairman of Somerset County, a renowned Republican Chairman of Somerset County. So maybe that gave him some credibility with Vince and maybe the guy got lucky on some or maybe he had some good information, but he sure did have this one right.

Nancy Becker: It's a good story. Now describe your job as Commissioner, big responsibility.

John Sheridan: I've got to tell one story first.

Nancy Becker: Okay. So I go in and sit down with Tom and he says, "I really want you to do this." And I said, "I'm delighted to do it." I said, "Are you going to do a four way check before you announce it?" He said, "Uh-uh." He says, "You know what day it is?" This was like April 6th or something like that. He said, "You got anything to tell me, tell me now because I'm going to announce it this afternoon."

Nancy Becker: All right, for the record, tell us what a four way check is.

John Sheridan: A four way check is what the State Police do to check out serious candidates for important state posts and they check FBI records and criminal records and just about-- and then they do interviews of people that know you and it's a very thorough examination. But I didn't think I had much that I was worried about. But you never know quite how things are going to be presented from your past. So I just asked a question and he told me flat out, "No. You got anything, tell me now." So I said, "No, I really don't." So I got sworn in a month later on May 7th, I recall it to the day and got started. And by that time-- one of the questions I got asked during the interview, "Can you support the Governor's call for a five cent gas tax increase?" And I said, "Yes, of course I can. I think the department-- one of the department's biggest problems is money and this should help to solve the problem." And so he was in the midst of a big legislative battle by the time I got sworn in. And just to make that part of the story a little shorter, came up one vote short in the Senate.

Nancy Becker: On the gas tax.

John Sheridan: On the gas tax. I believe it had originated as it had to in Assembly and the passed the Assembly and failed in the Senate.

Nancy Becker: And were you already Commissioner was the gas tax legislation was introduced?

John Sheridan: I believe it had been introduced, yes. And as I recall it was really something that-- you know, Cary Edwards also was very interested in transportation and I believe that Cary was the person who was the big push in the front office on the gas tax.

Nancy Becker: So did you play much of a role once you were Commissioner?

John Sheridan: I just was out trying to sell it. I was trying to get it over the hump. You know, I obviously had some good connections with the Republican senators in the Senate because I had been their counsel. Got into a little trouble on my first foray into the battle. We put out some flyers at railroad stations that basically had a list of the legislators they should call and they were in alphabetical order and Senator Bubba was at the top of the list. He got-- I won't say a million calls, but he probably got 100 calls. He
went nuts. I had to go the Senate caucus and make an apology for doing it. But I made my push for the bill and I got over that.

Nancy Becker: So what were you responsibilities as Commissioner?

