

## **Lawrence Bilder Interview** (October 5, 2016)

**Kris Shields:** Hello. I am Kristoffer Shields, Historian and Program Manager at the Center on the American Governor. It is Wednesday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016, and we are here at the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University to conduct an interview for the Governor Richard J. Hughes section of the Center's website. I'm happy to be joined today by Judge Lawrence Bilder, former Superior Court and Appellate Division Judge in New Jersey, as well as a member of the Hughes administration. Judge Bilder was Secretary to Governor Hughes, as well as, later, Counsel to Governor Hughes, and also a close friend and personal advisor.

**Kris Shields:** Judge Bilder, first, thank you so much for being here today, and welcome to Eagleton.

**Lawrence Bilder:** My pleasure.

**Kris Shields:** I thought maybe we could start just by getting some of your recollections of Governor Hughes, in general. What it was that you thought made him a successful governor, and what we can learn from him today, as we face some challenges in New Jersey?

**Lawrence Bilder:** The big thing that stands in my mind is the governor as a leader—a leader in the sense that people think of Harry Truman as being a leader. And one of the incidents that I think point up so perfectly how he understood that the buck stopped with him—and he would take advice from people and work with people, but in the final analysis he had to make the decision—was with the Newark riots. The events happened, and he went down there, and he made a lot of very bold statements. But at the same time that he was making these bold statements, and at the same time that, every day, he was going around with the mayor and doing all the things that everybody saw, he was also doing a lot of other things that were quite different. For example, very early on, I was instructed to make sure that there were supermarkets open so that mothers could get milk for their kids. And through the—whatever group it was in state government—I was able to get ahold of the A&P [grocery store] district manager, and he agreed to keep the A&Ps open. And he did. In fact, he was so dedicated to it that he would call a number of days in, and say, "We haven't seen anybody for the last two hours. Could we close up for a couple hours to clean the place up?" Hughes did that on his own. That wasn't the advice of any of the people who were figuring out how to stop this.

**Kris Shields:** This was in 1967, I should point out.

**Lawrence Bilder:** Yeah. I guess it was '67. It was—I can't tell you what year, but it was the Newark riots.

**Kris Shields:** In his second term, yes.

**Lawrence Bilder:** What I always referred to as the "disorders," but they really were riots. Another thing he did was, every night, he went out and visited and met with people from the community. Ray Brown, who was a lawyer from Jersey City, very big in the NA—

**Kris Shields:** NAACP.

**Lawrence Bilder:** NAACP arranged the meetings. And the only people that were there were the governor and myself and the governor's driver who took us there, but other than that—and often they were apartments that were pretty empty, and people just sitting around, on the floor around, and talking to the governor, so he could find out what was going on. And indeed, Colonel Kelly, who really ran the operation—and magnificently, I might say. I think Colonel Kelly was just a top man. He understood everything. He didn't know where Hughes was. Nobody did. And Hughes did this every night. And towards the end of the week—I guess, on Saturday—he started thinking that maybe we were the problem, and not the solution. And on Sunday we took a walk around and visited, I think, a supermarket, and so forth. On Monday... my recollection is that the *Newark News* criticized him: "The city's burning down, and he's out there campaigning." Of course, he wasn't.

**Kris Shields:** Criticized Governor Hughes?

**Lawrence Bilder:** Criticized Hughes, yeah. I haven't been able to find out-- I did find an article by Farmer, in the *Trenton Times* for that day, in which he mentions that Hughes had been out on the street. In any event, against the advice of the state police, Colonel Kelly, and the attorney general, and everybody, Hughes said, "We're getting out." And he got out. He had concluded we weren't the solution; we were the problem. And so he made up his mind, and did what he was elected to do: to be the decision-maker. He did the same kind of thing that Harry Truman did when he decided to integrate the military. Didn't ask anybody, did it against the advice of everybody, because it was the right thing to do.

**Kris Shields:** Would you say that was typical of Governor Hughes's leadership style, in general?

**Lawrence Bilder:** I don't think there were that many times when there was that much of a dichotomy. One of the decisions that people probably wonder about is this business about the Rutgers professor that was calling for Vietnam.