John Sheridan: Okay. So you have a rather large department that basically by this time had two functions. It had a huge highway department and it had been-- you know, it had been at one time, the premier highway department in the world. People used to come from China and from Europe to New Jersey because this was the place where a lot of the initial ideas about what highways should be built like, what the safety standards should be, how they should be built and the designs of them originated here. I'll just give you a couple. Four leaf clovers were originated in New Jersey, Jersey barriers that everybody knows are here, jug handles and I could go on and on and on. But they had this long glorious history and they had built a great highway system. Then in 1948 when the Constitution passed there had been a dedicated gas tax up to that point, so there was always good funding for transportation and they had done a lot of projects. But what happened in '48 was that-- what I would say, what was described as the good government movement was that it was zero based budgeted essentially every year. And so on a highway project which might take three, five, eight years to build, you could only count on funding for one year. So funding at DOT was a huge issue and that's why the Governor tried to attack it with the gas tax. The other thing that happened was New Jersey Transit had come into being. Lou Gambaccini and some of his young staffers including Martin Robins had put together concept of New Jersey Transit and had taken over those bankrupt railroads that I had talked about before. And so it was in its formative stage. I mean they were just starting up, maybe a year or two into it and they were just beginning to get a handle around the issues and so we had big issues with the railroad unions over work rules. We had lots of service problems with bad equipment. It's a very, very serious issue, finically got both the-- the Highway Department, the Highway side of the Transportation had been basically shut down for the entire 1970s. Once the '68 bond funds were expended, they lost three bond issues in the 1970s to the public and so they essentially had no funds plus the new environmental laws had come in and had set back the whole interstate program and a whole bunch of things. So we had projects stacked up that were promised and everybody thought were going to be built that weren't being built. And fortunately had a little money to work with because Lou Gambaccini had gotten a small bond issue passed in 1979 and there were still some funds left from that bond issue. But we had this problem of how are we going to fund this highway program, how are we going to complete the interstate, how-- you know, there were big gaps in the interstate program when I got there. So I went about thinking how to deal with those issues and I hoped that the gas tax would pass because that was really going to be a pretty good solution to the problem. Once it went down I went back to the drawing boards, started making sure that the department was clear on what we were going to do. We're going to start building highways again, we're going to figure out how to do it, we're going to have priorities. There's going to be a project list that we're going to work on until we get it done, highest priority being close the gaps in the interstate system. We had a gap, 287 basically from Montville up to Suffern was not there. There was two gaps in '78, 10 mile gap in Union County and a 10 mile gap between east of Phillipsburg to the border in to Pennsylvania. Had the big interchange on 295 where 195 and 295 cross wasn't built, that was just nothing. And I'm trying to remember, I think 80 might have been pretty well complete from one end to the other. And there were projects like 55 and remind me to tell you a story about 55 because it's very much a Tom Kean story. And Route 9, Route 206, I mean I could just go through one after another that everybody at that time wanted to build, wanted to be finished and hadn't been finished. So we set that priority. And the other thing was, I remember very early on, probably even during-- once the Governor announced my name I actually went over and hung out in the department for a month before I got confirmed and worked with Anne Canby who was Interim DOT Commissioner. And one of the issues I remember, both she and Lou Gambaccini told me, "Look it, you got one real problem here that I don't know how you're
going to deal with it, but you better deal with it because it's going to come back to haunt you and the Governor if it doesn't get taken care of." And it had to do with the electrification of the Morris and Essex Railroad in Essex County, the Governor's home county and it had been built by Thomas Edison in the '30s and hadn't been rehabbed at all up until 1980s. It was a project in the pipelines but it was having a problem. It was a DOT managed project being built for New Jersey Transit but the essentially had to rebuild the line while keeping the railroad running and so you had this big problem of Transit trying to operate trains, running into DOT's problems with getting the project built. We can get back to that later, but that was a big issue that we were confronting.

Nancy Becker: Do you want to take a break for two minutes.

John Sheridan: Sure.

Nancy Becker: All right.

Nancy Becker: John, just before the break, you were talking about one of the biggest problems was funding.

John Sheridan: Right.

Nancy Becker: And I know that you had a huge role in the creation of a funding source for transportation. Why don't you talk a little bit about that?

John Sheridan: Yeah, so you have to remember at that time that both houses of the legislature were controlled by the opposition party, the Democrats. As a matter of fact, the Speaker of the Assembly was one of my law school classmates, Alan Karcher. The majority leader, John Paul Doyle was another one of my classmates in law school. So we were now back together again. Alan was-- you know, they were both very bright guys but Alan was a nemesis for Tom Kean. So when you started thinking about how you're going to get through legislation, you had to really find a way, how are we going to get these controlled parties to essentially turn over a lot of funds to a Republican administration to go build a lot of projects and in thinking about how to do that we first had to design a program that even had a chance of passing and then we had to get everybody behind it. So I was struggling with exactly how to do this. I knew we weren't going to go back with a gas tax. I was basically told by the front office, "We're not doing that again." And we had limped along with some funding, there was a project the I-95 project which he designated that would have gone through Hopewell. There was a bunch of money that we got from that and some other things that we did. So we had some funds and I had some left over bond issue funding], so we were doing pretty good in terms of getting projects out that had been stalled for a long time. But we're still struggling with what's the concept of this plan. So it took us quite a while and ultimately, just one day by happenstance, I don't know whether you recall this or whether it's been talked about yet, but Bob Hughey who was the Commissioner of Environmental Protection, he had an idea that the way to sell it was not just to make it for the environmental sewer needs and water needs but also to include transportation. And so he had gotten some help from I forget which firm, some Wall Street firm that had helped him sort of conceptualize how they would do this. And he came over to talk to me one day or I went there, I forget which, but we had a good discussion about it but it was pretty clear to me that it wouldn't work in this sense, that in sewer and water, they actually had revenue generated by their project so they could have a revolving fund, so the fund could be replenished pretty easily. But in transportation you build a highway and unless you told the highway which we weren't talking about money for that at all, we already had the Turnpike and the Parkway and Expressway, this idea for a revolving fund
which was part of this trust fund wouldn't work. But in the course of that conversation he
started telling me about something I had never heard about before which were contract
bonds, that the state could sell bonds if the legislature would agree to appropriate money
every year to support those bonds. and they wanted general obligations bonds. And, they
had never been done in New Jersey as far as I know. So I took that idea, and I had some
conversation, I worked with Gary Stein quite closely in the governor’s office. Gary was
the policy person in the office, and was a very smart guy and had some Wall Street
experience too. And I believe we worked with Bear Stearns at the time. We decided we
would just go with one firm. And we cobbled together this plan, that involved some
contract bonds. Short term bonds, ten year bonds. So the idea was, that they would be
paid off in ten years and you could just renew the program. It dedicated part of the gas
tax that already existed to the fund extreme and imposed a new tax on heavy trucks, on
the theory that heavy trucks were really the biggest cause of damage to the highways,
and they weren’t, we felt, paying their fair share. So we had these three items. And I
knew that we had to do something to make it worth the effort. And so we proposed a
three billion dollar program. And at that time, I was like, “this is three billion.” Nobody ever
talked in those numbers. And the last bond issue was 140 million dollars, or 190 million
dollars, I forget. So we had this big program that we proposed and we had the financing
mechanism all worked out, but I had to get the governor on board for this. And I
remember, we were going over, and Gary and I presented it. And Gary was a little bit
standoffish, as I recall. I'm not really sure this was really smart. Greg Stevens by that time
had taken over from Lew Thurston and, you know, he was pretty new. So he was kind of
listening and learning, you know. So, you know, every once in a while we’d call up Greg
or Gary and one day I called up Greg and said, “How are we doing? I mean, we’re getting
pretty close to state of the union, and then a new budget. And, what are we going to do?
And, if we’re going to get going on this, we’ve got to do it now.” And, Greg said, let me
check, I’ll call you back. So I guess there was a lot of talk about it, inside one day about
different things they were going to do. And I was told <laughter> I don’t know if this is
true. But, I was told the governor said, “Are we going to do that crazy thing Sheridan
wants to do?” <laughter> and, I guess the answer was “yes.” And, so we went with it.
And, by this time, we had been through the strike up at transit. And, my staff had started
to change and evolve. And one of the guys that I had hired to help me with the strike and
the P.R. on the strike was Jim Weinstein. And so Jim started, when Tom Flynn left,
who had been Governor Cahill’s press secretary. Filled in as director of communications,
and then ultimately became my chief of staff when Jim Crawford became assistant
commissioner, so all names that people may remember that are still around. Jim’s back
again as head of New Jersey transit. But, Jim helped with the planning of the campaign.
And we had, not very high tech now, but we had this combination video, PowerPoint
presentation that we had put together. And it was pretty good. And we had taken
excerpt and it was the lead piece on the governor’s state of the union message, as I
recall. And then we had taken that and started doing a road show. And we had built a
pretty good coalition. As I recall, we had just about every labor union, every business in
the state was on board. I remember Bob Van Buren, the hungry banker, from Midlantic
Bank Bob Van Buren headed up this coalition, and we had literally, hundreds of
companies and organizations in the coalition. And I got on the road, and I went and I
actually saw 117 of the 120 legislators, all in their offices. Sometimes, one on one.
Sometimes, one on three, sometimes one on two. But, I went to all of them. And, in the
end, while I think there was a lot of wringing of the hands by Senate President John
Russo and Assembly Speaker Alan Karcher [ who really didn’t want to do this. Really
didn’t want to turn over three million dollars to this Republican governor to start spending
on transportation projects. There was so much support behind it. The labor unions, last
night, that it came up for a vote, it was right before the budget. And really it was part of
the budget package. But they were in the state house in force. Until the wee hours of the
morning, and they were running into the caucuses and running into the caucuses. In the
end, it passed both houses unanimously. Nobody could not be for it.
Nancy Becker: And the transportation trust fund was certainly one of the economic planks of the Kean administration's economic recovery program as well, was it not?