**Kris Shields:** Eugene Genovese.

**Lawrence Bilder:** Yeah. Hughes made the decision, but that wasn't a case where everybody was the other way. Quite the contrary. A number of political advisors, who you would think would be very conservative, were very quick to say, "You know, this is the right thing to do."

**Kris Shields:** And this was during Hughes's reelection campaign, correct?

**Lawrence Bilder:** The reelection campaign.

**Kris Shields:** And that professor at Rutgers made some controversial comments about Vietnam?

**Lawrence Bilder:** Sure, sure.

**Kris Shields:** And Governor Hughes [disagreed with the professor's statements but defended his free speech rights].

**Lawrence Bilder:** And it became an issue, because the Republicans used that as a campaign reason to throw Hughes out.

**Kris Shields:** Unsuccessfully.

**Lawrence Bilder:** Unsuccessfully. I think another example of leadership is maybe when he went out, earlier, campaigning to raise money—a bond issue—to build places for people we were taking care of in buildings that were just unacceptable. And one of the [county leaders] Denny Carey, had a saying. He said, "Taxers is losers." And you can see that all the time. They'll do anything to keep from having a tax. The roads can go to hell—whatever. Hughes spent a tremendous amount of time selling the idea of getting bond issues and fixing up these places, so there would be a decent place for these people that we were taking care of. Because a lot of them were unsafe buildings. He got buses, and he took the press around in the buses—they didn't have all the media stuff they have now—and made everybody look at what was going on. I think that's leadership. That's not somebody saying to you, "We ought to do this, and we ought to do that." His motto, sort of, was, "When in doubt, do what's right." So I think those are a couple of the examples of what I think puts him in the same category as, I say, Harry Truman, who comes to my mind.

**Kris Shields:** It's a very interesting time in New Jersey history. Governor Hughes is elected in 1961, for the first time, and then serves two terms. So it's much of the decade of the '60s that Governor Hughes is governor. You mentioned the bond issue, for example. One of the challenges that he faced was that state government, I understand, was changing at this time. The population was growing. There were more demands on state government, particularly in terms of infrastructure, and the

state needed revenue, frankly, in order to meet these demands. A bond issue was one way. He also supported an income tax, correct?

**Lawrence Bilder:** He did more than support an income tax. He knew that we needed more money. And in preparation for the second term—maybe that's optimism—but in preparation for the second term, a large number of bills were prepared, and one of them was to get an income tax. There were also other bills at that time which I thought were very important, such as a bill to create a Department of Community Affairs and a bill to modernize air pollution control. And when I say "modernize," up to that time air pollution was thought of in terms of what's coming out at the stack. So I guess they drove around and they'd test a stack, and so forth. This bill changed it to look at what would go into the furnace, and it made a huge, huge difference. And there was a bill for water. And then there was education, which was a big fight—to take the state colleges, which were teachers' colleges—and they were, indeed. We sent people in to see what they were doing. And one of the examples was, they were teaching high-school chemistry, because they were teaching people how to teach high-school chemistry. So the courses—the whole school, the whole business—was oriented towards giving us teachers for our schools. As a matter of fact, I think that the law even said that they had to promise they would teach if they went to school there.

He wanted to change that. He wanted to create a situation in which, if you had a kid, and you were willing to have that kid live at home, same as they had been in high school—so you couldn't afford to send them to school, but you could let them live at home—that they'd have a nearby school they could go to, where they could have a real B.S. or a B.A., and for a tuition which could be met by working in the summertime when you weren't going to school. That's what the goal was. It started really early on. During his campaign—the first campaign—we learned that people were going to Union Junior College, spending a couple of years there, and then going to Harvard. We thought that was pretty terrific. It told us something we ought to find out about, and work out. And Hughes also—Governor Terry Sanford (D-NC, 1961-1965) had an organization of—a national education thing, which he asked Hughes to join. And we learned a lot from that, and meeting people there. So the idea was to separate the state teachers' colleges—which had been run by the K-12 people, for good reason, because they were using that as their place to get their teachers—and to change the curriculum so they would truly be colleges, and to do things to ensure that the costs of those colleges were still within the means of people who were willing to make the sacrifice of keeping the kids at home. Sounds silly, because they say now that the kids are all living at home now, anyhow. But so a program was developed and legislation was prepared, which would create a Department of Higher Education. And the Department of Higher Education would have strict control over the finances that came from the legislature. None of this business of colleges going to the legislature, because we learned about that through