John Sheridan: Yeah. Sure, I mean, the whole idea was, like, "look, we have all these projects that need to be done." But remember, we were in the first year of the Kean administration, we were the remnants of a serious recession that had happened, it came out of the gas crises of the late 70s and the high inflation, and a bunch of other issues. And, I guess President Carter got blamed for it but I'm not sure they were his fault. And, Reagan had taken office, and was very enthusiastic. But in his first couple years ( he came into office a year before Governor Kean), the recession wasn't getting better fast. So this was, when the governor presented it, he emphasized the transportation piece. But also, the whole economic benefit, the whole idea of putting people to work, and getting things going, and getting the Jersey economy going again, it was the stimulus package of its day.

Nancy Becker: You mentioned briefly the rail strike, which also occurred in the early days of the Kean administration.

John Sheridan: Before I came to office, the new administration up at New Jersey transit, which was Jerry Primo and Martin Robbins and many others, including, by the way, my sister happened to be working there at the time. She was a young person in the communications office. Which is another story I'll tell you, but she had been there, a couple years by that time. But right at the beginning when they were formed. But, Martin had worked with this firm out of Chicago, I think it was called Lincoln Beal . And they were experts in labor and negotiations for railroads and they had a whole list of work rules that they wanted to accomplish. And so, we had talked about, "Okay, if we're going to try and get these, it's going to mean a strike." We know it's a strike. So my thought was, "wait a second. If you have a strike, and you haven't got a plan on how to take care of the people, you'll get killed. You'll get the governor and the legislature will be on our necks in about two minutes to get this thing fixed." And, so we spent a long time working on a plan. And we had a very, very good plan, on paper, for taking care of getting all the people into New York. And, we had worked the P.R. side, as I mentioned, I had hired, at the recommendation of Tom Flynn, Jim Weinstein to help us with the press. And we had a good press plan. We had some facts on our side that I think we used pretty well. In the sense that, because of the way certain conductors got paid for overtime and double time or whatever, remember, this is back in the 1980s when this was a lot of money. Some of them were making 90,000 dollars a year. And we used it. We used it. And we clearly won the P.R. battle, in the papers, First of all, I'll never forget this, the first night we have this great plan where people get from New York on PATH and then they get on buses and the buses go out to Park and Ride lots where people have parked. And, so <laughter>, I'm up there in Newark behind Penn Station with Ken Merin who was also in the governor's office who was, I guess, deputy policy chief or deputy counseler, I forget, at the time. Or special counsel. But, Ken and I were up there, Ken was on the transit board too. And we were up there, I don't know what we thought we were going to do. But we were trying to see if we could help a little bit or make sure everything was okay. It was a total cluster mess. <laughter> What happened was, all the buses came there, but they weren't organized and they came in from every different street and they were all like this. And it was pouring rain, it was just pouring. We were out there being drenched. Anyway, they got out of there, we got them out of there, eventually, hours later. And by the next night they had it very well organized, and it went essentially like clockwork. And surprisingly everybody said, you're going to get killed because it won't work that well. People found other ways to get to work. Or didn't go to work, I don't know which. But essentially it became a nonevent, that - -

Nancy Becker: How long did it last?
John Sheridan: Seven days, and they caved. We settled. And the governor was very good. I'm sure he was sitting in Trenton, saying, I don't know if I can take another day <laughter>. You know. But he was very good, and let it run its course and we did a very good job at the negotiation. We got a lot of the work rules that we wanted, and a very modest, if any, wage increase, I don't even recall. But it was clearly, in terms of how people perceive things, that we had sort of won the war.

Nancy Becker: You've already spoken about several major issues. Were there other major transportation issues during your time as commissioner?