Terry Sanford's program. A president of one of the big universities said that, "We get our money by using football tickets with the legislature." So the program that he created by this legislation—or that was prepared in the legislation—had the control at the state level, and would watch the administrative costs and whatever other costs would affect the tuition that would be charged. And that was another piece of that legislation. And all these packages were prepared during the first term. And all these packages were—I guess the best way to say it is, shopped around the leaders. We don't have leaders now. But they were shopped around the leaders, and we had the votes for all this legislation.

**Kris Shields:** When you say "leaders," do you mean leaders in the legislature?

**Lawrence Bilder:** The [county leaders]. [John] Kenny and [Dennis] Carey and [Anthony] Grossi, and so forth. And so we had the votes, and all the lobbying in the world wouldn't have changed anything, because we had the votes. And the votes stood up, except in one case. That was the income tax. The income tax. With the income tax <laughs> people from the Assembly came in and said, "Now, Governor, if we vote for this income tax, you're really going to be able to get it?" And I just ticked off for the governor all the people that we'd spoken to. Well, the Sunday before the vote, some of the building tradespeople got to Dennis Carey and persuaded him that if he had an income tax, the Democrats would never be elected again.

**Kris Shields:** And he was from Essex County, correct?

**Lawrence Bilder:** Essex County leader. And so he held back and he disappeared. He went to a basketball game. So we didn't get it. However, he *did* give us the vote we needed for a broad-based tax, because we got a sales tax; not what Hughes wanted, but he did get it. He didn't fuss about it. We lost. Okay, let's get a sales tax. And we had all the votes for the sales tax. And when I talk about the votes from the leaders, it's—you know, Hughes ran for gun control. That was one of his things. And I remember a delegation came in and said to the governor, "Governor, we can't vote for this. We've gotten thousands of cards, and we just cannot vote for this. This is a tremendous thing." But they did vote for it. And I've always thought that they voted for it because their leader told them that if they didn't vote for it, they wouldn't be on a ticket. So they didn't have to worry about whether they'd lose if they voted for it; they wouldn't even be on the ticket.

**Kris Shields:** It brings up an interesting general point, because it's a very different political climate in New Jersey, in the '60s, than it is today, or even 20 years ago. What was the relationship between Governor Hughes and these legislative leaders?

**Lawrence Bilder:** Well, they weren't legislative leaders. They were—

**Kris Shields:** Not legislative, that's true. [County political leaders.]

**Lawrence Bilder:** Well, let me back up a second. If you look at *The Making of a President*—there's a whole series of them, but the first one, in one of the chapters, maybe Illinois, maybe Wisconsin, I forget—he talks about the fact that these political leaders had their control in their local place: leader in Newark—in Essex, Newark. And whatever they were doing, it came from there, and they were interested in continuing to have political control in their town or county, or whatever. And it helped them if they had good government at the state level and good government at the national level. So they were very helpful in passing things at the state and national level. Truman came out of that kind of an operation. Truman came out of a—I suppose they'd call it corrupt political organization—and Truman was a great president and a great leader. So when we took these bills to the leaders, they looked at them, and they were satisfied that this was good legislation that would be helpful to the state; and if it was helpful to the state, it'd be helpful to them. So that's—at least, that's how I saw it. That's how I see it. And it's interesting that, apparently, recently, somebody's written an [article in the Atlantic magazine](#), suggesting that the fact that we don't have these leaders anymore has become very costly.

**Kris Shields:** Do you think that's true?

**Lawrence Bilder:** Yeah, I think it's true. I mean, I'm an amateur at this thing, so I don't really know. I'm just—I'm a retired judge. And whatever politics that I know, I learned from Richard Hughes. When I went to work for him in Trenton, I'd never voted. I'd voted once in a presidential election, when I was in the Navy. I didn't know how you became a Democrat or a Republican. So I listened to him, and he told me lots of things, because he had been a political leader—a very successful one. He and Thorn Lord put Mercer County together. It had been Republican, and they turned it Democrat. And there was a guy that used to come in to see me, that said that Hughes had said, "When we become Democrats, we're going to have so many jobs, we're going to have to go over to Pennsylvania to get people to fill them." And I said to the governor, "Is that true?" He says, "Sure. Sure." So he understood politics. He was very, very bright, and a marvelous lawyer, and a great judge; great judge *before*, because he had left the bench. He had remarried, and he couldn't afford to be a judge. But he was a very fine judge. And then, of course, he had his time as chief justice.

**Kris Shields:** What type of law did he practice?

**Lawrence Bilder:** Pretty general. He did some really good—I remember there was a big accident right down here, where he represented the plaintiffs, and did a superb, superb job.

**Kris Shields:** A very successful attorney?

**Lawrence Bilder:** Very successful, and practiced in—after he left the bench, he practiced with Jimmy McLaughlin in Trenton. And I practiced with a firm in Newark, and he was of counsel to us. And any work he had with us, I worked with him. So that's how I really got to know him.

**Kris Shields:** One thing I think is interesting about Governor Hughes—you mentioned national politics. He had a pretty strong relationship with President Kennedy and President Johnson. How did he use that to help New Jersey? How did he use that as a governor?

**Lawrence Bilder:** Well, we <laughs> had a "Washington office." Hughes had a very small staff, and always wanted to have a small staff and a very low budget. I was the Washington office. I would go down to Washington, and I would visit the White House and some of the departments. And our arrangement with the [New Jersey] Congressmen was, if something was done for your district, you'd get credit for it. So if they built a post office in [Representative] Charlie Sandman's district, we might've arranged for it, but he'd get the post office, and he'd get all the credit. And this was very beneficial because the bureaucracy works pretty well. If the Senator wants one thing, the Representative wants something else, and the State wants something else, they're free to do pretty much what they want. But if everybody wants the same thing, they have very little choice. And we had friends in these departments—a number of people who were from New Jersey worked in these departments, some of whom came back to New Jersey when we established a—Kennedy was going to have a program. I don't know what they called it then, but it was to take care of people, and he was putting a lot of money into it. And people—we established a program in New Jersey, which ultimately became the Community Affairs Department. And people came up from Washington into that program—people who had been working in departments in Washington. And I don't remember all the names. Of course, Joel Sterns was one of them. Joel Sterns is a very dear friend of mine, but all these people came up.

**Kris Shields:** Did you get the sense that Governor Hughes ever had thoughts or desires to run for national office?

**Lawrence Bilder:** I have no sense of that. He went out to the [1968 Democratic National] Convention, and he had a lot to do with straightening out a lot of fights that were going on about representation. I knew nothing about that. I was not there. I know nothing about it. I was with him in Atlantic City [1964 Democratic National Convention] when Johnson was there. And he was friendly with Kennedy, and he was friendly with Johnson. And we had met Johnson, as a matter of fact, when he was vice president. We had gone—he was at the—I guess the Senate Office Building. He had his office, and we met him a number of times there. And he

knew Hughes. He knew who Hughes was, and we had good relationships with him. And Hughes went further than any of us wanted to, with Vietnam.

**Kris Shields:** How do you mean?

**Lawrence Bilder:** Governor Hughes went over to Vietnam. I don't remember all about it, but they did. Johnson sent him over there, so he could come back and tell everybody, "This is a great thing we're doing." And he had in his pocket a letter from a member of our staff, saying, "Don't do this. This is a terrible thing we're doing over there." Hughes was a very loyal Democrat—very loyal to the president, and very loyal to the nation. I don't think he felt he was doing anything wrong. I don't think *Johnson* thought he was doing anything wrong. So.

**Kris Shields:** Along these lines, this is something that's fairly well-covered in other places, but we should talk about the Glassboro Summit while we're here. Is there anything there, maybe specifically from a New Jersey perspective? The fact that it took place in New Jersey—how did that come about?