John Sheridan: Oh, lots of issues over highways, you know. Over individual projects. You know, I-95, I had mentioned before, that was a huge issue. I recall Route 31 up around Flemington was a big issue, and we had lots of those all over the place. I got to tell you the 55, this is like - - the governor was great to work for. Because he basically said, "keep me involved through my staff on what you're doing. Let me know. Don't get way out in front of me, make sure I understand what you're doing," but he wasn't one of those guys that was calling you up every five minutes, "I need to do this, I need to do that, you need to do this, you need to do that." It wasn't like that. And basically, I thought the cabinet overall did a very good job and I think it was essentially because, his style was not management so much as it was leadership, you know. We're going to be an ethical administration that's going to try to do some very good things. But the vehicle for getting those things done, the ideas that are bubbling up from the department. Or, ideas that are out there that need to be addressed. And I just thought he was terrific, from that point of view. But <laughter> in this one situation with 55, this was before the trust fund passed. Because, clearly, by the time the trust fund passed, one of the tools we used during the trust fund era was a book of every single project that needed to be done and when it would be done under the trust fund, once it passed. And so when I would go to the legislative office, I'd say, "here's the five things in your district. Here's the ten things in your district." So we had a very clear selling tool. But, back to route 55. Even though I was involved in transportation issues, being from central and north Jersey I didn't have that much feel for south Jersey. And apparently the governor had, during one or more campaign stops had pretty much pledged that 55, which had been stopped for years and years, was going to get built. And he promised that. But it was sort of unbeknownst to me. If I knew it, I didn't remember it. And one day, I was at a legislative committee, which I was at regularly. I mean, I got called in before the committees all the time. And somebody asked me about 55, and I said, you know, the 55 is definitely on our list, and we're going to get 55 built. Well, it was headlines in south Jersey when I said that. There were, you know, the Courier, Post and the Gloucester Times and the Vineland paper and the Salem paper. It was like, Philadelphia Enquirer. It was headlines <laughter>. Well, he didn't call but he had Greg Stevens call. And Greg said, John, John. What are you doing? This is the governor's project, you know. Don't you think he should be there when you announce this? And so - - <laughter> you know, I had to admit that I had really screwed this one up. But you know, it was innocent enough, but not very smart on my part.

Nancy Becker: I want to go back to New Jersey transit for a minute, because you were also chairman of New Jersey transit. Was that the first time that the commissioner of transportation was chair of New Jersey transit?

John Sheridan: Now, that's the way Lou Gambaccini? had designed it. And they did something very smart and unique when they designed New Jersey transit. In most every transit agency in the country, the people were chosen from different areas of the state. So, let's say the district included ten counties. So it would be one rep from each county. And that person was like a legislative representative. So they were always arguing about, what they needed for their district. And it sort of lost the higher level view of what's good for the state. And I thought Lou and Martin Robbins who thought all that through, had really designed it very well and so the appointments were all gubernatorial appointments, including the Treasurer and the Commissioner of Transportation right
from the get go. And it was a good way to do it, because even though transit had been essentially separated from DOT, it was a good way to pull transportation policy together and make it work together. And, I thought it was very well designed, and the other thing they did is, it was not a large group. I think the whole board was seven, you know. So the governor had one appointment. When I was there, for a good period of time, he had one designee, I should say, who was Ken Merin And then he had appointments there. I think there were four appointments that were confirmed, subject to advise and consent of the Senate, with staggered terms. And then there was the Treasurer and the DOT commissioner. So, we had a lot of administration input, but you didn't control the board, you know, depending on when those appointments had been made. And I thought it was very well thought out.

Nancy Becker: I want to talk for a minute about the independent transportation authorities, like the turnpike and the highway authority, et cetera. It was very different than it is today. How did you, as commissioner, work with these very powerful independent authorities?

John Sheridan: You know, right now as you know, the commissioner sits on each of the authorities and for reasons we could get into, I never thought that was a great idea. But, it was something that happened, I think that it came in the latter part of the Kean administration when Hazel was commissioner. Hazel Gluck was commissioner. And that was the first foray into that area. But when I was there, Bo Sullivan was chairman of the turnpike authority. He was a very powerful chairman, and didn’t seem to much care what the department of transportation thought. And, you know, frankly, they were not big on my list of things to worry about. You know, the parkway had Gallagher, I believe he was the executive, later Senator Gallagher. And I forget who was at the Atlantic City Expressway. But they were independent, and, they ran it very independently. And so, you know, it was a burden I didn’t have to worry about, at the time. And I didn’t worry about it very much.

Nancy Becker: Did you work with the federal government to bring federal transportation funding to New Jersey?