**Lawrence Bilder:** Well, that's the problem. How it came about is—<laughs> you get different stories from different people. And my story is completely different. If you ask Steve Farber, who was also on our staff, he'll give you a completely different story. Joe Katz can no longer give you a story, but he'd give you a different story. I'll give you the story that I have.

**Kris Shields:** Sure.

**Lawrence Bilder:** Hughes and I were in the office, and he got a phone call. The president wanted to meet [with Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin], and they didn't want to meet in Washington, and they didn't want to—so they needed someplace in between.

**Kris Shields:** And this was President Johnson?

**Lawrence Bilder:** Yes. They wanted someplace in between [Washington and New York]. And initially, Hughes suggested an estate in Northwest New Jersey, which one our wealthy friends owned, and that didn't sound like a good idea to Johnson. And then the suggestion was made: we had a state college down in Glassboro. And we checked to see what was happening down there, and there really wasn't anything special. They may have had some kind of programs, but nothing that—and they liked that idea. But they said, "Don't say anything," because the announcement had to come out of Washington. Hughes was on his way to a Democratic meeting of some sort, down in one of the counties down there. It may not have been Cumberland County, but it was down that way. And Hughes went there, and we waited for a phone call, and then they announced that they were

going to have this thing at Glassboro, and we went down to Glassboro. That's how it happened. And I think the hero, to me, of Glassboro was Colonel Kelly—Colonel Dave Kelly, of the state police. This was a town and a college—they were going to have literally hundreds of media people there, reporters and so forth. The telephone company—in those days, we had the telephone company, still—brought in people from all over the country. And overnight, they had all kinds of telephone things in there, so that all these reporters were able to be connected with the world, as it were. And a lot of other things that had to be done: finding food and places—Dave Kelly took care of everything. All you had to do was tell him what you needed, and he took care of it.

**Kris Shields:** And this was all done before an announcement had been made, you said?

**Lawrence Bilder:** Well <laughs> there wasn't that much time between when they decided to go there and when it happened. It was—sure, it happened before the president and crews got there, but it was very short, right? There wasn't very much time. And between the telephone company and Dave Kelly, all this stuff got put together, and, I thought, brilliantly. Brilliantly. I couldn't imagine anything being done like that. But other than that, you know. What can I say about this? Other people have different stories. Some of the stories are that Hughes had the idea and called the president, and said, "Why don't you come to Glassboro?" And maybe they're right. I don't know, you know? It's a long time ago, and as I say, we all look at things and come out with different pictures of what we saw.

**Kris Shields:** The challenge of history.

**Lawrence Bilder:** Right.

**Kris Shields:** You mentioned earlier a little bit about Governor Hughes and the environment. How much was the environment an important issue for Governor Hughes? Was this something that he was focused on? What were some of his initiatives?

**Lawrence Bilder:** Well, when you talk about environment—we prepared and passed bills for air pollution, and water bills, so. Community Affairs Department. All those bills that we prepared all passed, and the bills were given to different people. The education bill, I think, was given to a senator in Bergen County, and that person became the education senator. But all these bills had been prepared. So I don't recall anybody talking about "environment," but we talked about water, and we talked about air pollution. We had a lot of help in those areas from government people.

**Kris Shields:** What would you say is Governor Hughes's legacy, as governor? Is there any particular—

**Lawrence Bilder:** Yeah, I'll tell you what I thought about that is—that all these great things you do turn out, in retrospect, they don't last. They're not as important as you thought they were going to be. Right? The education—I thought that was a terrific thing. We really—I read in the *Bergen Record* yesterday that the tuition at the state colleges is \$13,000. A kid's not going to work in the summertime and make \$13,000, right? Most kids aren't going to. I also read that the—in the *Bergen Record*, in the same—it was an editorial—that they were questioning the administrative expenses, which forced all these things up. I know that these are all now universities. Well, the universities, to me—and I know nothing about it—but that spells "administrative costs." And I sense that, as a graduate of Harvard Law School, where I see—I give money every year, but it seems to me it goes into administrative things, and extra chairs, and so forth, but not making it easier for kids to go to school. But as I say, this is not my—it's just an amateur looking at the thing, so that these—all that went out the window when Governor Whitman got rid of [the Department of Higher Education]; turned all these schools loose to do with what they've done. And I'm sure there are a lot of pluses to that, but it certainly—they certainly aren't schools that a kid can make money in the summer to go to school, and live at home. And that's the kind of thing they're talking about now, is how we're going to get all these people to get an education without ending up with \$100,000, \$200,000 in debt. And I know that exists, because I keep hearing about it from members of the family that are still trying to figure out how they're going to pay off these huge, huge debts.

It just, so—the biggest thing that seems to have lasted is the Department of Transportation. It had been the Highway Department, and one of our bills was a bill to create a Department of Transportation, to take the emphasis away from highways and cars. And Dave Goldberg was made the Commissioner of Transportation. And one of the things he did was created a train system. Well, that train system is running, and people are on those trains, so that's something that really lasted. That really lasted. And I suppose that it must be that the air pollution business lasted. I don't think anybody's changed that. They're still controlling what goes into the furnace. And, you know, that's a good example again, I think, of having a—the ability to get the votes ahead of time, and fight the lobbyists. They really wanted to stop that. They could burn coal, and they had all kinds of programs that—they're going to have devices so that they could put the coal in, but it wouldn't come out the stack. And that was that many years ago, and it's still coming out the stack [in other states] when they have coal. But that [regulation] couldn't be stopped in New Jersey, because we had the votes. We had the votes. A senator came to me from South Jersey, and he said that a big company down there had said that somebody had come in from one of our departments, and was looking

around. He said, "Well, we're going to have new laws here, and things may change around here," and so forth. He was put up to it, I'm sure, to frighten the senator into seeing whether he could get this law stopped. And I'm not—I don't recall the details of the water stuff, but they probably had the same kind of thing there. But it wouldn't have mattered, because, as with the gun control, we had the votes. We had the votes.

**Kris Shields:** We mentioned that it's obviously a very different political climate now than it was at the time that Governor Hughes was in office. At the same time, we're almost exactly 13 months from electing a new governor in New Jersey, who's going to take over at a difficult, complex time, much as Governor Hughes did. Is there anything that our next governor, whoever it is, can learn from Governor Hughes, from studying Governor Hughes?

**Lawrence Bilder:** You're talking to the wrong person. I'm just— <laughs>

**Kris Shields:** How about in terms of leadership, though?

**Lawrence Bilder:** I'm just a retired judge, and I don't—you know?

**Kris Shields:** Do you think there's anything, though, in his style? Because he's seen as a pretty successful governor, I think—one of the better governors in New Jersey history.

**Lawrence Bilder:** Oh, he was. I think that he was one of the most successful governors. That's why I'm down here. I was really upset by the fact that people didn't seem to understand—or didn't have the opportunity, when you look through—to find out how really good he was. He was a terrific campaigner. I always felt that he'd rather run for office than be in office. He loved it. He loved it. When I would go with him, when he was campaigning for the second term, we didn't have a flotilla of cars and people with machine guns, and so forth. We had a driver—a state trooper driver—and a rather luxurious car, I suppose you'd call it. It was sort of a limousine, but not one of these long, stretch things. It maybe a <laughs> a Lincoln, or something like that. Not an upscale, but it's—whatever it was. But we would pick Hughes up in the morning, at six or six thirty, and we'd be on the road all day long, until late in the day, when we'd stop someplace and get something to eat. Because we'd been at umpteen dinners and lunches and breakfasts, but you don't eat at those things, and so forth. Hughes loved people, and he loved to talk to them, and he related to them. And he was very good at names. He could go into a room, and he'd meet maybe 20 people. But when he left, he'd know what each person's name was. And it lasted. It lasted. It was a marvelous ability. Lyndon Johnson had that ability. It was the same kind of ability Lyndon Johnson had. So I remember we were down in Miami, I guess, or Miami Beach, for some kind of convention, and we got on an elevator, and Lyndon Johnson was there. You'd expect that Lyndon Johnson

would know Richard Hughes' name. He knew *my* name. I'd met him at his office. But Hughes was like that. Hughes knew names, and he liked people, and he liked to relate to people. And so I always thought that he really enjoyed campaigning.