John Sheridan: Yeah, that was a very big part of what we had to do. Because, you know, we were subject to getting federal funds. A lot of the three billion dollar program I was talking about, I am guessing right now. But I’d say, maybe a third of it was state money and the rest of it was federal monies that were combined, with state monies. One of the problems we had, and one of the reasons we needed funding, was we had available federal monies. But if you didn’t have the match, you couldn’t get it. And, New Jersey was always, always, all during the 70s, way behind on taking down its match. And, some of those funds were always threatening to go to Wyoming or Texas or whatever. And so that was a big part of the selling package on trying to get the funds. And the key person for us on that was first, while I was there, was Jim Howard because we had a very powerful congressman, from Monmouth County, who was chairman of the house public works committee. And I got to work with him very closely and, you know. Ultimately it all worked out, it was not always an easy road. Because the chairman of that committee was an absolute powerhouse and then of course you had the senators. I had Senator Bradley, and, Senator Lautenberg when he was a very young senator.

Nancy Becker: Let’s focus on Governor Kean and what he was like to work with. You talked a little bit about how he was a leader and I like that quote, “he didn’t manage.” What were his major strengths in addition to his leadership style? And his weaknesses, while you talk about strengths?

John Sheridan: I had a hard time adjusting to Tom’s style, you know. I had worked for governor Cahill, and governor Cahill was very much direct. Pretty much knew where he stood on most issues, he could be very tough at times. And Tom was, I won't say aloof,
but he was standoffish a little bit in the sense that, you know, you weren't always sure where he was on issues. And I think, it took me a long time to figure out that he was just way ahead of all of us <laughter> most of the people in the State House, on every issue. And it seemed later to me when I looked back on it, and even when I was there. But looking back on a few months earlier. His timing was impeccable. He could always pick the right time to be there, on an issue. And he was a master at it. And I guess the other thing about Tom was, he was basically extremely well grounded, I think, in terms of what he believed in. And, what were his core principles, I would say. There was just something, some inner strength there that he had and he just stuck to it, in his own, not belligerent way. But his own firm way. He could be very immovable on something when he wanted to be immovable <laughter>.

Nancy Becker: What would you say his major weaknesses were?

John Sheridan: You know, early on, I was concerned that he was not combative enough. Alan Karcher was an in your face politician and he used to come down, it seemed to me. Now, I wasn’t in the State House, I was out in west Trenton, so I didn’t see this every day but it just seemed to me, from reading the papers in that first, six, eight, ten months that Karcher was just down in front of that office at four o’clock every afternoon, raising hell about some damn thing. And, maybe it was the Irish in me, but I wanted to say, "Why don’t you put the boxing gloves on and punch him back?" in the end, he was very right about it. And I think the really big turning point, the first year was a very tough year. I remember going to a cabinet meeting, some time in late summer. And we were all reeling, you know. We had lost the gas tax. And everybody was, “when are we going to start doing some good stuff?” and, you know, “how are we ever going to get to deal with these crazy democrats in the assembly and the senate, and how are we ever going to get something going?” and we’re just all wringing our hands. And then Tom was hospitalized for several weeks, it seemed like several weeks. I don’t know it was that long, with back problems. And, so, everybody was sort of like, I think, reeling a bit. At some point in time, and I don’t remember exactly when it was, Greg Stevens came to the office. And I think he was first there as some role in communications, before he was chief of staff. But I don’t know how this all happened, because I wasn’t in the front office to know how exactly, how it happened. But Greg got him out there. Got Tom out of Trenton more, got him out to the towns. And Tom had a very nice way about himself with people. He would stand and linger, talking to reporters, and talking to people. He was just a very good conversationalist on issues. A very warm person. And after a while, people got to see the real Tom Kean, he wasn’t just this guy that they were reading about, out in Trenton where Karcher was beating him up every day in the press and things started to turn. I would say by the end of the first year it seemed to me, he was on a roll. And so, fast forward to after the bill passes. And, so remember, now, all the labor unions are fully supportive of the trust fund. And we had work piled up and we got work right down into the street. We did an enormous paving program in the first year. And put a lot of construction workers to work. This would have been in - - ’84. So it would have been late summer, fall of ’84 and into the spring of ’85, but right after the bill passed. Richie Tissiere who was head of the heavy and general construction workers who were housed up in Newark said, “why don’t you get them up to the labor hall, I want to just introduce you to our folks.” So, you know. I had gotten fairly friendly with the labor people during this, and I said, “Sure, I’ll go, I’m glad to come up.” So I went up to Newark and they had one of their meetings. There were 800 people in this town, in this hall up in Newark. And they were busting at the seams. And Richie gets up there and says, “I want to introduce the commissioner of transportation. This is the guy that’s gonna send your kids to college.” And the place goes berserk, you know. And I said, “What, Richie. Why don’t you have the governor here?” he says, “We’ll do that next week.” <laughter> they did the whole thing again, two weeks later, for Tom Kean. But Tom got this thing done. This is not the commissioner of transportation, I could go around and see everybody, I could do all that stuff. But in the end, without the governor’s leadership, without him out there going to the editorial boards, and, dealing with the leadership and the legislature
and dealing with the labor unions and all that, this never would have happened. And so, to the extent that I played a role in it, I'm very proud of it. But I know these things don't happen unless the governor's there for you. Unless the governor had put it in his state of the union message, unless he had stayed with it, it wouldn't have happened.