**Kris Shields:** Before we conclude, we always like to ask if there's anything that we missed, if there are any stories you were hoping to tell.

**Lawrence Bilder:** Well, there's one thing that comes to my mind now, that one ought to know about the Hughes administration. His law partner was Thorn Lord. Thorn Lord, I think, had been U.S. Attorney, and he was a deputy attorney general—or an assistant, I guess—assistant attorney general. And Thorn Lord was the leader in Mercer County. Thorn Lord and Hughes put Mercer County together. And Hughes, of course, went on the bench, and Thorn Lord was really dedicated—I got to know him pretty well—to good government, and doing good things for the state. And Thorn Lord created a group which met in Princeton, and had a lot of professors and professional people, and people who Lord thought could bring together a lot of great ideas. A lot of the things that went into the packages that were prepared, to be passed in Hughes's second term, came out of the Lord Committee. And the deal with the Lord Committee was a pretty good one. Whatever the Lord Committee suggested, Hughes would consider. But nobody in the Lord Committee would go out and complain if Hughes didn't do it. That was important, because you couldn't have this kind of thing where people say, "Well, I told him, 'Do this,'" and they're blowing the whistle on what the governor is doing, or not doing. And that worked pretty well. It fell apart at one point, but that's not terribly important. In essential ways, it continued, because whatever the problems were, in the final analysis, the Lord Committee people helped. There were professors in Princeton who worked on a number of these—the legislation. They'd come in and we'd talk about the legislation, and they'd make suggestions for the prospective legislation.

The other thing was that we always felt that Eagleton and Woodrow Wilson School were assets for the governor's office. We had a fellow named Mike Herbert, who came from the Eagleton Institute, and worked with us. And Mike Herbert did a lot of stuff with Joel Sterns, later on. Hughes also had great relationships with some of the big corporations. They lent their people and their efforts and their material, without cost to the taxpayers. My recollection is that New Jersey Network—this television thing—was designed by the AT&T people: Bell Labs. I think, with the education business, we got some help from one of the big drug companies; assigned one of their—the president assigned one of his assistants to help us, without any cost. It just—they were there as good citizens, to do what they could to help.

**Kris Shields:** It seems like one of the themes with Governor Hughes is having good relationships in lots of different places.

**Lawrence Bilder:** In every place. Every place. And he always understood that he was a governor for *all* the people and that whatever his personal views might be, what he did had to reflect the needs of all the people, not just whatever his personal—no matter how strong those beliefs were, that that wasn't the governing principal. Because he represented people who *didn't* feel that way. And a lot of that came, also, from being a judge. A person who's a judge is—or *should* be—aloof from all of the pushes and pulls. When you go on the bench, you're not a Democrat, you're not a Republican. <laughs> You're not a Catholic or a Protestant or a Jew, or whatever; you're not a Muslim. You're independent of the whole thing. And I'm not saying that Hughes was that way as a governor, but a lot of that still lasted with him. A lot of that lasted with him, and he understood that he—and he did things that represented what the public needed, what—not *bad* things, but things that might not completely comply with his own personal beliefs.

**Kris Shields:** Well, that seems like both a particularly relevant lesson for today, in today's political climate, and also a good place to end. So, Judge Bilder, I'd like to thank you very much for taking the time to come down here today.

**Lawrence Bilder:** I thank you very much. You know, I think Hughes was just very, very important, and I think what he did was important. There are, where I live, some people down the street that have a nephew who lives in one of these institutions. And that institution is there because of Hughes. Still going. People trying to say, "Oh, no, they ought to be put into group homes," or whatever, which of course wouldn't work. But when I see him, I think, "Yes, that's one of the things that Governor Hughes did. That kid's living in a decent place, and is getting decent care." And that's a holdover from when Hughes had that bond issue, and made sure. I think Hughes cared about people, and he cared about the less fortunate people. I think he felt an obligation to consider the less fortunate people, and I think a lot of things in his administration reflected that.