Nancy Becker: What, would you say, were his greatest weaknesses?

John Sheridan: Well, I started to tell you that I sort of, I saw as a weakness him standing back from a fight at times. And it was just that I didn't understand him, you know.

Nancy Becker: So it turned into a strength.

John Sheridan: It really was a strength, you know. You know, I don't know that Tom had any real serious weaknesses, in terms of, he was clearly a leader. And I think that job, to me is not a management job, it's a leadership job. If you try to manage it, it's too big. Nobody can do it, and you need to be able to let everyone know what you're trying to do and then let other people do it.

Nancy Becker: You alluded before to staff personalities. And Tom Kean was known for embracing contradictory opinions within his staff and maybe even within his cabinet. Talk a little bit about the personalities on the governor's staff.

John Sheridan: Well, that was something, I think it was part of what I was perceiving as a bit of a weakness, why would he have all these people, and letting them do all this stuff, you know? <laughter> it was his way of learning and understanding all the facets of an issue, you know. And so you had a very strong personality in Cary Edwards in the office. And you had “Steady Eddie” as the chief of staff, Lew Thurston. And then you had Gary Stein who was bright as hell. And, a very even keeled personality, though. But who was trying to make it all work. I'm sure he's mediating all day long on issues, you know. And Cary was a tough guy to deal with. If you let him go, he would just take over everything, you know. A couple times I thought he was thinking maybe he was the commissioner of transportation.. But any rate, we used to hear these stories and they didn't change all that much when Lew left and, Greg Stevens took over. I think that, pounding worked. But you know what, all I can say is, overall the first term, which was the term I was there was a very successful term for the governor.

Nancy Becker: How would you assess the Kean administration as a whole, when you were there, and also when you left? And what were his greatest victories? Clearly you talked about the transportation trust fund, but from your perspective?

John Sheridan: Well, I thought he did great things in education. I thought he was a very good environmental governor. He was early to some of those issues. He understood them, you know, he spent a lot of time thinking about them. He got the economy going. I mean, I think from a tax policy point of view and from an economic development point of view, including some of the things we did in transportation, maybe he caught a wave, a little bit. But certainly a lot of credit goes to him and that administration, in the first few years of kicking up the state economy. And, that served the state very well all the way up until Tom left office in '89.

Nancy Becker: Beyond the gas tax, what were his most disappointing defeats?

John Sheridan: I'm trying to remember. There's nothing that jumps out at me. I'm probably just having memory failure here, because I'm sure there were some. But, nothing that's popping into my mind at the moment.

Nancy Becker: Why did you leave after three years?
John Sheridan: Okay, so <laughter> this is an interesting story. I was a lawyer, you know. Even when I went in, I had four children. The children were clicking along in age, you know. So, I was not far away from college years. I would have stayed if I could have been attorney general. And I’ll tell you a couple stories. So some time even before the trust fund passed, Tony Cicatiello and Larry Bathgate came to see me and they led me to believe they had had some conversations with the governor and they were all contemplating making some changes. And that Irwin Kimmelman would go back to private practice, or to the bench or some place. And John Sheridan would be AG. And, Roger Bodman would become commissioner of transportation. And, you know, in terms of a career path that was very attractive to me. I thought that was great, and I thought of course, if the governor wanted me to do that, I would be happy to do it. Never knew the real story but it didn’t happen. Just nothing changed, and never had another conversation about it. So I was thinking about the next term, what was going to happen, you know. Tom was likely to get reelected. But, I was sure Irwin Kimmelman was going to leave the administration, but I was looking around. I said, “Well, to me the obvious person to go to the AG’s office is Cary Edwards. I mean, he’s worked with the governor day in and day out. He’s done a yeoman’s job in that office.” Cary was very good with the legislature. He understood the issues, he could talk to them. He had been there before. He was just very good on that stuff. And to me, there was no way the governor was going to say, “Okay, let’s make John Sheridan AG and Cary Edwards, you stay here or go away.” It’s not going to happen. And I kind of figured it out. And so right after the trust fund passed, and we had gotten the Morristown electric project that I talked about before, was done. Which I have to tell you a funny story about too. But, a good Tom Kean story. But I had gotten it done, we had gotten the money in place. The projects we were going to do were all lined up. You could see that it was pretty well set. The department which had been perceived as a lousy department was now the talk of Trenton. They could do nothing wrong. In fact, I should tell you this, when I first went to DOT, was going there. I must have had half of the transportation industry tell me, “you’ve got to clean house, you’ve got to start over out at DOT.” And I remember sitting there talking, to a group of about 30. And I said, “It ain’t happening. I’ve been in that department. I know those people, there are some great people in that department. They just need to do what they’re supposed to do. And they’ll do it.” “Nah, you don’t know what you’re talking about.” You know, I said, “Give me a while, let me see. I’m telling you what I’m going to do. I am not going to tear the place apart and then find out two years from now we have nothing done.” And it was a great department, it was a fabulous department. And, the administration used to turn to us for, “Can you do this?” Yes. “Can you do that?” Yes. There was always somebody there that could figure it out and do it. And we helped out in so many ways. But I lost my train of thought <laughter>, I got off on - -

Nancy Becker: You were talking about why you left.

John Sheridan: Why I left. So anyway, I was sizing up the situation. I was trying to plan my life. So I didn’t see a career path. At one point in time, the opportunity was discussed about going to be the executive director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and I said, “Yes, I would be interested in that, it would be a good step for me.” And that was farfetched. Because New Jersey has never, in the long history of the Port Authority, except in one acting situation, had the executive director as a New Jersey spot. So it wasn’t a real discussion in the end. So that was another thing that didn’t happen. And so I was trying to figure what to do. So knowing that I was going to leave, it was August. I went to Greg Stevens and I said, “Look, I'm going to leave. I'm going to leave in the spring of next year. I'm going to get this construction program going and then I'm going to leave.” “Yeah, yeah, yeah. Come back and talk to us later,” you know. So I said, “Just please tell the governor, will you?” so in February, I called up and said, “Greg, I'm going to leave on May 7, my third anniversary. I just want you to know.” He said, “You can come in and talk to me and the governor.” I come in, and it was a lot of this, “Maybe you'll be - -” Not from the governor, but from staff. “Maybe you'll be AG.” I said, “Come
on. This is not happening,” you know. <laughter> don’t promise me something you can't promise. “So where are you going?” I said, “I don't know what I'm going to do.” “What do you mean?” I said, “I'll get a job, I just want to give you advance notice, I want to announce it publicly that I'm going to leave and then I'll, over the next couple of months I'll get a job. I don't know what I'm going to do.” “Come on.” So I don't know that either the governor or Greg believed me. But by that time, Gary Stein had gone to the court. And so shortly thereafter, some time earlier than February, maybe in January, Gary and I were pretty close. And I had told him that, I was going to go. I had told him about my conversation earlier in the year. And so Gary had said something to Marie Garibaldi and Marie Garibaldi called Bill Hyland and Bill Hyland called me. So as it turned out, once the announcement went out, Bill Hyland called me right after that. And we actually met on the Washington train trip in early February, whatever date that was and we had a little conversation. And that led to more conversation. But I was also talking to other firms, like McCarter and English and Kraft and Hughes and a couple of others, and one engineering firm that wanted to make me president. At any rate, long story short, after several interviews I remember one where I was going up to B.P Peretti, who was the senior partner and one of the named partners on a Sunday afternoon. And this is about my sixth or seventh interview. And I said <laughter>, Joyce, the wise guy that she is, she says, “who are you going to meet with, the cleaning lady today?” <laughter> So at any rate, it was a great fit for me. They were a great firm and I was fortunate, I built quite a good practice there.

Nancy Becker: You've had a very successful and varied career. It's been a pleasure talking to you today and I thank you very much for your time.

John Sheridan: Thank you so much, Nancy.

#### End of John Sheridan 2-9-10.mp3 ####